

ODEM HIGH SCHOOL PORTFOLIO HANDBOOK



College Transition

Mission Statement

The Mission of the Career Transition Portfolio at Odem High School is to provide students with the opportunity to show proficiency of the many skills they have acquired while at Odem High School. The Career Transition Portfolio and Senior Interview empower the students to take responsibility for their learning and to have a powerful voice in their development as individuals. Students express what they know, display what they are able to do, and showcase their talents. Through this process, OHS graduates become:



COLLEGE READY

CAREER READY

LIFE READY

Student Directions

This graduation requirement will not change your classroom experience. The challenging standards that guide your teachers and their evaluations will remain in place. Your workload will not change as a result of your portfolio requirements either. The difference for you and your classmates is that on a regular basis you will be collecting and selecting work samples instead of discarding them or taking them home. A variety of these work samples will be included in a final CAREER TRANSITION PORTFOLIO. In order to accomplish this task, you must COLLECT, SELECT, REFLECT, and CONNECT work samples from various classes during your high school career.

You will be required to:

- ✓ Save work samples in each of your classes and co-curricular activities for the year. Save mandatory common assessments.
- ✓ Take full responsibility for the completion of your final Career Transition Portfolio to be assembled in your senior year.
- ✓ Complete your Career Transition Portfolio in order to receive credit for the course.

These student directions are designed to steer you toward graduation. Essentially, the portfolio process is our school's way of ensuring that you not only work to your potential and perform at your highest ability, but that you save the work that proves that you have successfully fulfilled Odem High School's graduation expectations.

I have received, read, and acknowledge the OHS Portfolio Handbook requirements.

Student Signature

Date

1. Organization

It provides a central location for recording and documenting your achievements, honors, personal information, letters and education and career information.

2. Lifelong Process

- Throughout your career life, you will have the opportunity to collect documents that validate your skills and your accomplishments (report cards, thank you letters, school award, skill certificates, employment evaluations, community honors, athletic trophies, etc.)
- The Career Transition Portfolio demonstrates your history. It describes where you have been, indicates where you are now, and provides a glimpse of where you are going.

3. Preparation

- The Career Transition Portfolio assists you in gathering the information necessary for the completion of a resume or job application.
- The sooner one begins organizing a portfolio; the easier it is to develop.
- The collection of appropriate information helps to ensure a successful interview.
- You will always be prepared as new opportunities arise.

4. Confidence

A sense of confidence is the result of extensive preparation creating a positive and optimistic attitude when seeking employment or applying for college.

5. Self-Marketing

It is your responsibility to convince a perspective employer or recruiter of your qualifications. Employers hire people with the skills they need to get a job done.

6. Character Statement

Development of a portfolio establishes that you are seriously seeking employment and looking toward your future career goals. The fact that you are willing to assemble a portfolio on your own time is an extremely strong indication to an employer or recruiter that you are highly motivated, persevering, organized and self-directed.

7. Control Of Your Own Destiny

The more knowledge, education, and experience you have, the more doors are open to you. A Career Transition Portfolio helps you set goals, plan for the future, and prepare for opportunities.

Helpful Hints for Compiling Your Career Transition Portfolio

- You will need to collect a few of your exemplary work for the year.
- Do not throw away any assignments, group/individual projects, papers, lab reports, and visual aids. **Remember, you cannot use tests or quizzes in your portfolio!**
- Get accustomed to documenting things such as athletics, community service, and co-curricular activities by keeping a journal, taking pictures, or saving artifacts that you associate with the activity.
- Reflection is key to the portfolio process. When reflecting on an entry, be sure to keep the Portfolio Guiding Questions List in mind.
- Do not forget to have your portfolio entry forms signed by your teacher, advisor, coach, etc.
- Remember to work collaboratively with your skills teachers.
- A special reminder to seniors -- be sure to take advantage of the time available to you in the Senior Skills class to compile, revise, and perfect your Career Transition Portfolio.
- Do not miss deadlines!
- Organization is crucial in completing a successful portfolio in your senior year.
- Work with your teachers to be sure you are producing and or revising quality portfolio work samples.
- Remember that portfolio entries marked as emerging or unacceptable cannot be used in your Career Transition Portfolio.
- Your Senior Business teacher will be your greatest supporter as you prepare your Career Transition Portfolio in the 12th grade.
- Your Portfolio is an essential part of your total graduation requirement. Your administrators, teachers, counselors, and staff are here to guide and support you throughout this process. **Do not be afraid to ask questions.**

Choosing Your Career

Choosing a career may be the first really complex adult decision you will be called upon to make. This decision will determine the pattern of your life, the type of friends you have, where you will live and the circumstances (standard of living) under which you will live.

One of life's greatest satisfactions is a career that "fits". In choosing your career, you should be honest with yourself. You cannot expect to accidentally drift into the perfect career.

There are three significant requirements for making a career decision: self-understanding, identifying career requirements and the steps to achieve your goals.

I. The first requisite is SELF-UNDERSTANDING. How can you know what kind of work you want to do until you have taken the time to analyze your personal characteristics, interests, skills, values and work ethics?

A. Personal Characteristics: An individual's personality is made up of a variety of personal characteristics such as how he or she gets along with other people, how they handle pressure and how they accept responsibility. Your personality affects the career choices you make. If your job complements your personality, you will usually be happy with your work. Most employers are interested in finding out what type of person you are. Personality traits are frequently as important to prospective employers as much as previous work experience or academic qualifications. There are many personal characteristics that are helpful in a job. Some of these are punctuality, reliability, organizational skills, enthusiasm and flexibility.

B. Interests: Your interests are defined by what you like and dislike. Some people like to be involved in sports, while others enjoy good books and movies. You need to be able to identify your likes and dislikes in relation to your career. If your career involves doing things you are interested in and enjoy, you are more likely to achieve job satisfaction and to progress in your career field.

C. Skills and Aptitude: A skill is the ability you have to perform a certain activity or action. Entering data on a computer keyboard in a quick and accurate manner is an example of a skill. Skills are usually acquired as a result of training, experience and knowledge. People frequently confuse an aptitude with a skill. An aptitude is a natural tendency to do something well. For example, you may have a knack for working with computers, even though you have not had much formal training in them. Both skills and aptitudes make an important part of your personal profile.

D. Personal and Work Values: Values or ethics are beliefs that an individual holds. They are often difficult for people to identify because people are usually not consciously aware of them. A value can be defined as the importance you assign to your goals, beliefs, and behaviors both personal and work oriented.

II. The second requisite is to KNOW THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE CAREER in which you have an interest. The term "career" also refers to an "occupation" or "job." Information is power and the more information you have about a career, the more power you will have in securing a job within that career area. The following questions should be answered as you research a particular career area:

A. What is the nature of the work associated with this career or occupation? What are the responsibilities of a person working in this field?

B. What are the working conditions associated with this career? Indoors or outdoors? Working with groups or usually alone? How much and what kind of technology is used on the job? Is there much travel required?

C. How many people are employed in this occupation in the geographical area in which I want to work: North Texas (Dallas/Ft. Worth), East Texas (Houston), South Texas (Austin, San Antonio, Rio Grande Valley) etc.? What are the short-term and long-term employment outlooks for this occupation?

1. From entry level to top-level positions, what is the salary range for this occupation?
2. What education, skills or training are required for an entry-level, or to advance in the career?
3. What other occupations related to this field, might you be interested in?
4. What are the current changes taking place in this industry? Is it growing? Is it becoming more or less technological? Is it becoming more or less worldwide?
5. What other sources of information are there to investigate concerning this career?

III. The third requirement is to TAKE THE STEPS TO ACHIEVE YOUR CAREER GOAL. Once you know who you are and where you want to go, you must take the steps to get there!

A. Take advantage of the educational resources available to you. These include high school courses, community college courses--, and intern and apprenticeship programs.

B. Depending upon your school schedule, get part-time work in the career area in which you are interested—whether paid or as a volunteer, it is and excellent way to, “get your foot in the door.”

C. Produce a portfolio!

1. Your portfolio presents a picture of what you have learned in school and what you have learned about the world of work. It will be useful to you as you apply for full-time or part-time work upon graduation from high school or college.
2. Prospective employers will be very interested, and impressed in looking at your portfolio as it gives them a good indication of your seriousness in reaching your career objective.
3. The portfolio will also assist you in completing applications for employment, college or financial aid.
4. Most importantly, however, it will help you develop a feeling of self-confidence as you assemble.

OHS Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty Expectations

Plagiarism is from the Latin word for "kidnapper." It is a term that refers to the stealing of words or ideas from someone else without giving credit to that person. This definition includes computer programs, drawings, artwork and all other types of work, which are not one's own. Types of plagiarism include word-for-word, mosaic (rearrangement or rewording), and indirect (paraphrasing). Examples of plagiarism may include, but *is not limited to*:

- Failing to cite with quotation marks the written words of another;
- Failing to credit the author and source of materials used in a composition;
- Failing to cite research materials in a bibliography or works cited;
- Failing to cite a person who is quoted;
- Failing to cite an author whose works are paraphrased or summarized;
- Presenting another person's creative work or ideas as one's own in essay's, poems, music, art, computer programs, or other projects;
- Copying or paraphrasing ideas from literary criticisms or study aids without documentation.

Academic dishonesty occurs when students obtain or assist others in obtaining credit for work which is not their own. Students are expected to conduct themselves to the highest standards of personal integrity. Students must adhere to the rules prohibiting academic dishonesty and to resist peer pressure to violate these high standards of integrity. Students are not expected to use dishonest methods to fulfill academic expectations and responsibilities. Whenever students have any questions about this procedure or any procedure, they should ask their teachers, counselors, or administrators.

- Forging signatures
- Doctoring forms (erasures, obliterations, additions, deletions etc)
- Altering grades
- Falsely obtaining credit for work

Disciplinary Action

Any student who has been found guilty of plagiarism and/or academic dishonesty during any aspect of the portfolio process will face very serious consequences which will adversely affect graduation status. Penalties may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Invalidation of Career Transition Portfolio
- Invalidation of that specific component of Career Transition Portfolio
- Parent conference
- Detention
- Social Suspension
- Dismissal from various school organizations or societies
- Suspension
- Loss of scholarships
- Legal proceedings

Any student who has missed a deadline during any aspect of the Senior Project or the Career Transition Portfolio may be subjected to the following actions:

- Indefinite and irrevocable social suspension if he or she has missed three (3) or more deadlines.
- Social Suspension and Suspension (indefinite)

OHS Portfolio Process

The OHS portfolio process will be monitored and implemented in all classes as follows:

The teachers will:

- Return student work in a timely manner,
- Assist students in the selection of a minimum of two (2) work samples.
- Assess the work samples utilizing the OHS Portfolio Rubric. All entries must receive a grade of distinguished or proficient and be submitted by:
 - January 10th 2014

***Note: A work sample that cannot be physically stored in a folder must be represented by a photograph.**

Career Transition Portfolio

During their senior year, students assemble a cumulative Career Transition Portfolio which demonstrates proficiency in English, math, science, civics and government, and art as well as social studies, technology and applied learning.

The Career Transition Portfolio is assembled in the Senior Business course. In September, students in the College Transition course will begin working on their cumulative portfolio. Student portfolios will be assembled throughout the year.

Requirements of the Career Transition Portfolio:

- Among the pieces of work, English, math, science, and government must be met, as well as social studies, technology and applied learning. (Duplication may occur.)
- There must be at least three (3) work samples from the following disciplines: English, math, science and social studies. There must be at least one (1) work sample from the following disciplines: fine arts, foreign language, and technology/business. Students are also encouraged to select the remaining work samples from college courses and/or co-curricular activities.
- A portfolio reflection which explains how the student's Career Transition Portfolio represents proficiency of the in English, math, science, civics and government, historical perspectives and art as well as national/state standards in technology and applied learning.

Introduction: Career Transition Portfolio

All Odem High School senior students, as part of their graduation requirements, are required to complete a **Career Transition Portfolio** and a **Senior Interview (if time permits)**.

The **Career Transition Portfolio** (or Graduation Portfolio) consists of the following relevant job-seeking materials in the following order:

Tab #1 Introduction

___ Letter of Introduction

Tab #2 Cover Letter, Resume, & References

___ Cover letter on professional paper

___ Resume on professional paper

___ List of References (*minimum of 3—only 2 from Odem*)

Tab #3 Transcripts

___ Most Current Copy of High School Transcript

___ Most Current Copy Del Mar Transcript

Tab #4 Recommendation Letters

___ Minimum of 3 Letters of Recommendation (*max 2 Odem and min 1 non-Odem*)

Tab #5 College Readiness

___ College Acceptance Letter

___ Financial Aid Verification/Package

___ Minimum of 2 Scholarship applications/awards

___ Test Scores (*SAT and/or ACT*)

Tab #6 Employability Information

___ Standard Work Application Form Example

___ Student Autobiography (*must be typed*)

Tab #7 Awards/Certificates, Extra-Curricular Activities, and Community Service

___ Certificates/awards earned during high school

___ Current Extra-Curricular Activities List

___ Community Service Log

Tab #8 Written Work

___ three samples of student writing, one of which is in student's handwriting (*edited, reviewed and approved by an English instructor*).

Tab #9 Best Works

___ Minimum of three examples of high quality work, showcasing a skill (*reviewed and approved by the content instructor*)

Tab #10 Reflection

___ Career Transition Portfolio Reflection

OHS Rubric for Portfolio Entry

Level of Performance	Expectations
<p>Distinguished</p> <p>(4)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Communication: Entry demonstrates evidence of a high level of organization using rich and insightful elaboration. Writing is intentionally organized with a progression of ideas. Consistent application of the rules of grammar, usage, and mechanics. ■ Thinking and Reasoning: Entry is comprehensive and demonstrates a high level of analysis, synthesis, and problem-solving. ■ Application: Entry demonstrates ,in application of theory and knowledge to practice as derived from readings and coursework, • Coherence: The rationale is clear, strong, and relevant to the expectations of the respective OHS department. ■ Self-Reflection. Reflective entry specifically explains the knowledge, perspective, or skill that has been gained through this assignment and its relevance to future applications.
<p>Proficient</p> <p>(3)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Communication, Entry demonstrates evidence of organization using relevant details. Writing is generally organized and coherent. May have some errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics. ■ Thinking and Reasoning: Entry demonstrates some level of analysis, synthesis, and problem-solving. ■ Application: Entry shows some application of theory and knowledge to practice as derived from readings and coursework, • Coherence: The rationale is clear, strong, and relevant to the expectations of the respective OHS department. ■ Self-Reflection: Reflective entry explains with a fair amount of clarity the knowledge, perspective, or skill that has been gained through [his assignment and its relevance to future applications.
<p>Emerging</p> <p>(2)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Communication: Entry demonstrates little organization with lapses in coherence. Many errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics that interfere with meaning. ■ Thinking and Reasoning: Entry demonstrates little evidence of analysis, synthesis, and problem-solving. • Application: Entry demonstrates little application of theory and knowledge to practice as derived from readings and coursework. ■ Coherence: The rationale is clear, strong, and relevant to the expectations of the respective OHS department. • Self-Reflection: Reflective entry explains and partially describes the knowledge, perspective, or skill that has been gained through this assignment.
<p>Unacceptable</p> <p>(1)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entry demonstrates the above characteristics to a minor degree or not at all.

Assessment of the Content of your Career Transition Portfolio

- All Career Transition Portfolios are assessed by the senior faculty during common planning time, which is a time designated for interdisciplinary teacher collaboration.
- Faculty members assess each portfolio using the school-wide OHS Portfolio Scoring Rubric. Students whose Career Transition Portfolio is scored as distinguished or proficient fulfill the Career Transition Portfolio requirement.
- Career Transition Portfolios that are scored as emerging or unacceptable during the scheduled common planning time will be re-assessed, and students will be provided with feedback by the teachers with specific details on how to make the necessary changes so that their Career Transition Portfolio will be deemed proficient.
- Career Transition Portfolios will also be reviewed during Senior Project Day by the panels of school and/or community judges.

Transfer Students

The following guidelines shall apply to students who transfer into Odem High School:

- Students entering prior to the start of their junior year must complete all requirements as detailed in this policy.
- If the student has work samples from other schools, then all entries will be transferred to the OHS portfolio.
- Individual situations not addressed by this policy will be handled on a case-by-case basis through the OHS Advisors.

Your career portfolio will be organized in a three-ring binder and will function as a ready reference and method of structuring and organizing elements of a professional job-seeking strategy. This will enable you to compete more effectively in today's highly competitive job market. As you build, modify and update the contents of your portfolio, you will better appreciate and understand your accomplishments in high school. By studying your portfolio before your Senior Interview, and before subsequent job interviews you may have after high school, you will gain confidence in, and be better aware of, your capabilities and the contributions you can make to a future employer.

A Portfolio Evaluation Committee consisting of Odem Faculty and Staff will evaluate your portfolio based on the completion and content of all portfolio requirements. Your portfolio will be evaluated until all have been returned. Please note, that even though you might pass the evaluation, **all errors found in the portfolio must be corrected before the Senior Interview Committee looks it over during your interview.**

Passing Score

You must achieve a minimum score of 70% to successfully complete the portfolio portion and to be allowed to participate in the Senior Interview.

If you do not meet this standard, you will be asked to resubmit your portfolio until you meet all the necessary requirements. The 70% standard for successfully completing the portfolio will be increased by 10% for each subsequent resubmission to the Portfolio Evaluation Committee (70-80-90, etc.). **Your portfolio is not just a high school assignment!** It is designed to be used for many years after graduating from OHS. You will be able to modify its format to fit a specific industry or job. You will be able to delete sections or add others where appropriate. When done correctly, it can be an excellent tool for future job applications and interviews, as well as for college scholarship applications and interviews.

You will be required to participate in a **Senior Interview (if time is permitted)**. This 10 to 20 minute interview will be conducted by a three-member interview team may consist of OHS personnel and volunteer representatives from local businesses and professional community during a scheduled appointment time.

Your interview evaluation will be based on knowledge of and familiarity with the contents of your portfolio, interview listening and answering skills and non-verbal criteria such as posture, gestures, appropriate dress and neatness.

The schedule of interviews will be posted on Mrs. Martinez's door (Room 1). Interview assignments will be decided at random. An interview assignment is not subject to change, but if you are participating in another school activity or college class, the interview will be scheduled around that event. It will not, however, be scheduled around anything else. If you need to make a change, you will be required to find another student to trade with. Then, both students can request the change from Mrs. Martinez in Room 1 during office hours. All OHS teachers and staff are aware of the Career Transition Portfolio and Job Preparedness Program and are eager for your success. There will be no academic excuse for missing a deadline or an appointment.

Passing Score

After your interview session is over, each member of the committee will evaluate your performance using a special score sheet (See Senior Interview Evaluation Score Sheet). You must achieve a minimum score of 70% to successfully complete the Senior Interview portion of the Program.

If you are not successful in your interview, if you are late or if you fail to attend your interview appointment, you will be required to reschedule your appointment. Unless there is an opening, these rescheduled appointments will be made at the end of the interview calendar after everyone else has had a chance to attend their appointments. The 70% standard for successfully completing the interview will be increased by 10% for each subsequent interview appointment. This policy is intended to discourage students from intentionally missing an interview.

Summary

All the entry-level skills required by the Career Transition Portfolio and College/Career Readiness are integrated into the various academic areas at Odem High School and taught as part of the curriculum. The staff at OHS is keenly interested in ensuring that their graduates are prepared for post-secondary realities. Whether as a high school graduate entering the workforce, a college student seeking part-time employment or valuable work experience in their chosen career, or as an applicant seeking to compete for various scholarships or grant programs, a OHS graduate will be ready to face the world with confidence.

CAREER TRANSITION PORTFOLIO PLANNER AND CHECKLIST

Portfolio Due Date: / /

#	Portfolio Component	Target Date
1.	Introduction (1 item) A personal and informative letter introducing your portfolio to the interview committee describing your best work and what the portfolio means to you.	
2.	Cover Letter, Resume, & References (3 items) Cover letter and resume on professional paper. Separate list of references.	
3.	Transcripts (2 items) Unofficial copy of Odem and Del Mar transcripts	
4.	Recommendation Letters (3 items) 2 max from OHS faculty/staff and 1 min from non-OHS faculty/staff. <i>No family and/or friends.</i>	
5.	College Readiness (5 items) Include at least one letter of acceptance to a college/university. Provide evidence of completion of your FAFSA. Provide evidence of two completed scholarship applications or awards. Provide your SAT/ACT scores.	
6.	Employability Information (3 items) Interview guidelines (provided in class). Sample job application in your own handwriting. The student autobiography must answer: "Tell me a little about yourself". <i>A minimum of 300 words, but no more than 400 typed.</i>	
7.	Awards/Certificates, Extra-Curricular Activities, and Community Service (minimum of 2 items) Copies of all certificates and awards you earned during high school. A chronological list of extra-curricular activities and community service with dates.	
8.	Written Work (3 items) Include three samples of your writing—one of which must be handwritten (<i>edited, reviewed and approved by an English instructor</i>).	
9.	Best Works (Minimum of 6 items) Include one or two examples from each of the following academic areas: math, science, social studies and fine art/foreign language. You may also include works from other classes such as drafting, drama, etc.	
10.	Reflection (1 item) See requirements	

A GUIDE TO SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF THE CAREER TRANSITION PORTFOLIO

Your personal portfolio will be the most valuable job-seeking tool you will ever have. By using your portfolio, you will be better prepared than most applicants. Employers are looking for employees who are experienced, organized and who project a positive attitude! Barring experience, which you can only gain by working, the Career Transition Portfolio can give you an edge. Filled with information and data important to an employer or college administrator, the portfolio will make you feel more confident and in control when applying for a job, to a college or being interviewed. Because of it there will be few answers you cannot give to a perspective employer.

To get a passing score, **your portfolio must be error free before it is evaluated and before your interview.** This is extremely important. Everything included in your portfolio, except for the handwritten job, college and financial aid applications, must be formatted and printed from a computer. Be sure to use appropriate wording and correct sentence structure, grammar and spelling. Although you may have completed a component as part of an earlier school activity (e.g. a resumé), it may be necessary for you to revise it before including it in the portfolio.

There are ten main components of the Career Transition Portfolio. Before you turn in your portfolio for evaluation, ask fellow students, teachers, or family members to go over it with you, looking for errors and to make suggestions for improvement. ALL OHS TEACHERS are available for this review.

- 1) **Introduction.** This personal and informative letter introduces the portfolio to the evaluator and interviewer and is addressed to the Interview Committee. It describes your best work and how the portfolio components relate to your career goals. It reflects what the portfolio means to you and what you have achieved by completing the project. All letters included in the portfolio should be formatted using the appropriate guidelines and be composed on a computer.
- 2) **Cover Letter.** A concise, well-written cover letter should always accompany your resume. Include a cover letter when applying for an **ENTRY-LEVEL JOB** that might be available in the career area you are interested in. Apply and write a cover letter for an entry-level job available to you, e.g. clerk, office assistant, receptionist, medical clerk, hospital orderly, tutor, Explorer, etc.

Resume. Include work experience (whether or not it is paid), education (especially skills classes such as computers, accounting, drafting, art, etc), school activities/honors, special skills that will show a diversity of experience associated with the particular job, and references listed as "Available upon request." Keep it clean and neat. **References** are to be included on a separate sheet.
- 3) **Transcripts.** Include an unofficial copy of your Odem High School and Del Mar College transcripts(if applicable). **Please request these at least two weeks in advance of the due date.**
- 4) **Recommendation Letters.** At least three letters from persons who know your character, e.g. minister, businessperson, community leader, and educator are to be included in your portfolio. The person who writes the letter must include a telephone number where he/she can be contacted. Up to two letters may be from Odem High School faculty/staff. **Friends or family members are not acceptable as references. Fraudulent letters will result in the student's failure of the portfolio program. NOTE: These letters must correspond to references you have listed on your job application in section 6.**
- 5) **College Readiness.** Include at least one letter of acceptance to a college/university. You must provide evidence of completion of your FAFSA. This could include a screen shot or confirmation of completion email, etc. You must also provide evidence of two completed scholarship applications or awards. The scholarships must require some sort of essay. Lastly, please provide your SAT/ACT scores.

- 6) **Employability Information.** Complete a sample job application in your own handwriting (employers will want to see a sample of your handwriting –be neat!) **NOTE: the references called for in your job application must be the same as the letters of recommendation that you provide in section 4, “Recommendation Letters”.** The student autobiography must answer: “Tell me a little about yourself.” *A minimum of 300 words, but no more than 400 typed.*
- 7) **Awards/Certificates and Extra-Curricular Awards.** In this section, you will provide copies of all certificates and awards you earned during high school. You shall also provide a chronological list of extra-curricular activities and community service with dates. If you received a medal or trophy, provide a picture of the award with a brief description of why you received the award. After you graduate, include your high school diploma and associates degree.
- 8) **Written Work.** Include three samples of your writing—one of which must be handwritten (*edited, reviewed and approved by an English instructor*). This can be a short essay, poem, short story, etc.
- 9) **Best Works.** Include **one or two examples** from each of the following academic areas: math, science, social studies and fine art/foreign language. You may also include works from other classes such as drafting, drama, etc. Large projects (e.g. painting, science projects) should be photographed. Add typed explanations or descriptions where appropriate—especially for pictures and photos. Using drawings, pictures, graphs, descriptions and materials to supplement the Best Works component is strongly encouraged.
- 10) **Reflection.** See requirements

Creating your Personal Portfolio is not a lot of work--mostly it involves simply assembling materials and organizing the various components. Just remember this very important advice: ***Make sure that all components are neat, grammatically correct and error free so as to show the careful effort you have put into the project.***

On the following page is a Career Transition Portfolio Planner and Checklist. Students need to complete the described components of the portfolio prior to the assigned portfolio due date and Senior Interview. **The completed portfolio will then be turned into Mrs. Martinez during the scheduled due dates, unless announced otherwise.** It is suggested that you work out a timetable for completing the portfolio.

Career Transition Portfolio Reflection

Purpose: As a culminating component to the Career Transition Portfolio, all students will write a reflection addressing certain questions and/or statements about their academic experiences.

This reflection will explain how the student's Career Transition Portfolio represents academic growth and proficiency of Odem High School's Graduation Expectations.

Requirements:

- Paragraph 1: Explain how you have grown as a life-long learner through the portfolio process. Cite an earlier work sample and a recent work sample and describe your academic growth.
- Paragraphs 2: Describe the skills you have acquired throughout your high school (Body) experience. Explain how these skills will be used for future success.
- Paragraph 3: What have you learned about yourself as a result of your learning (Body) experiences? (obstacles overcome, challenges faced, successes achieved and goals realized)
- Paragraph 4: Choose a work sample of which you are most proud. This work (Body) sample should emphasize achievement of academic excellence during your time at Odem High School.
- Paragraph 5: Reflect upon how well your high school experiences have prepared (Conc.) you for life after graduation. Support your statement.

Guidelines:

The following guidelines must be met to receive either a distinguished and/or proficient:

- 5 separate paragraphs explaining the above criteria
- MLA format
- Must be TYPED
- The reflection is the last document in the Career Transition Portfolio accompanied by a graded rubric from the senior English teacher

OHS Career Transition Portfolio Reflection Rubric

Student: _____

Teacher: _____

	Distinguished (4)	Proficient (3)	Emerging (2)	Unacceptable (1)
Introduction	Introduction is well developed and clear throughout; criteria for paragraph one is exemplary	Introduction is effective and clear throughout; all criteria for paragraph one has been met	Introduction is attempted; criteria for paragraph one has partially been met	Introduction is not evident; criteria for paragraph one has not been met
Body	Organized for dynamic effect; exceptional use of language to support purpose throughout; criteria for body paragraphs is exemplary	Organized for effect; adequate use of language to support purpose throughout; all criteria for body paragraphs has been met	Somewhat organized for effect; inadequate use of language to somewhat support purpose; criteria for body paragraphs has partially been met	Little or no organization; minimal support of purpose; criteria for body paragraphs has not been met
Conclusion	Eloquently explains preparation for life after graduation; leaving a lasting impression	Explains preparation for life after graduation; leaving a lasting impression	Inadequately explains preparation for life after graduation; no lasting impression	Does not explain preparation for life after graduation; no lasting impression
Writing Conventions	Excellent use and consistent application of the rules of grammar, usage and mechanics; superior command of sentence structure	Some errors in application of grammar, usage, and mechanics; limited command of sentence structure	Major problems and errors in the application of grammar, usage, and mechanics; weak command of sentence structure	Poor use of and errors in application of grammar, usage, and mechanics; no command of sentence structure
Format	Accurate use of MLA format; 5 separate paragraphs	Minor problems in application of MLA format; 5 separate paragraphs	Incorrect MLA format; 5 or less separate paragraphs	Incorrect MLA format less than 5 paragraphs
Reflection	Rich and insightful elaboration that shares thoughts, observations, and impressions of high school experience	Relevant elaboration that shares thoughts, observations, and impressions of high school experience	Elaboration somewhat shares thoughts, observations, and impressions of high school experience	Irrelevant elaboration that does not share thoughts, observations, and impressions of high school experience

TOTAL SCORE _____

SENIOR INTERVIEW EVALUATION FORM

1. Tell us a little about yourself.

Below Expectations 0, 1, 2, 3 Adequately answered question	Meets Expectations 4, 5, 6, 7 Effectively communicated with minimal examples	Exceeds Expectations 8, 9, 10 Very effectively communicated with elaborate examples
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2. What are your favorite aspects of your portfolio?

Below Expectations 0, 1, 2, 3 Adequately described	Meets Expectations 4, 5, 6, 7 Effectively described with minimal detail/examples	Exceeds Expectations 8, 9, 10 Very effectively described with elaborate examples
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3. What was your most rewarding experience during high school?

Below Expectations 0, 1, 2, 3 Adequately discussed experience	Meets Expectations 4, 5, 6, 7 Effectively discussed with minimal examples	Exceeds Expectations 8, 9, 10 Very effectively discussed with elaborate examples
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4. If you could give one piece of advice to next year's seniors, what would that be?

Below Expectations 0, 1, 2, 3 Adequately explained	Meets Expectations 4, 5, 6, 7 Effectively explained with minimal examples	Exceeds Expectations 8, 9, 10 Very effectively explained with elaborate examples
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5. Interviewers overall impression of the interviewee, i.e. familiarity with the content of the portfolio, interview listening and answering skills, and non-verbal criteria (posture, gestures, eye contact, dress and grooming).

Below Expectations 0, 1, 2, 3 Adequately demonstrated important aspects	Meets Expectations 4, 5, 6, 7 Effectively demonstrated important aspects with minimal examples	Exceeds Expectations 8, 9, 10 Very effectively demonstrated important aspects with elaborate examples
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TOTAL SCORE OUT OF 50: _____

EVALUATION RUBRIC

Level of Evaluation

Interpretation Level

Exceeds Expectations
8, 9, 10

Student demonstrated the ability to exemplify professionalism and effectively communicated their response; greatly exceeds minimal business standards; supported response with 2 or more examples; ***must hire this student.***

Meets Expectations
4, 5, 6, 7

Student demonstrated the ability to communicate their response in an acceptable and effective manner; meets at least minimal business standards; supported response with 1 example; ***student is hireable.***

Below Expectations
0, 1, 2, 3

Student demonstrated the ability to communicate with little or no effectiveness; generally fell below minimal business standards; provided no supporting information for the response; ***student is NOT hireable.***

A GUIDE TO SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF YOUR SENIOR INTERVIEW

Normally a job interview is a discussion between a job applicant and an interviewer regarding employment with a company. In the case of your Senior Interview, however, you will be meeting with a three-member interview committee. The purpose of the Senior Interview is to present your portfolio, discuss your experience at Odem High School and your post-graduation plans.

As in any job interview, preparation is the key quality needed for Senior Interview success. Many job applicants enter interviews only vaguely aware of what they should expect and what they are doing. This guide will give you a clear understanding of what to do before, during and after both your Senior Interview and a job interview.

The Senior Interview

The Senior Interview will loosely follow the stages of a real job interview, but because it is not for the purpose of gaining a job per se, most of the questions will center on you, your experiences at school and your plans for the future rather than your qualification for a particular job.

Typical Senior Interview Process:

1. Arrive 15 to 20 minutes before your appointment.
2. You will sign you in. Sit and relax.
3. The Greeter will take your portfolio in to the Interview Committee.
4. When they are ready they will call you in. The Greeter will escort you in and introduce you to the committee.
5. After shaking hands and making eye contact with all the Interviewers, you will sit down and exchange pleasantries or small talk with the purpose of putting you at ease.
6. Interviewers will remind you of why you are being interviewed.
7. Questions from the interview committee will be asked about you and your plans after graduation from OHS.
8. Questions from the interview committee will also be asked about your portfolio.
9. Be sure to study your portfolio and be familiar with everything that you have included. Be prepared to answer questions about it.
10. Closing remarks by the interviewer and a chance for you to ask the interviewer a question or two.

Preparing for the Interview:

1. **Anticipate** some of the questions you are likely to be asked and be prepared to answer them. Refer to the list of possible Senior Interview Questions. It is important to practice what you would say in the interview. However, you should respond sincerely and not memorize the same answers as your friends.
2. **Dress for success.** As in a job interview, personal appearance will be important in the Senior Interview as well—it is the first impression made during the interview. Dress in nice, clean clothes. Do NOT wear school clothes or the clothes you might wear on a date. While you may feel that these clothes look sharp, they are not appropriate for a formal interview. Dress conservatively. **Ladies**, a business outfit or knee-length skirt and dressy blouse (a jacket looks nice but is optional), closed toed shoes are best. **NO** sandals, low cut blouses, bare midriffs and high cut dresses with flip-flops. Such are completely inappropriate and may earn you a failing score. **Gentlemen**, shirt and tie and slacks are appropriate. Baggy pants, which hang off the hips and/or untied thick-tongued Vans are not appropriate. Athletic shoes are not appropriate for men or women. Shoes with dark socks are perfect for men.
3. **Bring your Portfolio**, but be sure to **remove all score sheets and materials with correction marks on them.** Your portfolio will be looked over by the committee before you begin your interview; it will make your first impression for you, so make sure it is clean and mistake free.

During the Interview:

1. Following the guidelines for The Job Interview below will be helpful, however, due to the unique nature of the Senior Interview, not all the guidelines may apply.

2. Approach the interview with the thought that the interview committee is trying to determine how seriously you approached the portfolio project. The better your portfolio, the easier the interview will be for you!
3. Remember the Interview Committee does not want to make the interview difficult or stressful for you. They want the interview to be a positive learning experience for you.
4. The length of your interview will be scheduled for 15-20 minutes. The committee will study your portfolio for a the first five minutes, then invite you into the interview room, spending about 10-20 minutes actually interviewing you and about 3-5 minutes completing the **Evaluation Form**; a copy of this form is included in the appendix. This evaluation will be included in the portfolio when it is returned to you the next day. If you wish, you may wait for the Greeter to usher in the next interviewee and pick up your portfolio.

After the Interview:

1. Passing score of 70% (a C- by most standards) is required.
2. If for any reason you did not pass, the Evaluation Form will indicate which area needs to be addressed.
3. Another appointment will be scheduled for you.
4. Passing scores will be raised by 10% each time the interview must be repeated. Thus, just like portfolio scores, a second interview must be passed with an 80%, a third 90%, etc.
5. If you passed you are now finished with the Career Transition Portfolio and Career Preparation Program. Congratulations!

February 1, 2011

The Senior Interview Committee of the
OHS Senior Portfolio
Odem Edroy ISD
1 Owl Square
Odem, TX 78370

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am proud to present my Career Transition Portfolio for your review. I recall when I was a freshman thinking that I could not wait to be a senior. I thought I would be at the top of the heap and my senior year would be fun and stress-free. How naïve I was. The only heap I am on top of is a mountain of deadlines, class requirements, car payments, affording my senior trip, paying for graduation and, of course completing my Career Transition Portfolio and getting through my interview.

I have learned a lot at OHS. I would like to call your attention to my work in art and my Creative Art classes in particular. I am proud of my creativity, particularly in ceramics, and hope one day to market my own stoneware. My experience at Reed's Supermarket has been of great value as I plan to pursue a business degree at University of Texas after completing my general education at Odem High School.

Without the portfolio and interview requirements, I may not have realized how far I have come in my four short years of high school. In compiling examples of my best work and reviewing my experiences, I see more clearly my academic past and am eager to face my future. I believe I have learned valuable skills at OHS, which will further my hopes and dreams. The portfolio and interview experience is an important step along that path.

Thank you for your willing participation in this program and your interest in young people. Such effort is never wasted and who knows, you may one day be eating dinner or drinking morning coffee from my stoneware and say, "I knew her when."

Sincerely,

Samantha Senior
1234 Owl Perch
Odem, TX 78370

Enclosure

January 10, 2010

Miss Victoria Spears
Personnel Manager
Kaiser Permanente
1234 Opportunity Dr.
Corpus Christi, TX 78952

Dear Miss Spears:

I recently saw an ad on the internet that your company is hiring for an available file clerk position in the pharmacy department at your Modesto hospital. In order to apply for this position, I have included a job application and my resume with this letter.

I have excellent math skills and I am bilingual, speaking both English and Spanish. I work well with other people and I am friendly and outgoing. I have taken both introductory and advanced computer applications at Odem High School. I am proficient at using Microsoft Office 2007 including Word, PowerPoint and Excel. My career plan is to become a pharmacist so I hope to work in a pharmacy to gain experience.

Last summer, I worked as a sales clerk at Rite Aid Pharmacy in Newman. This experience helped me to develop important skills in responsibility and decision making. Also, as a teaching assistant at Odem High School, I had the responsibility of assisting other students with class work and helping the teacher with grading papers.

As a first year student at Del Mar College, I will be available to work evenings and weekends. I am available to start work immediately. The best way to contact me is by phone (361) 000-0000 anytime after 3:00 pm. I look forward to hearing from you and thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Student name
Home street address
Odem, Texas 78370

Enclosures

January 10, 2010

Ms. Vera Miles
Manager
Keller's Gifts in McHenry Village
1700 McHenry Avenue
Corpus Christi, TX 78423

Dear Ms. Miles:

I learned from one of your employees, Ms. Raine Stoddard that you plan to hire part-time help at Keller's in a few weeks. I would like to apply for the position.

Over the past two years, I have taken beginning and advanced accounting and advanced computer applications at Odem High School. In addition to these classes I am very interested in art, particularly in ceramics and tableware, which I believe would be an asset to your business. I have worked at Jackie's Keepsakes and Gallery in Newman as a general employee through my school's Regional Occupational Program. As a first-year business student at Del Mar College this fall, I will be able to work late afternoons, evenings, and weekends.

I have enclosed my resume that provides additional details about my background and education. I am available for employment immediately.

May I have an appointment to discuss the job with you? I can be reached after 4:00 p.m. at (361) 862-2916. I would greatly appreciate being considered for the job.

Sincerely,

Imma Senior
Home Address
Odem, Texas 78370

Enclosure

Bevo Longhorn
123 University Station
Austin, Texas 78713
Longhorn4Life@email.com
UT EID: HOOKEM

EDUCATION

8/23/06-5/30/09

Longhorn Central High School

Austin, Texas

WORK EXPERIENCE

2/01/07-5/15/08

McBevo's (Austin, Texas)

Cashier

3 hrs/week

- Took customer orders and prepared feed bags for drive-thru
- Managed day-shift herd and prepared weekly schedules

6/11/08-8/01/09

Angus, Holstein and Angus, L.L.P. (Dallas, Texas)

Intern

15 hrs/week

- Assisted with preparation of civil rights motions related to the banning of cattle branding and sheep shearing practices

ACTIVITIES

10th-12th

(Includes extracurricular, community, religious and volunteer activities)

Longhorn Central High School Student Council

Member (10th-11th), Lead Horn (12th—Elected)

3 hrs/week

- Organized special movement of Longhorns to tutor horses, 36 weeks/year goats and sheep
- Represented the elder cattle in a "Eat More Chicken" leadership consortium

9th-12th

Longhorn Football Team

Water Bearer (9th-11th), Senior Water Bearer (12th—Elected)

10 hrs/week

- Provided crystal clear water for fellow steers

18 weeks/year

10th-12th

Save Our Skins Foundation

Member

1 hr/week

- Organized an anti-skinning rally involving 250 cows
- Picketed a local leather manufacturer for 24 hours

12 weeks/year

HONORS & AWARDS

9th

Texas' Shiniest Horns Award

- Selected from more than 850 longhorns in Central Texas

10th

All-District Horse Shoe Pitching Team

12th

Eagle Scout

SKILLS, TALENTS & ACHIEVEMENTS

Languages

- Fluent in mooing, huffing and stomping

Musical Instruments

- Played various horns since 3rd grade

Communication Skills

- Extensive experience mooing to large herds

REFERENCES

Available upon request

January 31, 2011

Miss Victoria Spears
Personnel Manager
Kaiser Permanente
1950 Franklin Street, 15th Floor
Corpus Christi, TX 78423

Dear Miss Spears:

I want to thank you for taking the time to interview me for the open position of a file clerk in the pharmacy department at the Modesto hospital. I appreciate your consideration of me for the job.

After speaking with you about the job's duties, I believe that my skills, talents and capabilities are a good match for the position's requirements. Since the job involves computers, I would do well since I have excellent computer skills. I have experience from working at Rite Aid Pharmacy in Newman and I am bilingual, speaking both English and Spanish.

I am very interested in working at Kaiser and look forward to hearing from you once your decision is made. Please feel free to contact me anytime if further information is needed. My cell phone number is (209) 000-0000. Thank you again for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Student name
Home street address
Odem, Texas 78370

January 10, 2011

Ms. Vera Miles, Manager
Keller's Gifts in McHenry Village
1700 McHenry Avenue
Corpus Christi, TX 78423

Dear Ms. Miles:

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to interview for the position of a part-time sales clerk in your store. The interview was interesting as well as informative. I particularly enjoyed the tour of the store and the bridal area with its vast collection of flatware and china.

I believe my education, training, enthusiasm and willingness to learn would be beneficial to Keller's, particularly during the holiday season just around the corner. I am available to work weekends and evenings and I can start immediately.

I believe this position would provide both a career opportunity and important experience for me in my chosen field. If hired, I will work hard and do my best to be a most dependable employee.

Sincerely,

Samantha Senior
Home Address
Odem, Texas 78370

The Job Interview

The job interview is a structured exchange of information between people for a specific purpose. The purpose of the employment interview is for you to get a job and for the employer to hire the best possible person to fill that job opening. The employer is interested in how your education, skills and work experience relate to the job. It is up to you to show the employer that you are the right person for the job!

The process of a typical job interview usually contains the following five stages:

1. Introduction of interviewers, exchange of pleasantries and small talk with the purpose of putting you at ease.
2. Introduction of the job—what the job is about.
3. Questions from the interview committee about you and your qualifications—your background, work experience, education, skills, extra-curricular activities, etc.
4. Questions from you about the job, company, etc. These questions should show that you have knowledge of the business or industry and the position for which you are applying.
5. Closing remarks by the interviewer, information on when the decision will be made.

Preparing for an Interview:

1. If possible, know the name and title of the person (or persons) who will interview you.
2. Research the industry, business, and/or job. This will help you relate your previous work experience, education, and/or skills to the job for which you are applying. Refer to the **Research Worksheet** on page 33. Use it to help you research potential employers.
3. Anticipate some of the questions you are likely to be asked, and be prepared to answer them. Know the general salary range for the type of job for which you are applying. Try to research the job well enough so that you have an idea of what the salary might be. This way, you will be prepared if the interviewer asks how much you are willing to be paid for the job.
4. Bring your portfolio and a pen and notebook in case you need to write down pertinent information.

During the Interview:

1. Approach each interview with one thought in mind----“I want to work here!”
2. Personal appearance and good grooming are very important. Do not overdress or under dress for the position for which you are applying. Dress neatly, wearing clothing similar to that worn by other workers in that career field (something you should find out when you do your research on the industry or company).
3. Get a good night’s sleep before the interview. You need to look fresh and rested.
4. Be on time, or better yet, be a little early.
5. Go alone.
6. Tell the receptionist your name, the name of the interviewer and the time of your appointment. (“Hello, my name is Sammy Smith. I have a three o’clock appointment with Mr. Smith.”) Be polite to the receptionist! An interviewer will often ask for his/her opinion of a candidate.
7. While waiting in the outer office, behave in a business-like manner.
8. Give the interviewer(s) a firm handshake. Look them in the eye. Stand until invited to sit, and stand or sit up straight. Your enthusiasm for the job should show.
9. Leave your personal belongings (purse, briefcase, etc.) on the floor or in your lap—not on the interviewer’s desk.
10. Listen carefully and pay close attention to every word. Concentrate to find out if this is the job and company for you. Your attention shows courtesy and respect for the interviewer, the position and the company.
11. Be sincere, honest and forthright in answering questions, but be brief.
12. Do not chew gum!
13. While you are watching the interviewer, he or she is also watching you. Be aware of these non-verbal irritants: slouching in the chair, playing with your eyeglasses or purse, tapping your feet, nervous laughing or failing to make eye contact.

14. Be positive and truthful in all your replies, especially regarding experience. Tell the interviewer whatever you can that will help you to toward your objective-a job offer!
15. Demonstrate your willingness and eagerness to join the team.
16. Identify your positive points, be proud of your accomplishments, but do not brag.
17. Relate you're past experience (paid or volunteer) to the job for which you are applying.
18. Listen, express interest, and ask questions.
19. Let the interviewer bring up salary.
20. If you can do the job and want it, say so, ask for the opportunity.
21. Leave your troubles at home. Employers are not interested in your personal or family problems. They are interested in you as a prospective employee.
22. At the end of the interview, reiterate your interest in the job. If a decision cannot be made at the end of the interview, ask when it would be convenient for you to call about the hiring decision. Thank the interviewer for his/her time ("I'm happy to have met you. Thank you for your time.") Shake hands, make sure you have all of your personal belongings, and leave with confidence.

After the Interview:

1. After the interview, following up with a thank you letter could be the difference on whether or not you get the job. You may change the employer's impression with a well thought out note or letter. Timeliness is critical. Get your letter in the mail the next day.
2. Your note or letter should not only thank the interviewer for the opportunity to interview for the job, but you should also express your interest in the job.
3. Enthusiasm can buy you a big advantage in today's competitive world of job hunting. Your follow-up note or letter does not need to be long, but it is important to mention something meaningful from the interview.

Frequently Asked Job Interview Questions

Frequently asked interview questions are listed below. These questions are designed to give employers insight into your skills, abilities, and attitudes. Review these questions and give each question serious thought. Come up with an honest and complete answer so you can better sell yourself at the interview.

1. Tell something about yourself.
2. What type of position are you most interested in?
3. Do you prefer working with others or by yourself?
4. What qualifications do you have for the position?
5. Why should we hire you?
6. What do you know about our company?
7. What do you see yourself doing three to five years from now?
8. What are your plans for the future?
9. How long would you expect to work here?
10. What jobs have you held and why did you leave them?
11. Briefly describe your duties at your current or last job?
12. What did you like/dislike about your last job or school?
13. Why are you leaving your current job?
14. What accomplishments have given you the greatest satisfaction?
15. What have you learned from your mistakes?
16. What is your greatest weakness?
17. If a conflict came up between you and some of your co-workers, how would you handle it?
18. What rewards, other than money, motivate you to work hard?
19. Would you be willing to go where the company sends you?
20. Would you be willing to working overtime, weekends and evenings?
21. What do you like to do best in your spare time?
22. Why did you choose the career for which you are preparing?
23. Discuss your high school attendance record.
24. How did you find out about this job?
25. Do you work well in a group?

Some Reasons Why People Don't Get Hired

The following are job mistakes that you should avoid. A big part of interview success is being careful not to commit obvious errors. Avoid these mistakes and you are far more likely to find yourself in the finals for that perfect job.

1. **Arriving late for the interview.** Nothing makes a worse impression. If you cannot get to the interview on time, what would you do as an employee? Leave early enough to compensate for any potential problem: flat tire, getting lost, running out of gas, etc.
2. **Poor personal appearance or improper dress.** You never get a second chance to create a good first impression. How you look to others has a lot to do with how you are perceived as a person. In most cases, the decision to consider you as a serious applicant is made in the very first few minutes of the interview-before you even get a chance to sell yourself.
3. **Smoking.** In a recent university study, up to 90 percent of all executives surveyed said they would hire a nonsmoker over a smoker if their qualifications were equal.
4. **Bringing along a friend or relative to the interview.** Resist the urge to bring someone along to "hold your hand" or complete the application. This can make you look as if you did not have the confidence to get there on your own.
5. **Chewing gum.** Gum is totally inappropriate in an interview.
6. **Not doing your homework.** Knowing about the company to which you are applying is extremely important. You should investigate and research the company's products or services. This shows a sincere interest in your desire to work for the company.
7. **Admitting a flaw.** Some interviewers will ask, "What are your weaknesses?" Giving a straightforward, totally honest answer is a mistake. Answer the question by stating a "positive weakness." For example, "I sometimes get so involved in a project that I forget to schedule personal time to 'recharge the batteries.'"
8. **Not knowing your strengths.** You must know your own background so completely that you are prepared to answer any question about it without hesitation and in enough detail to satisfy the interviewer.
9. **Asking too many questions.** If you were the interviewer, would you hire someone who dominated the entire interview and put you on the defensive?
10. **Not asking any questions.** Not asking any questions makes you look uninterested, unimaginative or both.
11. **Inquiring about benefits too soon.** Ask not what your company can do for you but what you can do for the company. If you seem more interested in the three-week vacation policy or the new dental plan than in actual job duties, the prospective boss may develop serious concerns about your priorities.
12. **Excessive interest in money.** Let people discover how wonderful you are before you tell them how much you cost. Showing more concern for the amount of money you will make than interest for the job will send negative vibes to the prospective.

13. **Crying discrimination.** Quite often, not everyone involved in the hiring process knows exactly which questions are not allowed and, in complete innocence, bring up a forbidden issue. Do not jump up and scream accusations. Even if the intentions are not honorable, a dramatic protest is unlikely to get you the job.
14. **Bad-mouthing your old boss.** Never, never, never say anything negative about a person or company you worked for in the past. It brands you a complainer someone who can't get along with their supervisors.

What Do Employers Want?

1. **Enthusiasm.** We love a new spark of energy in the work environment.
2. **Fresh ideas.** Smart employers welcome other viewpoints because they know their perspective is not the only valid one.
3. **Initiative.** Most new graduates (high school or college) have not been scarred by employers' unfulfilled promises or the personal burdens of broken dreams and family overhead. Companies appreciate your willingness to give a job your full attention.
4. **Mobility.** Young people often are geographically flexible.
5. **Hard work.** People new to a field usually are willing to put in long hours. Understand, though, that most of this overtime is a factor of the teaming process. Employers have little tolerance for inexperienced staffers who watch the clock, track their hours, and gripe about low pay. We are paying new recruits to work so we love nothing more than when they toil to solve a business problem by applying their ideas and analytical skills to a situation. This will win you a job, raise or promotion faster than anything.
6. **Technical skills.** You should be fluent in the latest technology. Also, most employers appreciate computer literacy—even basic computer skills are a plus.
7. **Knowledge of industry jargon.** Whether you want to be an engineer or an advertising account executive, get to know the lingo used by professionals in the field. Buy a handbook or talk to experts to get a crash course in the language.
8. **Empathy.** Please understand that the employer has been running his or her business for a long time. Decisions often are based on history or habit, and certain rules and practices may not make sense—especially at first. Rather than complain, it is better to live within the rules until you have gotten the lay of the land politically. Then offer suggestions on how to improve the situation.
9. **Organizational skills.** Employers hate sloppy people. If your desk is a mess, chances are your thoughts are too.

“What Do Employers Want?” *The Wall Street Journal Classroom Edition*, February, 1995, p.10

Pre-Interview Employer/Company Research Worksheet

Research is the key to taking control of your job search. Being prepared for any interview means that you will do some homework before you arrive. Your research will show the employer initiative and organization, and you will feel more confident about your ability to respond to questions. Consider using additional paper to record your findings

Type of Organization:

Job Type:

Company Name:

Address and Telephone:

Directions and Parking:

Duties of the Job:

Salary and Benefits:

Union Affiliation Yes/No and Type:

Training Programs:

Dress Code:

Products/Services:

Targeted Customers:

Major Competitors:

Year Established:

Number of Employees:

Other Information:

Interviewer's Name and Title:

Interview Date:

Time: