



The Perfect Job

Are you **fed up** with **getting paid peanuts**? Do you feel that your boss is always **picking on** you? Is it starting to **get you down**? Uh-oh. We can feel it—you want to **quit**! Well, that's okay, but be sure you don't just **walk out** one day. Think about it carefully. Make sure you have **all your ducks in a row** before you go. Even if you think you may have another job **lined up**, don't **put all your eggs in one basket**. Nothing is official until you've **signed on the dotted line**, so make sure you have all the paperwork for the new job before you **hand in your notice** at the old one.



Of course, we don't always have a choice about finding a new job. Maybe you've been **let go**, or your company has **gone under**. Either way, it's time to start looking for a new job and **make a fresh start**.

The thought of finding a new job can be overwhelming, and you may be wondering where to start. There are plenty of options. Maybe the most important thing is to think about what you're good at. Can you **capitalize on** that? Maybe it's time to think about learning new **skills**. How is your English? Good language skills usually improve your chances for a better-paying job. So

how can you do this? The good news is that reading this book is a great **first step** ☺.

Taking an ESL class is another great way to improve. English classes are usually lots of fun, and you'll meet new people from all over the **globe**. Why not sign up with a friend and make it a fun night out? Some classes are free, like those sponsored by churches and libraries; others you may need to pay for. Community colleges and adult education centers are usually the most **affordable**. Some schools even offer very specialized English classes for different professions. But don't forget about the skills that you already have. You speak another language; maybe you can teach that to someone else. Think of it: you could set up a language exchange with an American where part of the time you talk in English and the other part you speak in your language. This is a great way to meet new friends. And don't forget that many companies look for people who can speak another language.

If you want to learn a **trade**, think about technical colleges and community colleges. There are schools that specialize in certain areas. For example, if you want to learn about working in the computer industry, there are schools that teach only computer technology. If you've always wanted to work in the dental field, you can go to a school that teaches only what you need to know about dentistry. Haha. We wonder if they teach a class about how to say, "Open wide!"

Okay, so where can you find this new job? There is no magic answer for how to find the perfect job. Many people rely on **word of mouth**. A friend tells you that her company is looking for a new person. Or you can look in the **classifieds** of your local paper, which posts its listings online these days. Many towns and community centers have career centers with lots of information about local companies that have jobs. And, of course, the Internet offers lots of options if you use it well. Type in the name of the company you're interested in. Then click the **Human Resources** link and search the **current** openings. You can even fill out the **application** online. You might want to look online at **headhunters** and **employment agencies**, too. You can **plug in** the type of job you are looking for, and they will send you **periodic updates** and **listings**. Many places will ask for references. References are people who know you and your work and will tell a potential employer that you're a good worker. If you want to use someone as a **reference**, be sure to ask him before **submitting** his name. If you want people to say good things about you, it helps if they are expecting the question before the new employer calls.

Okay, so you've found a job you think is your dream job. It's really important to **look beyond** the salary they will be paying you. It's important to be sure you're a **good fit** for the job. And it's important to think about the entire **compensation package**. What **benefits** does the company offer?

The one most people check out first is a health plan. These plans can be very complex and confusing, so **do your homework** and make sure you understand what is **included** and what is **excluded**. You may get a choice of different plans, and the company will probably give you paperwork explaining each. If you have questions, the person with all the benefits information is the **HR specialist**. Other benefits may include dental insurance, life insurance, and **short-term** and **long-term disability** insurance. You can **elect** or **decline** some of these; if you elect to take them, you will probably have to pay some amount out of each paycheck for the extra coverage. Think carefully. If you choose not to take the insurance and something happens, you could be **looking at** a huge bill. Other things to think about when you get a job offer are **vacation time** and **sick leave**. How many days will you get? Does the company offer a **pension plan**? Some places will even offer **tuition reimbursement**. It's all pretty complicated, but it's really important stuff. It takes a lot of work to find the dream job!

DIALOGUE 1: TRACK 51

LIA: Hey, Alan, look at you reading the newspaper! But **how come** you're reading the classifieds? Don't you usually prefer the comics? Haha.

ALAN: Very funny. And anyway, I already finished reading the comics. Now I'm looking for a new job.

LIA: No kidding? Uh-oh. Is there a problem at work?

ALAN: I guess you could say that. I've worked at that fast food **joint** for two years now doing the **same old stuff**, and it's time for a change. Besides, I've eaten **way too many** of their burgers, and I can't fit into any of my pants!

LIA: Well, I can understand wanting to make a change. And after all, you speak two languages **fluently**. There are plenty of companies that have great jobs for people who are **bilingual**. Not too many Americans speak two languages. With world economies so connected, companies need to have people who can communicate in another language, as well as English.

ALAN: That's exactly what I think. I know it's a big **plus** to be bilingual these days. And I think if I can find a job with a better salary, I'll be able to buy that new car I really want.

LIA: Yeah, and if you have that new car, maybe you'll finally be able to **convince** Margaret to go out with you!

ALAN: Exactly! I've had a **crush** on her for **ages**!

TIP 1

The holiday season is a good time to find a **part-time** job. Many people are shopping for holiday gifts, and stores often hire extra people.

TIP 2

Your chances of finding part-time work are even better if you can do **shift work**. Often stores need extra people to work when the store is closed to arrange **merchandise** on shelves.

VOCABULARY

- **affordable**: not too expensive
- ① **ages**: a long time
- ① **all your ducks in a row**: have a plan
- **application**: an information form that you need to fill out to get a job
- **benefits**: special things you get on your job in addition to pay
- **bilingual**: knowing two languages fluently
- **capitalize on**: take advantage of
- **classifieds**: ads for jobs
- **compensation package**: the salary and benefits of a job
- **convince**: persuade; make someone think something
- ① **crush**: feeling that you really like someone (romantically)
- **current**: now
- **decline**: refuse; not take
- ① **do your homework**: do research to find out about something
- **elect**: choose
- **excluded**: not part of something
- ① **fed up**: tired of something
- **first step**: starting to take action
- **fluently**: very well
- ① **getting paid peanuts**: getting very little pay
- ① **get you down**: make you feel discouraged
- **globe**: the world
- ① **gone under**: failed
- ① **good fit**: a good match for your interests and skills

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 people jobs
 how come: why
 Human Resource
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 included: part of s
 point: place
 let go: lose your job
 lined up: have thing
 listings: notices abo
 long-term disability
 sickness or injury
 look beyond: think a
 looking at: expecting
 make a fresh start: s
 merchandise: things
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 plug in: enter into a for
 plus: advantage
 put all your eggs in on
 may not happen!
 quit: leave your job
 reference: someone wh
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 the same thing
 short-term disability: be
 a short time
 take leave: days

- **hand in your notice:** tell your boss that you will be leaving your job after a certain time period
- **headhunters, employment agencies:** companies that work to find people jobs
- ① **how come:** why
- **Human Resources** (also called **HR**): the department that takes care of employees
- **included:** part of something
- ① **joint:** place
- ① **let go:** lose your job
- ① **lined up:** have things planned in order
- **listings:** notices about job openings
- **long-term disability:** being unable to work for a long time because of sickness or injury
- **look beyond:** think about more than just one thing
- ① **looking at:** expecting to happen
- **make a fresh start:** start again
- **merchandise:** things for sale
- **9 to 5:** a job (usual job hours are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.)
- **part-time:** working just a few hours of a day
- **pension plan:** a system that saves money so that you can collect small payments when you are no longer working
- **periodic:** occurring at different intervals
- ① **picking on:** always watching and criticizing or always giving work to someone
- ① **plug in:** enter into a form
- ① **plus:** advantage
- ① **put all your eggs in one basket:** depend on one thing happening (which may not happen!)
- ① **quit:** leave your job
- **reference:** someone who will give you a good recommendation
- ① **same old stuff** (also **same old, same old**): the same routine; every day is the same thing
- **shift work:** unusual work hours, not 9 to 5; perhaps working overnight
- **short-term disability:** being unable to work because of sickness or injury for a short time
- **sick leave:** days off when you are sick that you will get paid for

- ① **signed on the dotted line:** signed a contract
- **skills:** talents or abilities
- **submit:** give
- **trade:** a job that needs special skills
- **tuition reimbursement:** money back for what you have spent on education
- **updates:** new information, or changes to a product
- **vacation time:** days off that you will get paid for
- ① **walk out:** leave your job without letting your supervisor know in advance
- ① **way too many/much:** a stronger way of saying very many/much
- ① **word of mouth:** hearing something from another person

GRAMMAR REMINDER 1: The Present Perfect Simple Tense— Affirmative Statements

The present perfect simple tense can be used to show something that started in the past and has not yet finished. It's formed by the verb *to have* and the past participle. What's a *past participle*, you say? For regular verbs, it's the same as the past simple: just add *-ed*. For the irregular verbs, you just have to memorize the form. (See the list of irregular verbs in Appendix B.)

Take a look at these examples with the regular verb *to work*:

I **have** (I've) **worked** here for two years now.

He **has** (he's) **worked** here for two years.

They started working here in the past, and they are still working here now.

Take a look at this example from the dialogue using the irregular verb *to have*:

I've **had** a crush on her for ages.

I had a crush on her in the past, and I still have a crush on her now.

Note: In spoken English, we usually use the contractions **I've** worked, **he's** worked, and so on.

GRAMMAR REMINDER 2: The First Conditional

The first conditional is used to show the *probable* result of a *possible* action. It can be written in two ways:

If I get a new job, I **will** (I'll) have more money.

I'll **have** more money if I get a new job.

Don't mix if and w
Do not say: If I wil

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Having more money is the *probable* result. Getting a new job is the *possible* action.

Note: Don't mix *if* and *will* in the same clause!

Do not say: If I **will get** a new job, I have a new car.



PRONUNCIATION POINTER

/ʃ/ is pronounced **eye-I**.

It's not pronounced *ill*, as in "I'm sick; I need to go to the doctor!"

Paperwork!



Ack! We all hate paperwork! It takes ages to do, but there's no getting away from the fact that you will probably need lots of papers for your job search. You'll need to write a **résumé** and a **cover letter**, and you'll probably need **transcripts** for the education you have completed. These documents are summaries of your experience. The cover letter is a formal letter of interest in the job, explaining why you would be an excellent fit for the company, and how your past **accomplishments** will help the company.

The résumé shows all the work you've done. The transcript shows all the classes you've taken. If all your education was received outside the United States, you may want to consider hiring a company that can **Americanize** your transcript; that is, it will analyze your courses to see how they match up to similar courses in the United States, and they will figure out your **GPA**.

Although some companies still hire new employees using only a paper or online application **form** (without requiring a résumé), for many jobs, you will probably need to complete both. We know, we know. It seems like a **waste of time**, but hey, **gotta** keep the **big wigs** happy! No matter what paperwork you need for a new job, it's a good idea to think through all your previous experience and skills before an **interview**. You'll need to be **on the ball** to really **sell yourself**. The interview is a very short time to give as much information as you can.

Writing a good cover letter and résumé is an **art form**! There are hundreds of books and articles about how to do this, and, of course, there's a ton of

free information online. It's important to choose information that applies to the type of position you are looking for. Although it may take a lot of time, it really is **worth** doing this well. Make sure you get someone to check it over for you. Employers say that there is nothing worse than looking at a résumé full of **errors**. (Hoo boy, we know. We've seen some **beauts!**) If an employer thinks that you didn't put much effort into your paperwork, he may think that you'll be the type of employee who doesn't put much effort into his job. Employers often go by **first appearances**, so it's a great idea to have an **extra pair of eyes to look over** your writing.

Before a new employer even meets you, he may make judgments about you based on your résumé and cover letter. And once you've prepared a good résumé (and you've saved a copy to your computer and backed it up!), all you'll need to do is **tweak** it as your skills and work experience grow. This paperwork could mean the difference between getting your dream job or not.



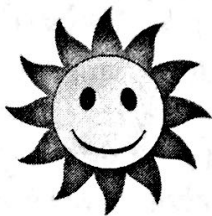
PRONUNCIATION POINTER

Beaut is pronounced **byute**. It's like *beauty*: **byut ee**. Beautiful!

TIP 3



You can find a ton of **templates** for cover letters and résumés online. Don't forget your local library! Libraries have plenty of job search help!



Fun Fact!

We can all use an extra pair of eyes to look over important paperwork. Even the president has people to help look over his speeches.

DIALOGUE 2: TRACK 52

ALAN: Hey, Lia, I could use an extra pair of eyes. Would you mind looking this over for me?

LIA: Sure. What is it?

ALAN: My résumé. Instead of looking for something new, I've decided to apply to be a **supervisor** at the place where I work now, and I really want to make a good impression.

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LIA: Wow, and I can see you spent a lot of time preparing this résumé.

ALAN: Yeah, I've thought about that supervisor job all weekend, and I decided I just have to **give it a shot**.

LIA: Good for you! You have some great experience, and you'll be a perfect fit for that position.

ALAN: That's what I was thinking, too. Some of the things I've already accomplished in my job show that I can really handle the extra **responsibilities**. I think if I just get an interview with the boss, I'll be able to sell myself. And if I get the job, I'll be **thrilled**. It's exactly what I've been looking for.

LIA: I'm sure they'll want a reference. Have you thought about whom you're going to ask?

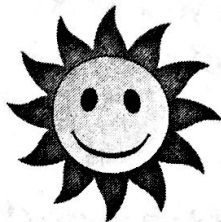
ALAN: Yes. My supervisor now has already said he'll give me a great reference. And just to be sure I get plenty of support, I've also called Mrs. Robinson from the James Rinski Company. That's the company where I used to work when I first arrived in the United States. She was my supervisor.

LIA: Great idea! I remember that she really liked you and thought you were one of the best workers on her team. But I don't remember why you left that job. What happened?

ALAN: The company had to **downsize**, and there was a big **layoff**. I was in the last group that they laid off. They **eliminated** my position. I know Mrs. Robinson **felt really bad** when she had to let me go. She said she would be happy to help me any way she could with finding a new job.

LIA: Sounds like she'll be a perfect reference. I'm sure she'll be really happy to give you a great **recommendation**. Good luck!

ALAN: Thanks. I'll need luck—and a résumé with no mistakes!



Fun Fact!

Many workplaces have “dress down Friday” when you can wear casual clothes. Take our advice: find out what the policy is! If you're the only one wearing a suit, you will feel silly. If you're the only one wearing jeans, you will feel **ridiculous!** (We know—we've been there.)

VOCABULARY

- **accomplishments:** good things you've done at work
- ① **Americanize:** make something seem similar to the way it looks in the U.S.
- ① **art form:** making something perfect and special
- ① **beautiful:** great! fantastic!
- ① **beauts:** amazing examples!
- ① **big wigs:** executives or other important people in a company
 - **cover letter:** a letter expressing interest in a job
 - **downsize:** make a company smaller by laying off people
 - **eliminated:** ended; got rid of
 - **errors:** mistakes
- ① **extra pair of eyes:** a person who can help find mistakes or make suggestions
- ① **felt bad:** felt sad about something
 - **first appearances:** how things seem right away, before getting to know someone
 - **form:** a document to be completed with your information
- ① **give it a shot:** give something a try
- ① **gotta:** very casual way of saying *have to*
 - **GPA:** short for **G**rade **P**oint **A**verage; your overall grade in school
 - **interview:** a meeting between someone who wants the job and the person who is hiring
 - **layoff:** ending the employment of some people, usually because there is not enough work
- ① **look over:** check; read for mistakes
- ① **on the ball:** alert; prepared
 - **recommendation:** a good reference, a good report about your work
 - **responsibilities:** jobs or tasks that someone is in charge of doing well
 - **résumé:** a summary of your work experience
 - **ridiculous:** very silly
- ① **sell yourself:** be able to explain why you are such an excellent person for the job
 - **supervisor:** a person in a leadership position at work; a manager or boss
 - **template:** an easy design to use for making a document
 - **thrilled:** really happy and excited

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GRAMM Tense

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- **transcript:** a summary of courses you have studied
- **tweak:** make small changes to add or change information
- ① **waste of time:** something that is not worth doing
- **worth:** of value

MORE FUN WITH IDIOMATIC EXPRESSIONS: Jobs

- **dead-end job:** a job that offers no chance for improvement
*There's no chance of a promotion in the office where I work. It's really a **dead-end job**.*
- **crack the whip:** make people work really hard
*That new boss of mine is really **cracking the whip** in the office. We don't get a minute to chat.*
- **work your fingers to the bone:** work really hard
*I really hope the boss appreciates the work I've done on this project. I've **worked my fingers to the bone** to make it perfect.*
- **call it quits:** end something
*It's no good. I'm fed up with my job. I've decided to **call it quits** and look for something new.*
- **learn the ropes:** learn how to do something; get used to doing a new job
*My new job is a bit stressful, but I'm sure it will be easier once I **learn the ropes**.*

GRAMMAR REMINDER 3: More Present Perfect Simple Tense

The present perfect simple tense is another tense that works really hard. It can also be used to show a recent action:

I've **decided** to apply to be a supervisor.

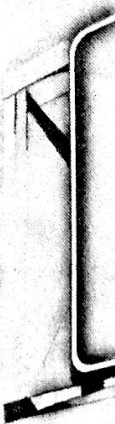
USAGE REMINDER

Looking for a job is one of those times when it's important to remember when to use **formal** English and when to use **informal** English.

Wow, this is a huge topic, but here are some general tips:

Okay in Informal English	Use This in Formal English
Contractions	Full form
I've worked there for five years.	I have worked there for five years.
Phrasal verbs	Full form
The company laid me off when they lost a major customer.	The company eliminated my position when they lost a major customer.
Idiomatic expressions	Literal language
I worked my fingers to the bone for my company.	I worked very hard for my company.
Informal vocabulary	More formal vocabulary
I worked with an awesome bunch of guys .	I worked with a wonderful group of people .
Incomplete sentences	Complete sentences
Great idea!	That's a great idea.

The



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