



Job Hunting Kit

(To improve your job hunting strategy)

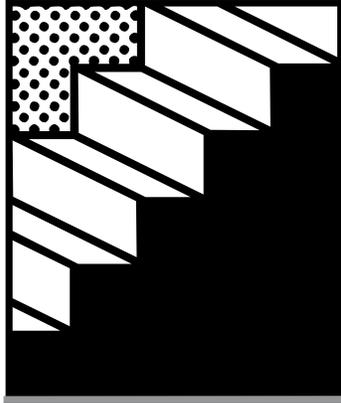
Urban Affairs and New Nontraditional Programs

Alabama Cooperative Extension System

Alabama A&M and Auburn Universities

UNP-4

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WORKFORCE PREPARATION: FINDING AND SECURING EMPLOYMENT

As we move into the twenty-first century, Alabamians face new and different employment challenges. Job competitiveness is increasing. Additionally, changing labor needs, advances in technology, and global competition are driving forces shaping the new work environment. Individuals who do not have the necessary skills and mind-set are at a disadvantage. One of the ways Alabama Cooperative Extension System's project, *Workforce Preparation: Finding and Securing Employment*, can assist is in the delivery of workforce initiatives and resources for the public. Some initiatives are "Going Places – Job Hunting Kit," group workforce training, job fairs, workforce references, and role modeling techniques such as those used in the curriculum "Welcome to the Real World."

For further information, please contact:

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Job Hunting Kit

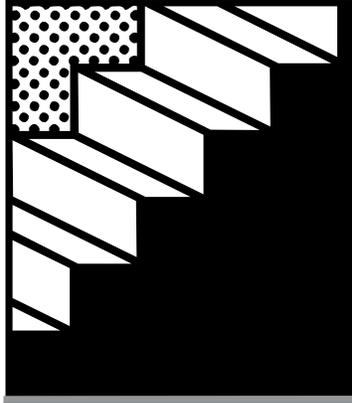


Table of Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Resumés, Interviews, and Cover Letters | 5 |
| Chronological Resumé | 6 |
| Functional Resumé Format | 7 |
| Combination Resumé Format | 8 |
| Interviewing Tips | 10 |
| Evaluation of Personal Interview | 11 |
| Dressing Simply for the Interview | 12 |
| Typical Interview Questions | 14 |
| Behavioral Interviews | 15 |
| Simple Cover Letter | 16 |
| Outline of Sample Follow-up Letter | 17 |
| Helpful Time Management Hints | 18 |
| “Sometimes Work Defines Us” | 19 |
| References..... | 19 |

Resumés, Interviews, and Cover Letters

The Alabama Cooperative Extension System is happy to provide you with this “Job Hunting Kit.” It is designed to help you fine-tune your job hunting skills and increase your chances of employment success. A brief overview of the contents of the kit follows.

Resumés (3 types)

A resumé tells human resources (HR) history. Most employers will ask for your job-related information during the past 5 to 10 years, depending on the organization. If you have worked more than 10 years, keep your information in a safe place just in case it is requested. Also, remember to date your resumé in the bottom left-hand corner: “8/99.” This will help you remember if you have included the most current information, and it will also let the employer know that the resumé is current.

1. Chronological. This resumé is the most widely used and is most effective when you have an extensive employment history or have had jobs with many responsibilities that you want to identify. Notice the summary at the top. You may wish to give a brief summary of your career or a description of work responsibilities that you feel make an impact. You should also list your more recent or present job at the beginning of your employment history and work down to your earlier employment.

2. Functional. This resumé gives you an opportunity to highlight your skills first and accomplishments next, rather than your work history, as is found on the chronological resumé. Summarize your jobs held at the end of this resumé. This is an important resumé to use when you are switching careers or industries.

3. Combination. This resumé is a mixture of the chronological and the functional resumés. Jobs are listed from the most recent to the earliest. You may highlight responsibilities and accomplishments within each job category.

Interviewing Tips

Important suggestions on interviews, including tips on grooming and dress.

Letters

A sample of a simple cover letter to accompany the resumé and/or application and a sample of a follow-up letter.

CHRONOLOGICAL RESUMÉ FORMAT:

RYAN E. ALVIN

01936 Jacksonville Way
Huntsville, AL 35811
(256) 555-1212 Home
(256) 888-1212 Messages

BACKGROUND SUMMARY

Nine years experience in commercial and residential construction including four years as Project Manager Foreman. Skilled in interpreting blueprints and plans to detailed completion from foundation to finish work with emphasis on producing quality product. Additional expertise in bricklaying, tile setting, siding installation, and concrete. Dependable, hard worker with a track record of completing projects on schedule. Excellent communication skills in working with construction superintendents, owners, and on-site workers.

WORK EXPERIENCE

TAYLOR CONSTRUCTION, Park City, Utah 1989- Present

Project Manager Foreman (1994-Present) Provide supervision and direction to ten-member crew on construction sites. Responsible for following plans, directing employees, and maintaining consistent work flow through project completion. Hire and train new employees as needed. Assist superintendent in scheduling daily work to accomplish deadlines. Monitor subcontractor work to ensure quality standards are maintained.

Construction Worker (1989-1994) Responsible for day-to-day construction activities including setting concrete forms, framing, setting trusses, roofing, bricklaying, siding, and all related duties.

EDUCATION/TRAINING

Certificate, Construction, Jacksonville Community College, Jacksonville, Florida, 1987.

Graduate, Terry Parker High School, Jacksonville, Florida, 1985.

Specialty “hands-on” coursework in construction, woodworking, and all aspects of building trade, 1984-85.

INTERESTS

Enjoy woodcarving, computer technology, sewing, swimming, basketball, fishing, walking, and outdoor activities.

12/99

FUNCTIONAL RESUMÉ FORMAT:

ANDREW BELINGERS
23 West Cinemat Street
Meridianville, AL 35759
(256) 888-1212 Home
(256) 800-1212 Office

CAREER SUMMARY

More than 10 years administrative experience in accounting, business, and travel industries. Strong organizational, management, customer service, and computer skills. Expertise in accounting procedures, customer and employee relations, office management, training, and sales. Known for adaptability, reliability, accuracy, honesty, and problem-solving abilities.

- GENERAL** Skilled in all aspects of accounting functions. Worked with accounting firm for
- ACCOUNTING:** tax and annual report preparation. Experienced with accounts payable, accounts receivable, monthly reports, and collection of delinquent accounts.
- MANAGEMENT:** Redesigned offices and organized floor space for convenient access of materials. Coordinated, planned, and managed logistics for all company activities.
- TRAINING:** Trained and supervised all new employees in secretarial, word processing, office procedures, and security. Conducted training sessions on corporate travel policy.
- TRAVEL:** Proficient in making travel reservations as an experienced travel agent and as a corporate travel representative. Ensured best possible corporate rates were obtained. Negotiated travel contracts and secured discount rates for quality services.
- COMPUTER:** Microsoft Word for Windows, Excel, Equation Editor, Microsoft Access, Filmmaker Pro, WordPerfect, Lotus 123, and MacDraw.

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

- LANFORD CORPORATION**, Charlotte, North Carolina 1994-Present
Executive Assistant to President
- WYMAN SCHOOL**, Charlotte, North Carolina 1991-1994
Financial Supervisor/Fiscal Assistant Accounting Administrator
- LARSEN TRAVEL AGENCY**, Atlanta, Georgia 1986-1991
Travel Customer Representative

EDUCATION

- B.S., Business Management, University of Charlotte, Charlotte, North Carolina
Accounting Courses, Charlotte Vocational Technology Community College, Charlotte, North Carolina
Certificate, Travel Representative, Lakeside Travel Institute, Atlanta, Georgia

12/99

COMBINATION RESUMÉ FORMAT:

GENNARD MIDDLETON
618 East Anderson Blvd.
Savannah, GA 35809
(912) 555-1212

Career Summary

More than eight years experience as Software Engineer and Programmer. Background includes the following: Programming, UNIX Operating System, UNIX Maintenance, INFORMIX, Ctree, System Administration, C Programming, Shell Script Programming, Pascal Testing, Communication Networks, User Interface Systems, Automated Testing Tools, Laser Disk, Computer Graphics. Instructor. Bachelor of Science, Computer Science, University of Massachusetts. Broad experience in other languages and environments. Thoroughly enjoy problem solving and working with software.

Professional Experience

Bendix Aviation Company, Aceonport, N.J.

1990 to Present

Software Engineer (1994-Present)

Maintenance of UNIX operating system environment and system administration tools.

- Reduced load of outstanding UNIX operating system problems 70%. Provided significant improvement in customer relations.
- Developed C-based user interface system administration tool, increasing interface performance over 300%.
- Added multi-language capabilities to user interface tool, which was helpful in working with European markets.

Associate Software Engineer (1990-1994)

Development of testing tools and maintenance of system administration.

- Created and maintained a single hardware administration tool for several hardware platforms, greatly simplifying hardware configuration for engineers and customers.
- Designed and implemented an automated testing system to manage test sites, allowing large numbers of tests to be run simultaneously, providing a significant reduction of complexity and testing time.
- Maintained a script-based user interface tool to administrate the UNIX operating system environment.

BROADCAST MANUFACTURERS, Boston, MA

1988 to 1990

Programmer: Responsible for developing software to support various broadcast production systems.

- Designed and implemented a graphics tool to interface laser disk images with computer graphics.
- Recommended several software changes that would help increase productivity. Three suggestions were implemented, saving the company \$48,000 in the first twelve months.

UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS, Lowell, MA

1986 to 1988

Programmer and Teaching Assistant: Responsible for software development and testing. Taught and tutored computer science classes.

- Lead engineer, testing an automated office environment. Efforts were highly praised, gaining additional contracts for the university.
- Developed a database-testing package for Boston Gas Company, providing an enhanced ability to isolate problems between software updates.
- Taught classes in Pascal, Assembler, and Basic languages.

Education and Training

B.S.—Computer Science, University of Massachusetts, Lowell, MA, 1988

Company-sponsored training:

- Advanced C
- Seminar on Developing Positive Work Characteristics
- Emerging Technologies in Communications
- Human Factors in Engineering Design
- UNIX Drivers and Streams
- Defining Requirements in Problem Solving

Interviewing Tips

Do you sometimes wonder how you can help yourself to successfully complete a job interview? Here are a few helpful hints that may come in handy.

Make a good first impression at your interview by

- Familiarizing yourself with the organization
- Practicing answers to questions you think may be asked
- Researching the required job skills for the position
- Dressing appropriately (See the section on “Dressing Simply for the Interview.”)

Greet the interviewer by

- Entering the office after being invited
- Accepting a handshake if it is offered (Please give a firm, not hard, handshake.)
- Establishing eye contact
- Taking a seat when offered
- Exchanging small talk

Take a binder or notepad to the interview to

- Look professional
- Keep your resumés, application, business cards, etc.
- Take notes that will help you later

Relax during the interview. Take your time when answering the interviewer’s questions.

- Ask job related questions.
- Point out how you can benefit the organization.
- Jot down notes that will be helpful if you should have another interview.
- Speak clearly.
- Avoid asking about salary until the employer introduces the topic. Your first goal is to convince the interviewer that you are right for the job.

Have a personal copy of your resumé to help you

- Recall information about employment history
- Refresh your memory about skills that you possess
- Remember dates

During the final part of the interview, you may be asked “Do you have any questions?” If you are interested in the job and the interviewer seems interested in you, remember to

- Ask the interviewer about the next step.
- Ask when you may follow up about the job.
- Thank the interviewer for seeing you.
- Shake hands goodbye, if appropriate.

Evaluation of Personal Interview

A handy way to keep up with and improve your interview style is to review the “**Job Hunting Kit**” **several times**. Pay close attention to “Interview Tips” and “Dressing Simply for the Interview.” Keep **track** of your interviews by recording your thoughts shortly after the interview in the appropriate areas **below**.

Company: _____ Date: _____

Position: _____

Interviewer: _____ Title: _____

1. How did the interview go? (Topics, questions asked, etc.)
2. What were the positive points about the interview?
3. What areas need improvement?
4. Was my overall appearance a good one, including hygiene?
5. In what areas should I follow up with the interviewer?
6. Remember to send a follow-up thank you letter.
7. What kind of follow-up strategy should I develop?

Dressing Simply for the Interview

Rooming and dress are an important part of making a good impression on potential employers. Your dress indicates how you want employers to think of you. One rule of thumb is to be conservative in your dress: avoid extreme fashions or loud colors.

Tips for Women

- Conservative, skirted business suit in blue, gray, or black is advised. Alternates can be a tailored dress with jacket or conservative skirt and blouse. Skirt length, necklines, and slits should be professional.
- Clothing should be neatly pressed. Try to stick with white or neutral color. Pay attention to neckline, while avoiding lace and ruffles.
- Shoes should be medium-heeled, closed toe pumps in a dark color. Make sure they are polished.
- Always wear neutral-colored hose. Check to make sure there are no runs or snags.

Tips for Men

- Typically, the best suits are in black, gray, or navy. Avoid the “latest fashion” colors. For positions involving trades, warehouses, manufacturing, or physical labor, it is appropriate to wear work clothes or slacks with a casual shirt.
- Wear a white, neatly pressed shirt.
- Wear a subdued tie.
- Shoes should be conservative and should match the color of the belt. Make sure they are polished.
- Wear over-the-calf, dark-colored socks.

Definite Yes's

- Be sure clothing is neatly pressed and coordinated.
- Practice good hygiene; always brush teeth, bathe, and use deodorant.
- Polish shoes.
- Shave or trim facial hair.
- Groom and cut hair.
- Select clothes that fit well.
- Choose clothes appropriate for the climate/season.

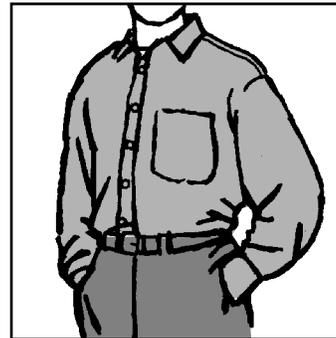


Figure 1. Wear neatly pressed and clean work clothes for positions involving trades, warehouses, manufacturing, or physical labor.

The following illustrations and accompanying comments represent a consensus of opinions from workforce and other professionals on the do's and don'ts of Dressing Simply for the Interviews.



Figure 2. Wear conservative ties.

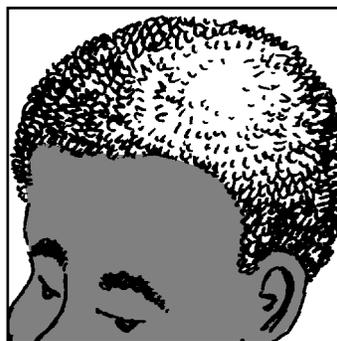


Figure 3. Be sure hair is neatly trimmed and combed; trim facial hair.



Figure 4. Practice good hygiene; always brush teeth, bathe, and use deodorant.

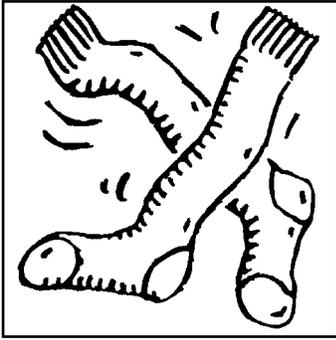


Figure 5. Wear over-the-calf, dark-colored socks (men).



Figure 6. Be clean shaven and trim facial hair.

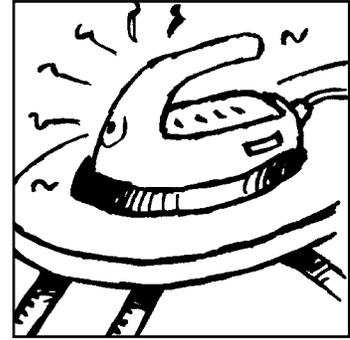


Figure 7. Be sure clothing is neatly pressed.



Figure 8. Wear a conservative or tailored dress; be sure it is clean.

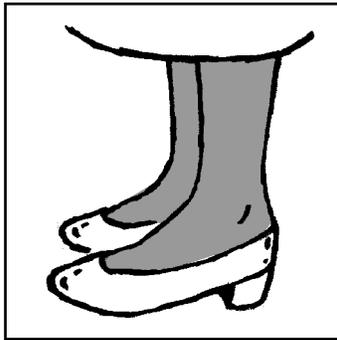


Figure 9. Wear medium-heeled, closed toe pumps; be sure they are polished.

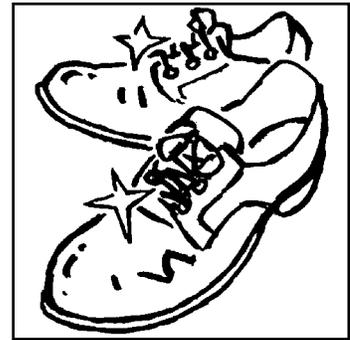


Figure 10. Wear conservative shoes that match the color of your belt; make sure shoes are polished.

Definite No's

- Large, colorful, or excessive jewelry
- Inappropriate hem or neckline
- Bow ties, boots
- Shoes that are too worn
- Clothes that are frayed
- Strong fragrances
- Excessively long nails



Figure 11. Don't wear revealing blouses or dresses with low-cut necklines.



Figure 12. Don't wear body-piercing jewelry except for simple earrings.

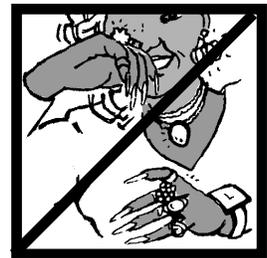


Figure 13. Don't wear large, colorful, or excessive jewelry; also avoid excessively long fingernails.



Figure 14. Don't wear bow ties or boots.



Figure 15. Don't wear pants that hang on your hips.

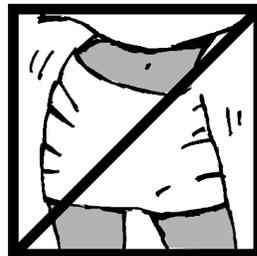


Figure 16. Don't wear skirts or dresses with inappropriate hemlines (too short or too long).

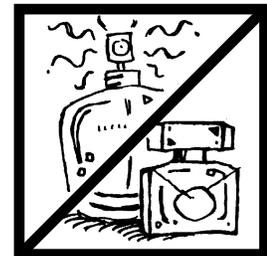
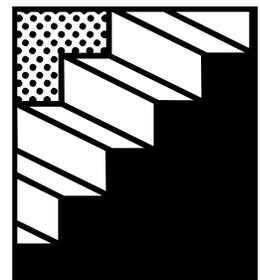


Figure 17. Don't wear strong fragrances.

Typical Interview Questions

Many questions are asked during interviews. Most of them are pretty basic. See if you can develop a strategy to respond to the 14 questions/statements listed below. These are the questions to use during your practice interviews.

1. Tell me about yourself?
2. What are your greatest strengths and weaknesses?
3. Why did you leave your old job?
4. Why do you want to work for us?
5. How did you like your old job?
6. What kind of salary are you looking for?
7. What do you know about our company?
8. Why should we hire you?
9. What did you think of your old boss?
10. What are your long-range career goals?
11. Will you work overtime?
12. You seem over-qualified (or under-qualified).
13. Are you willing to train to work in another area?
14. Are you a whistle blower?



Behavioral Interviews

The behavior-based interview is more effective for the employer's needs than are traditional interviews. It helps the interviewer determine your behavior in past situations on the job. Employers are seeking responses to behavior-type questions and competencies (abilities) in the following areas:

- Research ability
- Communications
- Assertiveness
- Time management
- Commitment
- Teamwork
- Creativity and imagination
- Decision making

The interviewer will check the candidate's answers closely to identify specific examples, names, or titles of individuals. The interviewer will also check outcomes that the candidate supplies during his or her responses to the behavior-type questions.

Practice responding to the set of behavior-type questions below. Is your response positive or negative? Analyzing an applicant's responses to behavior-type questions is one method a prospective employer uses to identify knowledge, skills, abilities, and training of an applicant.

Question: Can you describe a frustrating situation in your past employment experience that involved you, your supervisor, and one other person? How did you handle it? What was the outcome?

Try responding to the following: "You are a receptionist. You think you do an excellent job handling calls. During your evaluation, your employer stated that only one thing kept you from getting a very high evaluation: He noticed that you spend too much time talking to employees who come in and out of the receptionist area." How did you handle the employer's statement? What was the outcome? (M.L. Gordon, personal communication, November 10, 2000.)

You can prepare for behavior-type interviews for employment purposes by thinking through past difficult employment experience. You may be asked to recall the steps that led to the successful completion of tasks.

Simple Cover Letter

100 Riverwalk, #102
Savannah, GA 31400

Date

Mr. Walter Middleton, Director (**The contact person's name and title**)
Human Resources Department (**The contact's department**)
Savannah Power Board Mfg. Company (**The company's name**)
4440 Riverwalk (**Company address**)
Decatur, AL 33333 (**City, State, Zip**)

Dear Mr. Middleton:

I am interested in the position of lineman that was advertised in the classified section of the *Decatur Times*, Sunday, August 1, 1999.

The attached resumé identifies my experience and skills in lineman repair. I have also worked as a circuit board assembler, using the circuit board that Savannah Power Board manufactures.

I am looking forward to meeting you to discuss a position with your company. If you need to contact me by phone, please leave a message on my phone mail at (256) 555-1212 or call after 5:30 p.m., Monday through Fridays, and all day on the weekends.

Thank you.

Very truly yours,

Ryan Carter

Attachment

A Sample Outline of a Follow-up Letter

Ronald Jenkins
100 Riverwalk, #102
Savannah, GA 31400
(912) 555-1002
(912) 555-1213
rjenkins@sarpow.com
(912) 555-2001

Date

Name of Contact

Title

Company

Street Address/P.O. Box

City, State, Zip Code

Dear (Mr., Ms., Mrs., Dr.) _____:

This is the **introduction** of the letter. In this paragraph, you must thank the person for interest, time, lunch, interview, etc.

This is the **main body** of your letter. Here, you should mention something that impressed you about the company or position you are seeking. Remind the interviewer about your discussion and review how your skills and experience “fit” the needs of the company. Provide additional information and clarify any unclear issues.

In this **closing** paragraph, express once again your strong interest in the job. Finally, discuss references, the next meeting, a telephone number, and other contact information.

Very truly yours, (**complimentary close**)

Your name (**signature**)

Helpful Time Management Hints

Be aware of employment time schedules because "Time Is Money."

Think of wise time management as a precious gift you give yourself. The better you manage your time and priorities, the more time you are rewarded to do some of the things you enjoy. Managing your time is very important, especially when it comes to your job. When you get to work early, you are in a more relaxed frame of mind to do your job. Remember to select the priorities that will enable you to get to work on time because in business "Time Is Money."

Think about the following statements and make a note by each item that needs improvement:

- Consider how much your time is worth to you. Do you use your time wisely? Do you know how to plan your time wisely?
- Plan effective use of your time by
 - ✓ Setting goals: know what you want to do and what you must do to achieve your goal.
 - ✓ Prioritizing: make a list; decide what's most important and what's least important.
 - ✓ Planning informally: practice keeping written and mental notes.
 - ✓ Using relaxing time to think through important matters.
 - ✓ Avoiding procrastination: "Don't put off for tomorrow what you can do today."
- Create more time in your life by
 - ✓ Getting prepared the night before; do as much planning and preparation as possible for the next day.
 - ✓ Getting up earlier.
 - ✓ Dropping unnecessary tasks.
 - ✓ Sharing the work load when possible.
 - ✓ Cutting your telephone time.
 - ✓ Cutting your television time.
- Avoid arriving late on a new job by
 - ✓ Making a practice trip to a new job site during the hours of your expected arrival time to understand current traffic patterns.
 - ✓ Giving yourself extra time to be ready to handle the unknown.
 - ✓ Arriving at least 10 minutes early to see how much easier it is to focus on a new situation when you are not rushed.

Make copies of this sheet so you can keep a record of your success in reaching your objectives in time management. Reward yourself for successes—keep working on the weak areas.

Sometimes Work Defines Us

Where does he (she) work?
One asks while trying to help recall a name.
If that doesn't do it, then the next question is
"What does he (she) do?"

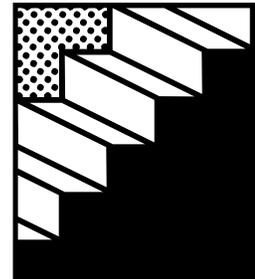
America was founded on the premise of hard work.
Don't you hear the pride in someone's voice when they say,
"My father works for the Gas Company"
or, "I work for the railroad!"

It doesn't matter what the title, as long as it's honest and earns you pay.
Many waiters and maids have successfully raised families on their salaries.
Many of their children went on to do very well in the world of work.
Many of their children were successful in education.

Even after many years pass,
You can still hear someone say,
"You remember him (her), she used to work for . . ."
It's up to you to define your recall title.

Get Busy! Reward yourself.
Consistently work above expectations.
Someone will notice your work.
"Yes, most will remember your job."

*Rosalie M. Lane, Extension Specialist
Alabama Cooperative Extension System
Normal, Alabama*



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The National WFP Mission

A work force is envisioned that is comprised of motivated individuals who continually renew their knowledge and skills and are productive and effective. A shared mission of the National WFP Initiative and Work Force Preparation: Finding and Securing Employment is essentially to create opportunities for learning so that adults can facilitate the employment transition that develops future job opportunities.

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For more information, call your county Extension office. Look in your telephone directory under your county's name to find the number.

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