

# Understanding a Job Ad

You can learn a lot about what a potential employer is looking for from the job ad. Ask these seven questions before writing your resume or going to the interview.

## **What don't you understand about the job ad?**

There are several common abbreviations employers use. A couple examples are EOE (Equal Opportunity Employer) and AA (Affirmative Action). For help defining terms contact the Department of Labor, try a dictionary, or ask a librarian.

## **What type of industry or company is it and what's happening currently?**

Check the company's website to find out the basics. Where is the company based? Is it a large or small company? What does the company offer? For larger companies check magazines and newspapers.

## **What is the main purpose of the job?**

Look for clues. From the skills requested in the ad what tasks will be involved in the daily routine of the position. For example filing, dealing with customers, etc. Do you have experience doing this?

## **Why is this job important to the company?**

Think about why this position is important. An Administrative Assistant will keep a company organized. A new person in sales may increase revenue. How could you help the company?

## **What types of skills does the company want and what other skills might be needed?**

Ads will often include communication skills, basic computer knowledge, etc. Be sure to highlight these and complementary skills that would be beneficial to the company. For example, a job requiring communication skills may also require organizational skills.

## **What personal qualities does the company want?**

Are you trustworthy and reliable? Are you good with the public? Can you work for long hours at a desk or on your feet? Think about how you would fit in the job and why it is good for the company.

## **What knowledge and training does the company want?**

Does the ad request a certain education level, training, or proficiency? Many job ads are asking for computer skills. Take some time to brush up on the basics.