

EMPOWERING YOUNG LEADERS: EMPLOYMENT SUCCESS STRATEGIES WORKSHOP OVERVIEW

Mission Statement

Agenda Gap Mississauga Youth aim to empower youth by promoting community well-being and advocating for mental health awareness with diverse teenage perspectives. Through developing supportive workshops and resources, we aim to educate our peers and community leaders on the importance of youth mental health and its connection to employment readiness.



Youth Employment Matters

Supports well-being by:

- Developing confidence
- Expanding networks
- Enabling community belonging
- Fostering independence

All of these outcomes are known protective factors for the promotion of positive mental health.



The Challenge

West Mississauga is estimated to have among the greatest concentration of youth until 2031 (Mississauga, 2020, p. 22), **making employment opportunities for youth of particular concern**, especially following the pandemic where “Peel Region closures were among the longest in the province” (2021 Vitals Signs, n.d., p 23).

Calls to Action

Adapt the Mandatory Grade 10 Careers Curriculum

- ✓ Include at least 1 month of resume preparation for real-time job postings
- ✓ Use a youth-informed approach to drive interactive & less theory-based assignments
- ✓ Create job boards in schools to provide a pathway to low-barriers opportunities
- ✓ Lessons and opportunities for networking skill development
- ✓ Instruct on how to leverage volunteer opportunities to achieve personal goals

Expand and Promote Municipal & Provincial programs to Address Youth Underemployment

- ✓ Set standards for youth inclusion in employment sectors where possible
- ✓ Expand and promote youth employment programs (subsidies, training programs) to youth and careers course instructors in school and in youth-serving agencies

EMPLOYMENT SUCCESS STRATEGIES

Resume Toolkit from Agenda Gap and Erin Mills Connects Youth-centred Workshop

What is a resume?

A personal marketing document that helps a hiring manager or someone in your network gain a concise understanding of your background, skills, experience and career aspirations. It's important to tailor your resume to the job description of what you are applying.



Resume Overview

Header: name, location, contact information

Profile/key competencies: Summarize your top skills targeted to the position you're applying for

Education: list key courses, awards and grades

Work experience: paid experiences

Extracurricular experience: volunteer/clubs

Interests and Skills: Include technical, soft skills and interests to add a personal touch.

Optional: technical projects and awards.

Formatting Guidelines

- ✓ 10-12pt font
- ✓ Margins at least 2cm wide
- ✓ White space to increase readability
- ✓ Use keywords from the job description
- ✓ Use standard fonts (Times New Roman, Arial, Calibri) to get past ATS software

1 Header

Your header appears consistent on your resume and cover letter.

JANE DOE (She/Her)

647-XXX-XXXX | Mississauga, ON | professional.active@gmail.com | <https://www.linkedin.com/in/xxx>

Includes:

1. Your Name (make it stand out by bolding, capitalizing or adding colour!)
2. Contact information
 - a. Your current city, a professional email address which you check often (ideally your first and last name)
3. Phone number with a professional voicemail
4. Optional: LinkedIn account URL

2 Profile

A profile showcases your relevant skills/experience/interest in a summary.

PROFILE Optional

Your profile is a 2 to 3-sentence description of your top skills and abilities. You could include a "Key Competencies" section instead. In this case, provide 3 to 4 bullet points that showcase your most impressive skills and experiences related to the job. List relevant languages spoken at the end. A profile and your GPA are not always needed, especially for undergraduate students without much experience.

Tips:

Stay relevant: Use language specific to the industry and employer to make a good impression early. Only include information that's relevant to the job posting.

Provide proof: Try to fit "strong leadership skills from student club executive experience" rather than just "strong leadership skills."

3 Education

Should include your current school, school name, completion date.

EDUCATION

John Fraser Secondary School
Grade 11, AP Program

Completion: June 2026

- Cumulative GPA: x%
- Awards:
- Relevant Courses:

Includes:

1. GPA (if mentionable)
2. Scholarships and awards
3. Up to three relevant courses
4. Class projects
5. Extracurriculars you can't fit in experience

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4

Work and/or Volunteer Experience

Your experiences show off the skills you gained, including leadership, decision-making, initiative, flexibility, customer service, teamwork, and communication skills.

Includes:

1. Volunteer work can be titled as "Community Leadership," "Community Involvement," "Leadership Experience, or "Volunteer Experience"; pick what fits your situation best
2. The skills you highlight in your resume should mirror the ones in the job description and be expressed through accomplishment statements.

R.A.T.S Method

RESULTS | ACTION | SITUATION | TASK

X Volunteered for the food bank

✓ Initiated and launched campus-wide campaign for the Vancouver Food Bank, collecting and delivering 2,000 pounds of non-perishable goods.

Turns your work **responsibilities** into your **impact**

- Past tense without pronouns and fillers
- **R:** What did you do/achieve in your role?
- **A:** What actions and skills did you take/use?
- **T, S:** What was your task & situation?

WORK EXPERIENCE **List in reverse chronological order (newest first)**

List as many positions as are relevant to the job you are applying to

Job Title 1, Organization Name, City, Province or Country

Jan 20XX – Present

- 2-4 bullet points per position
- Brief accomplishment statements using the **RATS** (Result, Action, Task, Situation) or **CAR** formula (Challenge, Action, Result)
- Be sure to include the Result (the outcome and impact of the action you took to address the challenge; this is qualitative or quantitative proof of your success), the Action (what you did, how you did it, and the skills you used), the Task (your objective), and the Situation (who, what, when, where)

Job Title 2, Organization Name, City, Province or Country

Jan 20XX – Dec 20XX

- Too vague: "Researched topics to write articles for an online newsletter"
- Better: "Increased readership in a weekly online newsletter by 40% by researching timely topics and keeping the target audience in mind"

EXTRACURRICULAR EXPERIENCE

List in reverse chronological order

Volunteer Title 1, Organization Name, City, Province or Country

Jan 20XX – Dec 20XX

- 2-3 bullet points per position
- Brief accomplishment statements using the RATS model (Result, Action, Task, Situation)

Volunteer Title 2, Organization Name, City, Province or Country

Jan 20XX – Dec 20XX

3

Interests *Describing your interests shows that you're a well-rounded individual.*

- It can also lead to interesting non-work conversations (ice breakers) in a job interview.
- List your interests and hobbies that are team-based, goal-oriented, social, or job-related.
 - Competitive soccer player, avid hiker of North Shore mountains, street fashion enthusiast

INTERESTS & HOBBIES (and/or SKILLS) **Each section is consistently formatted**

Include specific interests (you should be able to hold a 5-minute conversation about each interest). For example, traveling around Eastern Europe, reading science fiction, trading stocks in a personal portfolio, and being captain of an intramural soccer team.

EMPLOYMENT SUCCESS STRATEGIES

Interview Toolkit from Agenda Gap and Erin Mills Connects Youth-centred Workshop

What is an interview?

- A chance for you to learn more about potential companies and tell your story to a recruiter.
- The interviewer assesses how the role fits you, just as you assess how well the job and culture align with your personal goals and interests.



Secret Tip

Practicing and preparing before the real thing is the best way to boost your confidence and professionalism in an interview. Being prepared demonstrates that you're genuinely interested in working for an organization and will work to prove it.

What are interviewers looking for?

- Can you do the work?
- Do you have the skills required?
- Do you want the job?
- Are you motivated to do it?
- Will it achieve your career goals?
- Are you a fit with the industry, company, and team? Do you fit with the company culture and get along with others?

Types of Interviews

- 1 Phone pre-screen:** screens candidates early in the process.
 - Be enthusiastic and prepared to answer the phone - they aren't always scheduled.
 - Ensure you have a professional voicemail.

Be prepared to answer:

- Are you still available for work?
- Why did you apply for this role?
- What skills do you have that match what the position is looking for?
- Can you summarize your most relevant experience for this role?
- When are you available for work?

- 2 Individual/panel:** behavioural interviews often ask questions that prompt you to expand on your experiences and tie them back to the job you are interviewing for.

- 3 Group:** A group interview screens multiple candidates at the same time. This is an opportunity to show you are open to the ideas of fellow team members. Be prepared to answer 'get to know you' or behavioural questions.

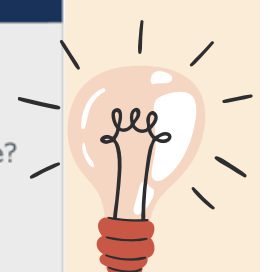
- 4 Online interviews:** dress professionally, choose a neutral background with a well-lit space, test your video and sound before, don't refer to prepared notes.

- 5 Technical:** a technical interview is designed to assess your expertise in specific job-related knowledge and/or skills. Technical interviews are commonly used in technology, finance, consulting, engineering, and healthcare industries.

Preparing for an Interview: Effective Research

Thorough research into an organization, beyond just reading the job posting, demonstrates to prospective employers that you're interested enough in the position to spend the time and effort preparing properly.

Job description	Company website
What specific skills is the company looking for?	What are their mission statement and values?
What's the tone of the job description? Professional? Encouraging? Humorous? Serious?	What's the organizational culture like?
What's it like to work at the company?	What's included in the careers section of their website?
What gets you excited about the role?	What gets you excited about the company?
Industry research	Company social media
What jargon does the industry use?	What tone do they communicate with via social media?
What's the culture of the industry?	What's the focus of their social media content?
Is the industry experiencing growth?	LinkedIn: what's the background of the company's employees (especially those in your interview panel)?
Are most companies in the industry successful?	
What's been happening in the news regarding this industry lately?	



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Interview Toolkit from Agenda Gap and Erin Mills Connects Youth-centred Workshop

Practice makes Perfect

Use a skills matrix to uncover what to talk about during your interview.

- The skills you choose to represent in your matrix should be based on the job description.

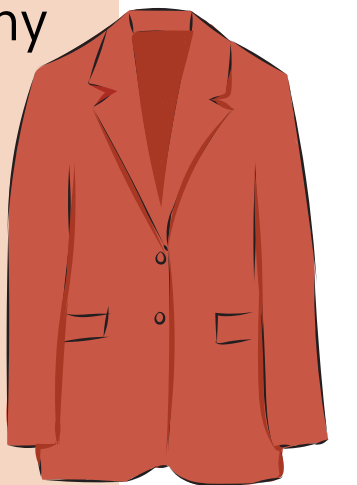
Here's an example of a skills matrix for a marketing position:

	Skill 1	Skill 2	Skill 3	Skill 4	Skill 5
Experience A					
Experience B					
Experience C					

	Analytical ability	Attention to detail	Communication	Initiative
Experience A: VP External - Marketing Club	I did A/B testing on our monthly newsletters to help develop a better communications strategy for reaching out to members, increasing click-throughs and engagement by 40%	When organizing our latest speaker series, I developed a project management plan to ensure all club executives followed the same plan.	I delivered the opening speech at our club's conference, clearly outlining how club members would benefit from the experience.	I spearheaded a move to a new email management tool that provides better analytics and goal tracking by pitching to the rest of the club executives at a recent team meeting.

Best Practices

- Arrive 5-10 minutes early
- Dress the part - match the attire of the company (be comfortable and confident)
- Bring a copy of your resume and any supporting documents



You can ask the recruiter:

- Can you tell me who will be in the interview?
- Will there be any technical questions?
- How long will the interview be?
- What is the recruitment process like?

Commonly Asked Questions

"Tell me about yourself."

- This can be a deceptively simple question! It's best to prepare carefully for this type of question to deliver a clear, structured response that highlights only the most relevant aspects of yourself

Here's one potential formula you can use:

The 'Beginning': Where you're from and how your education or experience relates to the job

The 'Spark': How you became interested in the specific job/field

Steps: The experiences and activities that led to you to applying to this job

Why You: The value you can add to their organization and attributes/skillsets that reflect the needs of the position/work. What sets you apart from other applicants?



"Why are you interested in this position?"

"What do you know about our organization/company?"

"What strengths can you bring to this position?"

"What are your short- and long-term goals?"

Behavioural Q's:

"Tell me about a time when you had to juggle multiple priorities at once. How did you handle it?"

"Describe a scenario where you had to work with a team to get a job done?"

"Can you recall a time when you had to work through a customer/client complaint?"

For most behavioural questions you can use the STAR formula:

Situation: Provide background on the scenario, with enough detail for the interviewer to imagine it.

Task: The task you had to complete or the problem you faced

Action: The steps you took to deal with the task or problem. (MAIN FOCUS!)

Result: The impact of your work. Was the problem solved? How did others react?



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Prepare questions to ask your interviewer(s)

You should have some questions ready to ask the employer at the end of an interview. This demonstrates your preparation and interest and will help you determine whether you and the organization/position are a good fit.

Example questions:

1. What has been your favourite project you've worked on and why?
2. What do you enjoy most about working for the company?
3. How has the company changed since you joined?
4. What are the current goals that the company is focused on, and how does this team work to support hitting those goals?
5. How would you describe the culture of the company?

Dear Jane,

Thank you for taking the time to get to know me and the skills I bring to the Sales and Customer Service Lead position with Global Products earlier today. The interview solidified my drive to expand the customer base and promote Global Products to our communities both locally and nationally. In particular, I enjoyed hearing more about the new sales program. I see my experiences leading volunteer engagement for the Business Club at UBC Sauder as a direct fit for my Sales and Customer Service Lead duties, and I'm keen to leverage my experience to succeed in this role.

I look forward to hearing about the outcome of this interview. Thanks again for your time and consideration.

Sincerely, [your name]

Closing the Interview

- Thank your interviewer(s) for their time to get to know you as a candidate
- Re-state your interest in the position

Essential elements:

- ☐ Address each interviewer individually by name.
- ☐ Thank the interviewer for taking the time to talk with you, and include something you learned.
- ☐ Reaffirm your interest
- ☐ Revisit your skills that match the position.
- ☐ Close the letter with a further note of thanks and a reminder that you look forward to a response.

More Commonly Asked Questions



- Give me an example of a situation where you had difficulties with a team member. What, if anything, did you do to resolve the difficulties?
- Give an example of a time when you had to establish rapport with a customer. What did you do to gain their confidence?
- Tell us about the most challenging customer service experience you have ever handled. Be specific and tell us what you did and what the outcome was.
- Describe a situation when you demonstrated initiative. What was the outcome?
- Describe a time when you came up with a creative solution to a problem in your past work.
- Give me an example of a time when you had to have a difficult conversation with a co-worker. How did you handle the situation? What obstacles or difficulties did you face?
- Tell me about a team project when you had to take the lead or take charge of the project. What did you do? How did you do it? What was the result?
- What have you done to make your team more productive? Give an example.
- Give an example of how you have successfully empowered a person or a group to accomplish a task.
- Tell us about a time when you had to solve a difficult problem. What did you do?
- Tell us about a time when you were able to develop a different problem-solving approach.
- Tell us about a time when you identified a potential problem and resolved the situation before it became serious.
- Describe a time in school when you had many projects or assignments due simultaneously. What steps did you take to manage the situation?
- Tell us about a time when you organized or planned a successful event.
- What do you consider to be your professional strengths? Give me a specific example using this attribute in the workplace.
- Tell us about a time you had to work on a team that did not get along. What happened? What role did you take? What was the result?

EMPLOYMENT SUCCESS STRATEGIES

Key Takeaways from Agenda Gap and Erin Mills Connects Youth-centred Workshop

Mission Statement

Agenda Gap Mississauga Youth aim to empower youth by promoting community well-being and advocating for mental health awareness with diverse teenage perspectives. Through developing supportive workshops and resources, we aim to educate our peers and community leaders on the importance of youth mental health and its connection to employment readiness.



Youth Employment Matters

Supports well-being by:

- Develops Confidence
- Expands Networks
- Provides Access to Opportunities
- Enables Independence



Calls to Action

Update Grade 10 Careers Curriculum

- ✓ Resume preparation for real & available jobs
- ✓ Youth-driven, interactive & less assignment based
- ✓ In-school "Opportunity Boards"
- ✓ Effective networking skill development
- ✓ How to leverage volunteer opportunities for goals

Expand and Promote Municipal and Provincial Program

- ✓ Set minimum quotas for youth inclusion
- ✓ Promote & expand youth employment subsidy programs
- ✓ Promote programs and policies to youth

Interview Tips

- Research the company and the position
- Practice answering the most common questions
- Arrive 10 minutes early dressed to impress
- Be polite, confident, concise and enthusiastic
- Ask questions at the end of the interview
- Email a thank you note after your interview
- Ask for interview feedback post-results

Mental Health Promotion during Job Search

- Practice to combat nervousness
- Continue the momentum
- Recognize that feeling bad after job rejection is natural

The Challenge

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Resume Tips

Should Include: personal information, objective, work/volunteer positions, skills, education and activities

- Focus on qualifying yourself in the top half of your resume
- Tailor your resume to positions
- Match the job posting keywords
- Quantify your achievements

HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT RESUME	
Yoursname@gmail.com	Phone
City, State	LinkedIn URL, Website
Motivated student (3.6/4.0) who demonstrates strong work ethic and creative ability. Seeking to apply my graphic design skills and artistic drive as a summer intern at your company. Will leverage proven experience as a competent designer to contribute to company goals and needs.	
EDUCATION	
Santa Monica High School, Santa Monica, CA	
Senior	
GPA: 3.6 / 4.0	
Relevant Coursework: Intro to Graphic Design, AP Art, Yearbook, Computer Applications	
Honors: Member of the National Honors Society and National Art Education Association	
Clubs: Yearbook Club, Santa Monica Newspaper, Spanish club	
MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS	
Yearbook Club	
Yearbook Design Team Lead	
2015 - Present	
Created a Yearbook logo designed to incorporate school mascot and colors; opted to use coated paper in 2016, which improved photo quality and increased profits by 5%	
Arrange all club photos and pages to correspond to yearbook theme	
Trained and supervised 2 sophomore students in graphic design	
Santa Monica Newspaper	
Graphic Designer	
2015 - Present	
Procured advertising for school paper, saving organization 25% in costs	
Edited and curated photos used for school paper; increasing readership by 15%	
Custom design page layouts to fit articles, photos, and advertisements into strict format	
Contributed to school's online publication by designing page layouts to accommodate mobile screens	
ADDITIONAL SKILLS	
Proficient in Photoshop and Adobe Creative Suite	
Basic knowledge of HTML	
Basic knowledge of Adobe Dreamweaver	
Great photographer	
Keen eye for aesthetics with good understanding of image gradients	
Intermediate speaking level in Spanish	
AWARDS, HONORS, AND HONORARY MENTIONS	
Nominated for Macmillan Prize for Illustration in 2016	
Submitted artwork to Ocean Awareness Student Art Contest 2016	
Came in 2nd place in the Applied Arts 2016 Student Awards for submitting graphic design work under the category of Advertising	

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RESULTS | ACTION | SITUATION | TASK

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✗ Volunteered for the food bank

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