Unit One addressed the big picture of labor market realities—which industries are growing, which are shrinking, and technology’s impact on the market. They learned about a wide range of careers in Retail as well as the various kinds of career families available to employees in the Retail sector. They also learned about current issues that affect workers.

Unit Two addressed the inner workings of the job-seeker. What are her interests and passions? What kind of work environment will she enjoy? What careers should she consider based on what she knows about herself and what factors might influence someone making a career change? Students also learned to navigate career database websites, assess their own interests and conduct a group research project about careers in the Retail sector.

In Unit Three, students heard from Retail workers themselves, through firsthand accounts and interviews in text and video, and discussed what they learned. They also conducted further research on Retail careers of interest.

In Unit Four, students considered what it takes to prepare for a career in Retail. They learned about common career pathways in the industry and considered how career movement happens in Retail careers. They learned about different training and education opportunities available for someone interested in this field.

In Unit Five, students learn how to leverage their existing and potential professional networks for job seeking, explore the job search process, including analyzing help wanted ads, learning about workplace expectations, and engage with a panel of Retail professionals. They also learn how to become entrepreneurs by reading about Retail workers who have started their own businesses. They also practice using online resources available to New Yorkers looking to become self-employed.
Unit 5 • Summary

1 • IDENTIFYING YOUR NETWORK

Students write a reflection about a personal experience of gathering information from someone they know or have met. They then identify a potential professional network, including people they know and businesses with which they are familiar.

1.1 • How to Develop Informational Interview Questions

After having identified their professional networks, students develop questions as a research technique, specifically the questions one might ask in an informational interview.

2 • HOW TO GET HIRED IN RETAIL

Students read an article based on interviews with several Retail employers and business owners, then paraphrase and make inferences about the information in the reading. After identifying and defining qualities required for Retail, they do role plays that demonstrate these characteristics.

3 • LANGUAGE TO LEVERAGE YOUR PERSONAL EXPERIENCE IN RETAIL

Students practice using vocabulary that can be used in cover letters, resumes and job interviews to describe their potential contributions to an organization or business, including how to frame negative experiences from the past in a positive light.

4 • READING SAMPLE HELP WANTED ADS IN RETAIL*

Students read a selection of help wanted ads from the Retail sector. Some of the ads are very detailed; others are not. Students ask questions about and make inferences from the ads to figure out what each job entails and match a fictitious job applicant to the job ad that seems the best fit for them.

5 • PREDICTIVE SCHEDULING LAW IN FAST FOOD AND RETAIL*

Students learn about a new law that requires giving employees advance notice about work schedules by reading graphs, a short article and a workplace labor poster. They perform calculations on worker scenarios and learn about civics by researching the role of their city council.

6 • READ AND DISCUSS: CAREER ADVANTAGES OF BEING BILINGUAL

Students read an article and answer questions about the advantages of being a bilingual employee and job-seeker.
Unit 5 • Summary

7 • FROM SALES TO...ANYTHING! TRANSFERABLE SKILLS IN RETAIL

Students read and discuss a short article on the benefits of working in the Retail industry “at least once in their lives” and complete a chart of skills that can be learned by working in Retail.

8 • WORKING ON COMMISSION

Students learn about the traits and skills needed to be successful in commission-based sales. They read and annotate an article and create a quiz based on the article.

9 • STARTING YOUR OWN BUSINESS SERIES*

Students learn about starting a business. They perform calculations using statistics about small business employment in New York City. They read narratives from New Yorkers who have started their own businesses and practice using some of the online services available to New Yorkers hoping to open their own businesses.

9.1 • Calculating with Percents: Small Businesses in New York City*

Students read a brief passage about small business employment in New York City, then perform calculations using percents and decimals drawn from information in the passage.

9.2 • Small Business Narratives in Retail*

Students read narratives of people who started their own Retail businesses, then consider the steps necessary to open those businesses.

9.3 • The Nuts and Bolts of Launching a Business*

Students research the legal requirements of opening a business. They learn how to use the website of New York City’s Department of Small Business Services* to find the required steps to open the business of their choice.

9.4 • Starting an Online Business

Students read about Casper, the first online mattress company, as a case study of an online business. They learn about the steps to opening an online company and analyze the decisions that Casper made.

10 • A PANEL OF RETAIL PROFESSIONALS

Students have the opportunity to interact directly with Retail professionals. They develop questions for the panelists, then listen to the presentation, asking their questions and taking note of the answers.
11. MY CAREER MAP

Students map their own career trajectory, including past and current jobs, what they learned from them about themselves, future goals, and steps they can take to reach those goals.

11.1 • Career Map Writing Activity

Students complete a writing activity analyzing their Career Map. They explore jobs they’ve had in the past, why they made the choices they did, and goals they have for the future. Rather than focus on one writing strategy, this activity is designed to be flexible and invites teachers to use the activity as is (good for lower level students) or incorporate a focus on a specific writing skill of their choosing, such as topic sentences, paragraph structure, or transitional sentences.
Section 1

Identifying Your Network

Students learn how to identify a pool of workers and others who can become a source for gathering career information.

PREP

• Be prepared to discuss the terms: Word of Mouth and Networking.

MATERIALS

• Networking handout
• My Network handout
• Journal: Using My Network assignment

EXPLAIN

1 Write the term Word of Mouth on the board. Ask students what it means.
   > Information that is passed from one person to another verbally. This is one way of conducting research informally, not by using a website or directory, but by asking another person.

2 What is a piece of information you have gathered through word of mouth? Write responses on the board.
   > An app (computer or mobile application); a recommended doctor or healthcare facility; a school or teacher; a job; an apartment; a roommate; a product, such as a hair product or pharmaceutical; a specific staff person, such as a public assistance caseworker; a neighborhood resource, such as an immigration legal practice; a travel route, such as subway or bus directions.

3 Who have you gotten this information from?
   > A family member, friend, classmate, teacher, neighbor; member of your house of worship or community group, a local merchant, employee of a service you use, even a stranger.

4 All these people, and likely more, make up your network. A network of people you know and have access to, even if you might not know them very well. Someone can become part of your network after speaking with or meeting them for the first time. Distribute Journal: Using My Network. Ask a student to read the instructions and summarize the goals of the assignment. If students have trouble thinking of a personal experience using their network, direct them to the list on the board.
5 Once students have finished writing, ask them to discuss what they wrote about.

How is this similar to and different from networking? What is networking? What are some ways you have learned about careers in general and job opportunities in particular?

A network can include people you know, media, your places of work, businesses you use. Career networking consists of talking to professionals about their career and industry in order to learn about the career, the industry or about job opportunities. It can be informal, such as talking to someone you meet casually, or more formal as in the case of an informational interview in which you sit down and ask a set of predetermined questions. An informational interview is a conversation between someone wanting to learn about a particular career and someone who already works in that career. This is different from a job interview because the job researcher has not yet applied for a position. The purpose of the conversation is to gather knowledge. Sometimes informational interviews can lead to jobs, even though that is not necessarily their goal.

6 Divide students into groups of 4 and ask each group to discuss how they got one of their jobs, either a current or past job. If they have not held a job, they can ask questions and keep the conversation moving and on task. While students are in discussion, write the following tasks on the board:

- Summarize the main ideas
- Define a network
- Explain the benefits of networking
- Discuss who is in your network

7 Distribute the Networking handout and ask students to read the article. After reading, they should respond in writing to the first three tasks written on the board, and discuss the last one together. When they are finished reading and writing, ask them to share their responses.

8 Now you are going to identify your own network, in as broad a way as possible. The key to networking is to cast as wide a net as possible. The purpose is to think about how to make connections you might not think you already have. Distribute the My Network handout and ask students to complete it individually, listing as many names or businesses as they can.
Journal: Using My Network

Write one page about a positive experience you have had using your network to gather information. Include:

- Who gave the recommendation and how you know or met the person.
- What the product or service was.
- A description of your conversation, including questions you asked and information you received.
- The result of this conversation. How did it affect your life?
- Sometimes talking to people, especially new people, can be difficult. What made this conversation possible?
Networking


“It’s not what you know, it’s who you know.” This common expression is the basis for understanding the importance of networking as a strategy for career development and exploration. Everyone has a network, even if you don’t realize it, and when it comes to job searching, this network may be just as important as your skills and experience. A personal network is that group of people with whom you interact every day – family, friends, parents of friends, friends of friends, neighbors, teachers, bosses, and co-workers. With these people, information and experiences are exchanged for both social and potential professional reasons. Networking occurs every time you participate in a school or social event, volunteer in the community, visit with members of your religious group, talk with neighbors, strike up a conversation with someone at the store, or connect with friends online.

When networking for the purpose of career development, this means talking with friends, family members, and acquaintances about your goals, your interests, and your dreams. Most people actually learn about job openings through friends, relatives, or others who are part of their personal network, and because each person in your network has a network of his or her own, your potential contacts can grow exponentially. This is important because more often than not, hiring managers would rather talk to a potential candidate who has been recommended by someone they know or already employ. Even if a position is not currently available, networking can lead to informational interviews that can help you not only learn about possible career paths, but also be great exposure for you to be thought of as a potential candidate when a job opens up. An informational interview is not the same as a job interview by any means, but it is probably the most effective form of networking there is. In fact, according to Quintessential Careers, one out of every 12 informational interviews results in a job offer. This is a remarkable number considering the fact that research indicates that only one in every 200 resumes (some studies put the number even higher) results in a job offer.

A note for facilitators:
Developing networking skills is important for all youth, but particularly for those with limited work experiences, which is unfortunately often the case for youth with disabilities. By creating opportunities whereby young people can research, talk to, and network with those working in careers of interest, the more likely they will be able to make informed choices regarding their future. For youth who are hesitant to network or take the steps necessary to arrange informational interviews (for any reason), consider using pairs of two for many of the activities in this section. Teaming is one strategy that may help participants feel as if they have the support they need while trying out new skills and learning how to become a strategic and “seasoned” networker.
My Network

Thinking as broadly as possible, write down as many people with work experience as you can. Some may even be people whose names you don’t yet know, but are people you see regularly, such as a shopkeeper or security guard.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How I Know This Person</th>
<th>Name and Job</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal Connections:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends, Family, Neighbors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Connections:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-workers, Supervisors/ Managers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Places of Business:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A place where you do business, such as a store or clinic.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Connections:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classmates, Teachers, Counselors, Administrators</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Connections</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How to Develop Informational Interview Questions

After having identified their professional networks, students develop questions as a research technique, specifically the questions one might ask in an informational interview.

MATERIALS

• Developing Interview Questions worksheet

DISCUSS

What are ways you can learn about careers or jobs?

➢ Help wanted ads, friends, family, co-workers, career guide books, observation.

Today we are going to focus on gathering information from workers themselves. Everyone has a network, whether or not they are aware of it. Who could be included in a network?

➢ Family, friends, classmate, student, professor, people who work at a particular place of business, acquaintances.

EXPLAIN

1 Distribute the Developing Interview Questions worksheet. Ask a student to read aloud the instructions at the top of the page. Check for comprehension by asking students to rephrase the requirements of the assignment. When students rephrase instructions they solidify their understanding of the required tasks.

2 Give students time to complete the worksheet and then share their questions with the class.
## Developing Interview Questions

Imagine that you are interviewing a worker about a career you are interested in. Write the questions you will ask them. Think about everything you want to know about working in this field and ask questions that help you learn about their experience and get some advice from an experienced worker. Use the words below to begin your questions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Where</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How often</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How much</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Describe</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Section 2

How to Get Hired in Retail

Students read an article on employer expectations in Retail, then paraphrase and make inferences about the article. They work in groups to identify the desired qualities employers describe, define them, and create role plays that demonstrate these expectations.

PREP

- Read What Matters to Retail Employers?
- Complete both worksheets in preparation for assisting students with them.
- Be prepared to discuss the following terms in the context of the workplace: communication, positive attitude, cooperation, dependability, attention to detail.
- Read each scenario and decide the number of actors you will need for each scene. Roles will include employer or supervisor and employee, and may also include co-workers.
- Cut up enough Employer Expectations Scenarios to assign a positive and negative scenario of each characteristic to each group of students. It’s okay to give the same scenario to more than one group.

MATERIALS

- What Matters to Retail Employers? reading
- Paraphrasing and Inferring: Advantages and Challenges in Retail handout
- Qualities that Retail Employers Look For handout
- Employer Expectations Scenarios

EXPLAIN

1. If someone asked you the skills and knowledge that are most important for people working in Retail, what comes to mind?
   - Knowledge of products being sold, good calculation skills, aware of trends.

2. There are important technical skills that a Retail worker needs, but those are not the only type of skills required. There are also what are called “basic skills,” such as reading, writing, math, and English language proficiency. In addition, there are what are called “soft skills,” or professional skills.
   - What are some examples of soft skills?
     - Communication skills, being on time, taking initiative, working well as part of a team.
3 We’re going to learn more about what Retail employers look for in a worker, and the characteristics of people who work in this field.

4 Distribute the *What Matters to Retail Employers?* reading. Ask students to read and annotate it, marking anything they find important, interesting, confusing, or surprising.

5 When students are finished, distribute the *Paraphrasing and Inferring: Advantages and Challenges in Retail* worksheet and ask them to complete it in pairs.

6 When student pairs have finished, ask them to join another pair so that they form groups of four. Distribute the *Qualities that Retail Employers Look For* handout. Ask the groups to work together to complete the chart.

7 When students have completed the chart, ask them to share what they wrote with the class.

8 Write the following terms on the board:

```
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication</th>
<th>Dependability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive Attitude</td>
<td>Attention to Detail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
```

Ask students to write definitions of the terms on the board.

What do they mean in a work context? What do they mean to an employee? What do they mean for a Retail supervisor? Explain.

9 Put students into groups of an appropriate size depending on the scenario, and explain that they are going to work with their group to role play workplace expectation scenarios based on the characteristics they have been discussing. This is an opportunity to see what can go wrong and practice what to do right in the workplace.

10 Distribute the scenarios. Each group should receive one positive and one negative scenario for the same characteristic. Explain to students that they are going to create two skits: one that shows what the employee might do when not meeting this expectation and another skit that shows what the employee might do in order to meet this expectation. Tell the group what the roles for the scenario will be. For example, the Communication scenario could have: John, the Assistant Manager, John’s supervisor, Ana, the new hire, and Ana’s co-workers and customers.
The group should decide which student will play which role.

Give groups 20 minutes to develop and practice both the positive and negative skits for their assigned expectation. Skits should be no more than 2-3 minutes long.

Have each pair or group perform their scenarios in front of the class.

After a group presents, the class discusses what they saw. Use the following or additional questions to engage deeply with the scenario and workplace expectation.

- Which characteristic did this skit demonstrate?
- Was the employer or supervisor satisfied with the worker? Why or why not?
- How did the employer show she or he was satisfied or dissatisfied?
- What were the consequences, either negative or positive, of the worker’s performance?
- How did the worker’s performance affect the business?
- What would you do if you were the worker?
- What would you do if you were the employer or supervisor?
- Which scenario was more fun to act out, the positive one or the negative one? Why?
What Matters to Retail Employers?

Adapted from: https://www.thebalance.com/list-of-retail-skills-2062476
https://www.huffingtonpost.com/deborah-sweeney/the-five-traits-businesses_b_4855032.html
http://smallbusiness.chron.com/teamwork-important-retail-10945.html
https://www.collegerecruiter.com/blog/2017/02/14/why-employers-covet-soft-skills-developed-working-in-the-restaurant-and-retail-industry/

Trying to Break into Retail?

The good news for people trying to get a start in Retail is that entry-level sales employees are often hired with little to no previous experience. The bad news is that Retail companies can be just as quick to fire people who don’t meet their expectations.

Many of these expectations have to do with working in a customer-driven industry. For example, Retail workers are expected to have good communication skills. According to a survey of Retail employers, communication and cooperation—both examples of soft skills—were ranked the two most important skills that employers look for in for Retail workers.

In fact, according to the same study, the lack of interpersonal skills (or soft skills) was rated as being a bigger barrier to getting hired than lack of Retail experience. A Wall Street Journal survey of nearly 900 executives revealed that 92% of executives felt that soft skills were equally important or more important than technical skills.

So what exactly are employer expectations? And what are the soft skills, that is, the interpersonal and communication skills, that help Retail workers succeed?
Key Soft Skills in Retail

Communication:
Retail workers need to be able to greet customers, answer their questions, communicate with other stores or buyers, give information about products, and take orders. “But communication isn’t just about what you say; it’s about empathy and good listening skills, too. The best salespeople are those who can relate to others,” says Christina Markadakis, Sales Talent Recruiter at The Muse.

Positive Attitude:
Patience isn’t just a virtue: it’s a necessary skill in Retail and Customer Service. “You have to tell customers that they cannot use their six-month-old coupon, and no, you cannot use my employee discount. And you have to do it with a smile,” explains Savannah Hughes of Banana Republic. Sales Associate Caroline Sullivan agrees, saying, “You need to do your best to provide a good experience. Sometimes that’s difficult. For example, if someone doesn’t like the return policy, you still need to follow your store’s policies and you can’t make exceptions for people. You have to rely on your co-workers, like when you refer people to your manager.”

Cooperation:
As Caroline’s experience shows, teamwork is also crucial. Retail outlets can be some of the most stressful workplaces in the job market, combining low wages with disrespectful customers while requiring employees to stand, lift heavy items and move quickly over long periods of time. Good teamwork is the difference between team members sticking together vs. turning on each other out of frustration. Teams who act aggressively or insult each other can create a hostile store atmosphere that drives customers away. Solid teamwork can give customers the impression that store employees work almost like a family. This encourages customers to ask team members for help or engage team members in conversation.

Dependability:
Retail employers want to know that they can rely on their workers, including being able to depend on their employees to report for work every day. There have been cases of job candidates being selected after a lengthy interviewing process but then missing or coming late.
to the company orientation. Despite the time and energy invested in finding a salesperson, many companies will swiftly fire the new hire. Nordstrom’s Marketing and Sales Coordinator Alex Corrado adds, “Don't miss work unless it’s absolutely necessary, especially in the first few months. If you start off unreliable, managers will notice and treat you like that going forward.”

Attention to detail:
Retail workers need to focus on detail, whether it is making sure a customer receives exact change, items in the store are fully stocked, or the clothing on display is laid out perfectly. Little things, like having a neat, easy to navigate store and fully stocked shelves, make a store more inviting to customers, which leads to increased sales.

Soft Skills Hard at Work in Retail and Beyond
Naser Mahmoud, a major sales assistant at Costco, explains, “Working in Retail has given me the patience to be able to handle stressful situations without cracking under the pressure.”

Many Retail jobs, particularly in sales, are based on commission, where part of your salary is based on your ability to make sales. This can be a benefit or a downside, depending on your personality. According to Ryan Winthrop, Recruiting and HR Manager at a company that specializes in hiring and training sales department staff, “If you’re working on commission, your income relies on your ability to get this stuff done. The beauty and curse of sales is that you receive a performance review every day. You either closed a deal or you didn't. The buck stops with you.”

In addition, according to Dawn Crowder, owner of Carolina Clover Jewelry and Gifts, “Retail industry employees are well-versed in pulling double shifts with no notice, handling huge volumes of rushes that come with no warning, and being pushed into doing that task that no one wants to do. To survive in Retail, a worker has to be friendly, no matter the circumstances. They know how to—and can—work with anyone.”

Mandi Hinrichs, service desk associate for Bob’s Stores, adds that working in Retail has “forced me out of my shell and fostered people skills that have helped in every job I have had since. I now feel comfortable talking to people, answering phone calls and resolving problems in a professional setting because of my time in Retail.”

This industry’s emphasis on soft skills helps Retail employees when looking for jobs in other industries. A National Retail Federation survey of hiring managers across all industries overwhelmingly showed that retail industry experience is considered an asset for jobs in other industries because of the soft skills developed.
Paraphrasing and Inferring:
Advantages and Challenges in Retail

In your own words, write three advantages of working in Retail, according to the article. Provide a quote from the article to support each paraphrase. Then, write down three things you think might be challenging about working in Retail based on the article.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ADVANTAGES OF WORKING IN RETAIL:</th>
<th>Supporting Quote</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHALLENGES OF WORKING IN RETAIL:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Qualities that Retail Employers Look For

In the left-hand column write a quality valued by Retail employers, according to the text. In the right-hand column, write a definition of that quality.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Desired quality (skill, knowledge, or experience)</th>
<th>Definition of desired quality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Employee Expectations Scenarios

Communication

JOHN is the Assistant Manager of a Health and Beauty Supply store. He is responsible for setting the monthly schedule. Ana needs to take Tuesdays off for a class she is taking. She sees John and tells him she wants to be off on Tuesdays in the next month’s schedule. John, who is showing a new employee how to use the cash register, doesn’t hear what she’s saying, but just nods and says okay. When he goes back to his office, other workers stop by to tell him about their scheduling needs. John writes down their requests and includes them in the new schedule. When the schedule is posted, Ana is upset that she has been scheduled for work on Tuesdays.

Communication

CHRIS is an Assistant Buyer for a discount store. Summer is coming, and they need to make sure they have enough flip-flops in stock. Chris’s supervisor tells him that their flip-flop manufacturer has gone out of business and that Chris will need to find a new vendor to buy them from. She tells Chris the number of flip-flops they need in each size and color. Chris calls other buyers he knows to ask where they get their flip-flops. He also looks at companies on the internet. After finishing his research, he calls some of the companies to find out if they can provide the number of flip-flops needed and to ask their prices. When he is done calling, he meets with his supervisor so that they can pick a new flip-flop vendor.

Positive Attitude

SHEILA is a Sales Associate at a clothing store. Her store mailed out a flyer about a 50% off sale on cashmere sweaters. A customer comes in to buy the sweater in blue, but the store is out of her size. Sheila checks the store’s inventory, but there are no more blue sweaters of her size in stock. Sheila offers to order the sweater for the customer online, and when the customer declines, Sheila tries to suggest other sweater colors. But the customer refuses, yells at Sheila, throws the sweaters that were stacked on the display table onto the floor, and storms out. Sheila glares at the sweaters on the floor and at the other customers, who move away. Sheila’s co-worker, Keisha, comes over to pick up the sweaters. Sheila complains to Keisha about how much she hates her job. Keisha suggests that Sheila take a break to calm down. Sheila says that if the customers weren’t so rude she wouldn’t have to calm down. For the rest of the day, Sheila glares at anyone who approaches her and sighs whenever anyone asks for help. Her co-workers do their best to help the customers and to make up for Sheila’s unfriendliness.
Positive Attitude

**CARLOS** is part of a team of sales associates at a gardening store. He and his co-workers rely on commissions for part of their salaries, and sales have been very slow. They are all working extra hours to try to make additional sales. When he is on his lunch break, Carlos hears some of his coworkers complaining to each other, which seems to be bringing everyone else down. Carlos knows that their negative attitudes are only going to make their work harder and the day go by slower. Even though Carlos is tired and frustrated too, he decides to encourage everyone by telling jokes and reminding them that the longer they work, the more money they make. Carlos makes a game out of it, challenging his co-workers to not complain for the rest of the workday, just to see if they feel better at the end of the day or if the day has gone by any faster.

---

Cooperation

**ALIYAH**’s co-worker, José, has asked her to help move some boxes of extra inventory into the storage room. This is not a task that Aliyah enjoys and José did not ask very nicely, but their boss said the task needs to be finished by 4:00pm, and it is already 3:00pm. Aliyah knows José will not be able to get the job done on his own and that it’s important for the work to be done by the end of the day, but she has an appointment for 3:30 pm. As Aliyah rushes out of the office, she thinks it’s José’s fault that the task won’t be completed because he didn’t work hard enough that day.

---

Cooperation

**VERONICA** is tasked with updating her company’s training manual for the new telephone sales representatives. She adds a few of her own tips for phone sales and reviews tapes of previous phone conversations to get ideas for updating the manual; however, she feels stuck. Her colleague Betty is their top salesperson, and another colleague, Reggie, is very good at dealing with difficult customers. Veronica asks them for guidance in updating the manual, and in exchange, offers to help them out with some of their own work projects. Her co-workers agree to help Veronica with updating the training manual.
Dependability

JOE has to be at his job at the Big News and More Store at 7:30 AM so that the store can be ready to open by 8:00 AM. At 6:30 AM, Joe finds out that his daughter’s babysitter cannot make it today. Joe does not have a back-up babysitter. He will need to get her ready for school and drop her off. Joe doesn’t call his boss to tell him about the delay because he assumes he will only be about 15-20 minutes late. He figures his co-workers will understand and help out by working faster to make sure they open on time. When he arrives to work 30 minutes late because of traffic, his co-workers are upset with him and have already told the boss that Joe’s lateness prevented them from opening on time.

Dependability

The team leader has been out on disability leave and LISA has been asked to run the weekly meeting at the customer service department where she works. She has been hoping for an opportunity like this for a long time. Every night for a week, Lisa has come home from work and prepared for the meeting to show her bosses that they can count on her. On the day of the meeting, she picks out a very professional outfit to wear and leaves a half hour earlier than usual to be certain she is there on time. When everyone arrives for the meeting, Lisa is there to greet them and has the meeting agenda ready to distribute.

Attention to Detail

ROBERTA works at Shoe Tree, a large shoe store. She works on commission, so part of her salary is determined by how many sales she makes. The store is very busy and there are a lot of customers giving her shoes so she can find the right sizes. Roberta is in a hurry, so she doesn’t look carefully at the sizes or colors when grabbing the shoe boxes off the shelves in the back room. Many of her customers leave because the colors or sizes are wrong and they get tired of waiting for her to fix the problem. At the end of the day, Roberta is disappointed to find that she has made less money than her co-workers because she has made fewer sales.

Attention to Detail

LAWRENCE works for Electronics R Us, a huge electronics retailer with stores across the country. Lawrence tracks the ordering and arrival of items from the warehouse to the store to make sure that his store is always stocked. He reviews the inventory, calls the warehouse to place orders, and checks with the receiving office at his store to make sure that items have arrived on schedule. If there is a problem, he calls the warehouse to straighten things out. At the end of each day, he tells his supervisor which orders have already come in that day and what items are still on their way. While reviewing an order before leaving work for the day, Lawrence realizes that it hasn’t been logged into the system correctly. He alerts his boss, who is pleased that Lawrence caught this error before it became a problem.
Language to Leverage Your Personal Experience in Retail

Students use context clues to determine the meaning of terms used in resumes, cover letters and interviews, then answer questions and write original sentences using the new terms.

MATERIALS

• Key Terms for Resumes, Cover Letters and Interviews worksheet
• Definitions of Key Terms for Resumes, Cover Letters and Interviews handout

EXPLAIN

1 Many Retail workers start out in the sector without having a college degree. For these jobs in particular, the job interview and demonstrating “soft skills” such as dependability, ability to follow instructions and cooperation on a team are especially important.

2 Today we are going to practice using vocabulary that you can use to describe your strengths regardless of the profession you want to pursue and regardless of the challenges you may have overcome in your past. Unlike sectors such as Healthcare or Education, Retail is fairly friendly to job applicants with complicated pasts, such as those with criminal convictions or histories of incarceration. Being able to express the personal strengths that have developed out of these challenges is key to securing employment. Credentials, such as certificates, licenses and degrees are important, but first impressions also make a huge impact.

The way you describe yourself in writing, in your resume and cover letter, determines whether or not you are called for an interview. And the way you describe yourself during an interview can determine whether or not you are offered the job. Correctly using professional language makes an enormous positive impact. It shows that you are professional, educated and have taken time to carefully consider the words you choose to describe yourself. Since every employee of an organization becomes a representative of that organization, your professionalism will make the organization look good. Having a professional vocabulary also helps you speak with confidence about yourself, and when you have confidence in yourself and your abilities, others will believe in you too.
3. Distribute *Key Terms for Resumes, Cover Letters and Interviews*, and ask students to work on Parts I and II in pairs.

4. When students are finished, discuss their answers as a class. Clarify students’ understanding of the vocabulary and offer additional information from *Definitions of Key Terms for Resumes, Cover Letters and Interviews* handout.

5. After the discussion, distribute the *Definitions* handout to students, and ask them to complete Part III of the worksheet on their own in class or for homework.
Key Terms for Resumes, Cover Letters and Interviews

PART I: For each word, read the sentence and try to determine the meaning of the underlined vocabulary word from the context. Explain the meaning in your own words.

1 Asset
At first I thought I should hide the fact that my native language is Spanish when I was applying for jobs, but it is actually seen as an asset in my work as a Sales Representative.

Meaning of the word: 

2 Benefit
When I first started working, I struggled to balance work duties and my personal responsibilities. That experience has turned out to be a benefit in my current role training new sales workers, because they often struggle with the same issue.

Meaning of the word: 

3 Identify
As a customer service representative, I’ve learned that it’s best not to identify with customers too much when they have a complaint because I might assume I know what they need based on my own experiences. It is better to listen and try to work within our store’s policies to resolve the issues.

Meaning of the word: 

4 Overcome
As a product demonstrator, I’ve had to overcome my fear of speaking to new people. The more I do it, the easier it gets! I now look forward to showcasing our products.

Meaning of the word: 

5 Experience
My experience of moving to a new country and having to learn a new language has taught me that I can learn things quickly. This helps me train new sales associates more effectively because I know how they might be feeling about learning new things.

Meaning of the word: 

6 Perceive
As an older person re-entering the workforce, I highlight my computer skills on my resume since some people perceive older workers as not being very computer savvy.

*Meaning of the word:* ____________________________

7 Validate
Working in a crowded store during the holiday season can be intimidating and stressful because of the high volume of people. But when customers compliment my work to my boss, it validates the effort that I put into helping them find the right gift to buy.

*Meaning of the word:* ____________________________

8 Recover
At first, when all my ideas were rejected, I felt insecure about my future in Fashion Design. But over time, I listened to suggestions and did research, which helped to improve my designs and enable me to recover my confidence!

*Meaning of the word:* ____________________________

9 Challenge
When a lot of new items are expected to arrive on the same day, it can be a challenge to keep track of them and make sure they are all shelved and stored correctly. I have to be very organized, make lists, and stay focused the entire day.

*Meaning of the word:* ____________________________

10 Empathize
As a store manager, I can empathize with the sales staff who are often exhausted by the end of the day. I worked in sales, too, and I know how tiring it can be!

*Meaning of the word:* ____________________________
Key Terms for Resumes, Cover Letters and Interviews

PART II: Answer the following questions using complete sentences. Make sure to use the vocabulary word in your answer.

1. What do you consider to be your most important workplace asset and why?

2. What are some possible benefits of sharing past struggles with a potential employer?

3. How can you demonstrate understanding even if you don’t identify with your workers’ personal problems?

4. Describe something that you have had to overcome in order to be a better employee, student or caregiver.

5. What past experiences would you share at an interview to show that you are a dependable worker?
6. Describe a time when you were **perceived** in a way that you felt was inaccurate. Why do you think you came across that way?

7. What are some ways of making a person feel **validated**?

8. Describe how **recovery** from a difficult situation can be an advantage when working in Retail.

9. Describe a **challenge** you have overcome that could help you on the job in Retail.

10. Describe how you can **empathize** with someone whose experiences are very different from your own.
Key Terms for Resumes, Cover Letters and Interviews

PART III: Write one sentence using each of the vocabulary terms that you could say to an employer during an interview. The sentence should demonstrate your knowledge of the word.

1. ________________________________________

2. ________________________________________

3. ________________________________________

4. ________________________________________

5. ________________________________________

6. ________________________________________

7. ________________________________________

8. ________________________________________

9. ________________________________________

10. ________________________________________
### Definitions of Key Terms for Resumes, Cover Letters and Interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Asset</strong></td>
<td>A positive quality (or thing) that can be used to someone’s advantage.</td>
<td>Being bilingual is an asset to many New York job-seekers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Benefit</strong></td>
<td>A good or helpful result of something.</td>
<td>The NYCID benefits New Yorkers because it grants free memberships to many museums in addition to being a form of identification.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Identify</strong></td>
<td>To have something in common with or be able to relate to a person or experience.</td>
<td>Many Machine Supervisors can identify with Machine Operators because they worked in those positions before they were promoted to supervisory roles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overcome</strong></td>
<td>To succeed in moving past a challenge.</td>
<td>Sales Representatives have to overcome their fear of speaking to people they don’t already know.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Experience</strong></td>
<td>To go through something, an event or period in which something specific occurs.</td>
<td>Speaking about experiences that show a person’s trustworthiness and commitment to hard work, even if they are unrelated to the field of Retail, can help in a job interview.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Perceive</strong></td>
<td>Coming to a conclusion about a person, place or event, based on one’s experience of it through the senses—seeing, hearing, touching, tasting and/or feeling.</td>
<td>People perceived her as being outgoing, even though she was really quite shy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Validate</strong></td>
<td>To make someone feel heard and understood.</td>
<td>Being able to validate a client’s concerns is a key skill required of many Customer Service Representatives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Recover (from)</strong></td>
<td>To restore one’s health or well-being, such as after an illness, accident or trauma.</td>
<td>It can take many months of physical therapy to recover from a bad car accident and a lifetime to recover from an addiction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Challenge</strong></td>
<td>A physically, mentally or emotionally difficult experience.</td>
<td>It is a challenge for most students to balance school, work and family responsibilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Empathize</strong></td>
<td>To be able to understand another person’s feelings of struggle. To be able to imagine what another person is going through as they experience a challenging time.</td>
<td>It is hard to truly help someone in need if you do not empathize with them and their situation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Reading Sample Help Wanted Ads in Retail*

Students read a selection of help wanted ads from the Retail sector. Some of the ads are very detailed; others are not. Students ask questions about and make inferences from the ads to figure out what each job entails. Then, they match three different job applicants to the job that seems like the best fit for them. The three ads are for the same career — Visual Merchandiser — so that students have grounds for comparison. They can be used to discuss the distinctions between help wanted ads in general.

**PREP**

- Read the *Selected Job Ads for Visual Merchandiser* *

**MATERIALS**

- *Selected Job Ads for Visual Merchandiser* *
- *Job Ad Information Checklist worksheet* *
- *Paraphrasing and Inferring Help Wanted Ads worksheet* *
- *Job Applicant Profiles handout* *

**EXPLAIN**

1. Imagine you have completed the training in your field, have had some internship or field experience, and are now ready to look for a job. You’re looking through help wanted ads. **What information is included in the ads?** Write student responses on the board. Review this information as a class.
   
   → **Salary, Location, Start date, Responsibilities, Contact person**

2. Put students into groups of three. Distribute *Job Ad Information Checklist* * and ask students to copy the list from the board into the left-hand column on the worksheet, and add any additional types of information they think should be included.
3 Distribute the *Selected Job Ads* and ask students to read the job ads from three retail businesses, and put a check on the worksheet in the box corresponding to the information included. For example, if the job ad for H&M lists the start date, they will put a check in the corresponding box. If not, they will leave it blank.

4 Distribute the *Paraphrasing and Inferring Help Wanted Ads* worksheet and have students work on it in their group. They should paraphrase the duties required of the worker, and infer which characteristics the ideal candidate would have, based on the help wanted ad.

5 Students read applicant profiles and match the applicant to the job. Distribute the *Job Applicant Profiles* and ask the students to continue working in pairs to recommend a job for each applicant.

**DISCUSSION**

Ask students about their experience of reading the job ads:

- How are they different from one another?
- Were some more informative than others? How so?
- What information was missing from the less informative job ads?
- What questions should a job-seeker ask for the less informative ones?
- How can this information be applied to positions besides Visual Merchandiser?
Job Ad Information Checklist*

In the left-hand column, write information you expect to find in a help wanted ad. Then read the sample ads and check which ads contain which pieces of information.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>JOB INFORMATION</th>
<th>H&amp;M*</th>
<th>Solomon Page*</th>
<th>Atrium*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
VISUAL MERCHANDISER

H&M
BRONX, NY 10475

Title: Visual Merchandiser
Reports to: Store Manager

Job Responsibility including but not limited to:

- Provide excellent direct and indirect customer service according to H&M standards and meet the 5 basic demands on the selling floor, in the fitting room and at the cash point
- Ensure garment presentation and garment care are executed per H&M guidelines
- Actively work in a commercial way to maximize sales
- Responsible for the care and maintenance of display materials
- Train, coach and give daily feedback on garment presentation to the store staff
- Inform store team about changes in the presentation of garments

Minimum Candidate Qualifications:

- Associate’s degree in a fashion industry specialty preferred
- 2 years of retail visual merchandising experience
- Ability to lift in excess of 20 pounds
- Ability to stand for long periods of time, bend, stretch, engage in repetitive motions, push, pull and carry items (mannequins, clothing, totes, torsos, etc.) for a short distance
- Ability to climb a ladder and use a step stool

Competencies:

- Strong visual merchandising skills and the ability to drive business through creativity, fashion consciousness and commerciality
- Knowledge of basic computer skills
- Ability to work in a fast-paced, deadline-driven environment
- Exceptional customer service and interpersonal skills
- Strong organizational and time management skills
- Strong verbal communication skills
- Able to work independently while still working within a team environment
- Must be able to work with hand-and-power operated tools and lift in order to execute display setups
FREELANCE VISUAL MERCHANDISER

SOLOMON PAGE—New York, NY

Start Date: March 5, 2018

We are looking for a Freelance Visual Merchandiser in NYC! This individual will also potentially travel to other store locations.

Responsibilities:
• Ensure accurate and brand-right visual presentations, policies, and procedures for the flagship store and mall stores with regard to visual presentations
• Assist with production of window and interior display projects in both flagship and mall stores
• Make strategic planning decisions and assist in window logistics/prop ordering
• Assist with communication to stores and partners
• Assist in locating and organizing product samples for style outs/visual meetings

Qualifications:
• 0–1 years of visual merchandising experience
• Able to work 20–30 hours a week
• Must be available for bi-weekly overnight installation at Flagship Store
• Computer skills: Illustrator, Photoshop, InDesign and Sketchup
VISUAL MERCHANDISER

LOCATION: Long Island City, NY

COMPENSATION: $40k–$50k

MINIMUM EDUCATION: High School Diploma/GED

This role is for an established luxury accessories company looking for a talented Visual Merchandiser to assist with displays in their corporate office.

Position Overview:
The Visual Merchandiser is responsible for ensuring that all visual displays are constructed and covered to meet company’s standard of excellence.

Responsibilities of the Visual Merchandiser:
• Visual Merchandiser will be constructing visual merchandising décor items
• Covering visual merchandising décor items
• Refurbishing displays with a variety of fabrics
• Maintaining inventories of fabrics and displays
• Installing displays
• Measuring and cutting fabrics
• Disassembling displays

Qualifications for the Visual Merchandiser:
• Experience with power and hand tools
• Attention to detail
• Interpersonal skills
• Hand-eye coordination
• Dexterity
• Organizational skills

Education Requirements:
• High School Diploma
Paraphrasing and Inferring Help Wanted Ads*

Using the Help Wanted Ads, complete the chart below, paraphrasing the job responsibilities and inferring what characteristics would make an ideal worker for each position.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employer</th>
<th>Responsibilities</th>
<th>Ideal Candidate Characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H&amp;M*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solomon Page*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atrium*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Job Applicant Profiles**

**TERRENCE** is 20 years old. He earned his high school diploma in Staten Island, and completed a one-year internship at a theater company, where he helped with technical tasks such as costume design, set building, and props. He lives with his grandmother and takes care of her medical needs, including any help she may need during the night. Terrence has a basic knowledge of Microsoft Office and he has taught himself Photoshop. Terrence likes to work on projects on his own when possible.

---

**JOANNE** is 25 years old and earned a GED and then an Associate’s degree in computer illustration at Queensborough Community College. While she was in college, she worked in a clothing store as a sales associate. In addition to selling, she also helped her manager design some of the advertisements for the store’s website and made some of the in-store sale signs. Joanne wants to go back to school for her Bachelor’s degree and needs a job to make ends meet while she’s in school.

---

**SARAI** is 34 years old. She lives with her husband and two young children in Brooklyn, NY. After high school, she went to Kingsborough Community College to study business. She had to leave college when she had her first child. After her second child was born, she went back to school. She enrolled at Brooklyn College and graduated with a business degree. Sarai worked as a sales associate at the Gap for two years, then was promoted to visual merchandiser. Most of her experience was in designing clothing displays. Sarai and her husband recently bought a house. On the weekends, they work together to make repairs and do basic maintenance. This spring, they built a new staircase down into the backyard.
Predictive Scheduling Law in Fast Food and Retail*

New York City’s “Fair Workweek” law, that requires employers to give advance notice about work schedules in the Fast Food and Retail sectors, went into effect in January 2018. Students learn about this new law that requires giving employees advance notice about work schedules, by reading graphs and a short article and a workplace labor poster. They perform calculations on worker scenarios and learn about civics by researching the role of their city council. Also included is a civics lesson in which students identify their councilmember and practice using the city council website. Modifications can be made to include regional local government officials.

PREP

Consider the problem of employers providing late notice to employees about changes to their schedules. Has this affected you as a teacher? Have you ever had students struggle with attendance due to their unstable work schedules? What other problems can instability in work schedules cause to workers?

MATERIALS

- How Much Notice Does Your Employer Give About Schedule Changes? graph
- Advanced Notice for Work Schedules Varies by Income Level graph
- Math in Context: Work Schedules and Income Levels handout
- New York City’s Fair Workweek Law: Focus on Retail reading
- New York City Council* reading
- Worker Testimony from Fair Workweek Hearings handout
- Navigating the City Council Website* handout

DISCUSS

1. Introduce the topic of unstable work schedules. You might ask questions such as:
   - Have you had a job where your work schedule varied from week to week?
   - Did you ever find out your schedule just a day or two before the shift?
   - Was work ever canceled within 24 hours of a scheduled shift?
• What kinds of issues does it cause when you don’t have adequate notice about your work schedule?
• What kinds of jobs have schedules like these?
• What do these jobs have in common?

Students might say they earned less income than they anticipated, creating problems paying rent or bills; they struggled to find childcare at the last minute; they had to miss class, creating problems with attendance or keeping up with class work, or even were dismissed or had to withdraw from a class due to work-related absences; they had to miss important family events, creating friction with relatives; low wage jobs give little notice while high paying jobs are more stable—that’s not fair.

EXPLAIN

2 There is a new law in New York City* that requires employers in fast food and retail businesses to give employees advance notice in scheduling their work shifts. Today we are going to learn about this new law, while practicing reading and math.

3 Write on the board:

How much notice does your employer give about schedule changes?

We will look at a graph with this title. What kind of information do you think will be included in this graph?

4 Distribute the graph, How Much Notice Does Your Employer Give About Schedule Changes? Ask students to explain what is written in the axes and what they represent—the numbers going up the left side of the graph and the text that is written under each bar.

5 With a partner, discuss and write statements on a piece of paper about what you notice in the graph.

> Over the course of discussion, students should note that over 80% of fast food workers and almost 50% of retail workers receive less than two weeks notice of schedule changes.

6 With the same partner, discuss and write statements about what you wonder based on this graph.

7 Write a two-column chart on the board, marked Notice on one side and Wonder on the other.
Ask students to share what they noticed, citing what part of the graph gave them the information. Write their observations on the board, under the **Notice** heading. Then ask them to share what they wonder, writing their questions under the **Wonder** column on the board.

8 Repeat steps 3 and 4 with the graph, *Advanced Notice for Work Schedules Varies by Income Level*, discussing the title of the graph, then the axes and how to read the graph. Describe what the colored bars represent.

9 As a class, discuss the meaning of the Federal Poverty Guidelines chart and text at the bottom of the page. You might ask questions such as:

- What are the Federal Poverty Guidelines?
- Why do we have Federal Poverty Guidelines?
- Why are there different amounts for different family sizes?

10 Repeat steps 5-7 above for the *Advanced Notice for Work Schedules Varies by Income Level* graph, discussing what students notice and wonder.

11 Distribute the *Math in Context: Work Schedules and Income Levels* handout. Ask students to complete it in groups. Review it together as a class.

12 **Explain:** In 2017, New York City passed a law that required employers of fast food and retail businesses to provide advance notice of schedules, and restricted certain types of schedule changes. The law applies to fast food and retail slightly differently, so today we will focus on the requirements for retail employers. Distribute *New York City’s Fair Workweek Law*. Ask students to read it and with a partner discuss the steps employers need to take to comply with the law. Ask students to also discuss what employees can do in cases when employers don’t follow the laws.

13 Share responses as a class.

14 The Fair Workweek Law was created and passed by New York City councilmembers. Ask students what they know about the city council.

> **They might say it is a part of New York government or that there’s an office in their neighborhood.**
Distribute *New York City Council.* Ask students to read it and discuss with a partner the purpose of the city council and describe what city council hearings are.

Discuss the reading as a class, noting how bills are passed, how committees work and how they relate to the Fair Workweek bill.

Distribute *Worker Testimony from Fair Workweek Hearings* handout. This reading is adapted from a city council testimony from a worker about how the Fair Workweek bill could affect him and people like him. Read the testimony, then, with a partner, locate and underline examples of scheduling practices that would no longer be allowed under the Fair Workweek Law. Use *New York City’s Fair Workweek Law: Focus on Retail* to perform the necessary calculations for the scenario that follows.

**OPTIONAL: CIVICS (Requires use of computer or smartphone)**

This activity presents an opportunity to make connections to civics information students may need for tests such as the TASC.

Navigate to [https://council.nyc.gov/districts/](https://council.nyc.gov/districts/).

Scroll down the list of council members. What do you notice? What do you wonder?

I notice that 11 out of 51 are women. I wonder which committees each member sits on, and what issues are important to them.

Distribute *Navigating the City Council Website* handout and ask students to complete it.
How Much Notice Does Your Employer Give About Schedule Changes?

Adapted from *Unpredictable: How Unpredictable Schedules Keep Low-Income New Yorkers From Getting Ahead* by the Community Service Society of New York

http://www.cssny.org/publications/entry/unpredictable-schedules

![Bar chart showing percentage of workers receiving less than 2 weeks' notice or 2 weeks or more notice in different sectors.](chart.png)

*Denotes a sample size of under 75 observations that should be interpreted cautiously.

**Sector is based on self-identification by survey respondents. It is likely that fast food workers associate themselves with the restaurant sector.*
Advanced Notice for Work Schedules Varies by Income Level

Adapted from Unpredictable: How Unpredictable Schedules Keep Low-Income New Yorkers From Getting Ahead by the Community Service Society of New York

http://www.cssny.org/publications/entry/unpredictable-schedules

The Federal Poverty Level (FPL) is the amount of annual income, set by the government, that determines eligibility for financial support from the government, such as food stamps or financial aid for college.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Persons in family/household</th>
<th>1 Person</th>
<th>2 People</th>
<th>3 People</th>
<th>4 People</th>
<th>5 People</th>
<th>6 People</th>
<th>7 People</th>
<th>8 People</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poverty guideline</td>
<td>$12,140</td>
<td>$16,460</td>
<td>$20,780</td>
<td>$25,100</td>
<td>$29,420</td>
<td>$33,740</td>
<td>$38,060</td>
<td>$42,380</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Math in Context: Work Schedules and Income Levels

Answer the questions below using information on the graph, *Advanced Notice for Work Schedules Varies by Income Level* and the chart on Federal Poverty Guidelines.

1. The graph describes poor people as those who earn:
   - A. 100 times the poverty level
   - B. Exactly the poverty level
   - C. The poverty level or less
   - D. Not enough money to live on

   If a family of 4 has income at the federal poverty level, how much do they make per year? ________________
   If a family of 5 has income at the federal poverty level, how much do they make per month? ________________

2. If a single individual has moderate income, about how much money do they make per month? ________________. Explain your thinking below.

3. About much would a high earning family of 3 earn per year? ________________

4. The highest earners on the graph are approximately **Choose one: half / twice / 3 times** as likely to receive 2 weeks’ or more notice on schedule changes as are workers with the lowest incomes. I know this because...

   Low income earners are **Choose one: more likely / less likely** than other earners to get their schedules less than 2 weeks in advance.

5. Jerome works as a sales representative at Sneaker Paradise and lives with his mother who is disabled and unemployed. If he earns $15/hour and works 25 hours a week, is he below or above the federal poverty guidelines according to the Federal Poverty Guidelines chart? Show your work below.
New York City’s Fair Workweek Law: Focus on Retail

Adapted from https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/dca/downloads/pdf/workers/Retail-FairWorkweek-Overview-English.pdf
http://www1.nyc.gov/site/dca/workers/workersrights/fastfood-retail-workers.page

The goal of the City’s Fair Workweek legislation, put into effect in January 2018, is to ensure that fast food and retail workers have access to predictable, reliable, and adequate hours and paychecks, so they can support themselves and be able to plan for child care, school, appointments and other needs.

The law requires that retail employers give workers 72 hours’ advance notice of work schedules, and those schedules should cover seven (7) days. Employers are no longer allowed to cancel shifts with less than 72 hours’ notice. Furthermore, employers are prohibited from scheduling on-call shifts within 72 hours of the start of the shift or adding shifts with less than 72 hours’ notice, unless the worker consents.

This way, employers will no longer be able to force workers to keep their schedules open for work with no guarantee of hours or pay.

Retail employers must keep detailed records of hours worked each week by each employee, workers’ written consent to schedule changes when required, and a copy of the written schedules given to workers. If an employer violates the law, the employee can file a complaint with OLPS (Office of Labor Policy & Standards). The OLPS will investigate the complaint, and if the employer is found guilty of a violation, the employer may have to pay damages to the worker and fines to the city. The law covers workers regardless of immigration status.
Important Information for Retail Employers/Workers: NYC’S FAIR WORKWEEK LAW

About the Law
Under the *Fair Workweek Law*, retail employers in NYC must give workers predictable work schedules.

Covered Employers
Employers—including subcontractors and temporary help firms—whose workers perform tasks at a retail business in NYC. See Covered/Not Covered Employees section.

A retail business is a store that primarily sells consumer goods and employs 20 or more workers in NYC.

Covered/Not Covered Employees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Covered</th>
<th>Not Covered</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All employees who work at a retail business store in NYC. See Covered Employers section.</td>
<td>Employees covered by certain collective bargaining agreements.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overview of Employee Rights

- **72 hours’ (3 days’) advance notice of work schedule**
- **No on-call shifts**
- **No call-in shifts within 72 hours of the start of the shift**
- **No shift additions with less than 72 hours’ notice unless worker consents**
- **No shift cancellations with less than 72 hours’ notice**

Recordkeeping
Employers must retain records of:

- Worker **hours each week**
- Each worker’s **shifts worked**, including date, time, and location
- Workers’ **written consent** to schedule changes when required
- **Each written schedule** provided to workers

Complaints

*File a complaint with OLPS.* Go to [nycc.gov/dca](http://nycc.gov/dca) or contact 311 (212-NEW-YORK outside NYC) and ask for “Fair Workweek Law.” OLPS will conduct an investigation and try to resolve a complaint. OLPS will keep a complainant’s identity confidential unless disclosure is necessary to complete an investigation or is required by law.

*File an action in court.* However, employees cannot have a complaint with OLPS and a claim in court at the same time.
# Potential Damages for Fair Workweek Violations


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VIOLATION</th>
<th>DAMAGES TO RETAIL EMPLOYEE*</th>
<th>FINES TO CITY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>An on-call shift has been scheduled</td>
<td>$500 or another amount paid to the worker to address the harm caused by the employer’s actions, whichever is greater</td>
<td>• $500 for violations that lead to a legal action involving the court system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adding a shift with less than 72 hours’ notice without the worker’s written consent</td>
<td>$500 or another amount paid to the worker to address the harm caused by the employer’s actions, whichever is greater</td>
<td>• Up to $750 for violations leading to a second legal action within a two-year period</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cancelling a shift with less than 72 hours’ notice</td>
<td>$500 or another amount paid to the worker to address the harm caused by the employer’s actions, whichever is greater</td>
<td>• Up to $1,000 for subsequent violations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failing to provide work schedules in compliance with the law, such as providing the schedule in written form (text, email, etc.)</td>
<td>$300 to the affected worker(s)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retaliation (action taken by an employer to discourage the worker from exercising their rights such as having a predictable schedule)</td>
<td>Erasing record of disciplinary action the employer took on the worker for trying to exercise their rights; re-hiring the worker, if applicable; back pay; $500; and any other money to address the harm to affected worker(s), such as wages lost due to the employer’s actions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Damages refer to an amount of money (or some other type of award) paid to a person to make up for loss or injury.*
New York City Council*

Laws can be on the federal (nationwide), state, or local (city or town) level. In New York City, local laws are created and passed by the New York City Council. The people who live in a councilmember's district are called constituents. Constituents have the ear of their councilmember. If a city service isn’t being adequately provided, for example, residents can complain to their councilmember who may have the power to make sure the city systems are working properly, or may decide a new law needs to be created to respond to a problem that many people experience. Each councilmember sits on various committees, such as the Committee on Education or the Committee on Immigration, and focuses especially on laws that impact those issues.

Councilmembers are the people who create and pass local laws. Getting a new law created and passed is a long process. Before a bill is voted on in the city council, there is often a public hearing. At the hearing, the public can speak before the voting members of the city council, to explain how the proposed bill would affect them. It is an opportunity to participate in democracy and shape change!

While the Fair Workweek bill was being debated in the City Council, there was a public hearing. Many workers, especially immigrant workers in the fast food and retail sectors, gave their testimonies explaining how unstable work conditions negatively impact health, family, education, almost every area of personal and family life. We’re going to read one testimony, from a New York City retail worker. •
Worker Testimony from Fair Workweek Hearings


Read the worker testimony below. With a partner, identify and underline examples of scheduling practices that would now be considered violations of the Fair Workweek Law.

Testimony from James Emezi, Brooklyn, NY:

Hi. I have worked part-time in the retail industry in Brooklyn for almost 2 years. I’m here to share some of my experiences of working while trying to be a full-time student at a community college.

I remember when I first started the job as a sales associate, my co-workers grumbled about on-call shifts and how hard it made things in other parts of their lives. I’d just started my first semester of classes around that time, but I figured my class schedule was set, so I could arrange my work hours around that.

The first time I noticed two shifts highlighted in yellow on my schedule, I asked my manager what that meant and she explained how an on-call shift works. You basically have to be available for that shift even though you might not get called in to work it. It was bad enough that I might not get that income, but I couldn’t even try to make that up with other work when I wasn’t scheduled, because I had school. At a few points, some of the shifts I was being asked to stay on-call for conflicted with my class schedule and I worried about losing my job if I couldn’t make myself “more available.” I actually skipped a few classes—but never on exam days—to make some of the shifts.

It wasn’t much better for my co-workers who had more flexible schedules. I saw them scramble to find last minute child care or even canceling doctor’s appointments that had taken weeks to schedule in the first place. The worst part was they’d sometimes cancel a scheduled shift the day before, so we couldn’t even count on the regular shifts. As you might imagine, a number of people got fired or had to quit because of these scheduling practices. I hope my experiences have shed light on how important it is for retail workers to have access to fairer, reasonable scheduling practices. Thank you.
Now that the Fair Workweek Law has passed, consider James's work schedule from the last week.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5/7 Monday</th>
<th>5/8 Tuesday</th>
<th>5/9 Wednesday</th>
<th>5/10 Thursday</th>
<th>5/11 Friday</th>
<th>5/12 Saturday</th>
<th>5/13 Sunday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>9AM–4PM</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>9AM–4PM</td>
<td>11AM–5PM</td>
<td>11AM–5PM</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- On Wednesday morning, James's manager texted him to say he needed to come in that day although he wasn't scheduled to work because a co-worker called in sick.
- On Saturday evening, James's manager texted to say that he shouldn't come in for his shift the next day.

1. Have there been any violations of the NYC Fair Workweek Law here? If so, what are the violations?

2. If James files a complaint with the OLPS and they find his employer in violation of the law, how much in fines and damages might the employer have to pay? Refer back to New York City’s Fair Workweek Law: Focus on Retail. Show your work below.
WORKER SCENARIO ANSWER KEY

Total Fines and Damages Owed by James’s Employer

1. Violations include:
   - A shift change (addition of a shift) with less than 72 hours’ notice
   - A shift change (cancellation of a shift) with less than 72 hours’ notice

2. If the OLPS finds James’s employer guilty of these violations, the employer may need to pay:

   To James:
   - $500 in damages (for addition of a shift with less than 72 hours’ notice)
   - $500 in damages (for cancellation of a shift with less than 72 hours’ notice)

   To the city:
   - $500 in fines (for violations leading to an initial legal action)

   Total in fines and damages:
   - $500 + $500 + $500 = $1500
Navigating the City Council Website

Navigate to council.nyc.gov to answer the questions below.

1. My city councilmember is Carlos Menchaca, the first Mexican-American and the first openly gay councilmember in New York City! Who’s yours? Click on Find Your District/Member.

2. Click on your councilmember and read their profile. What committees are they on?

3. What’s something interesting or noteworthy about your councilmember?

4. At the top of the page, click About, then Committees. Read through the committees and list 4 that interest you. Explain your interest in these committees.

5. What’s an issue in your neighborhood that you think your councilmember should pay attention to? Write a paragraph explaining what the issue is and why it needs the councilmember's attention.

Image from http://i.pinimg.com/736x/65/5e/67/655e67b08f866f7dceb1be1b55c0e566f.jpg
Read and Discuss:
Career Advantages of Being Bilingual

Students read and discuss an article about the increasing need for bilingual employees then respond in writing to questions about the article. Then they read a bilingual job candidate’s resume, analyzing how and where he discusses his language skills.

PREP

• Read the article, How Being Bilingual Can Boost Your Career
• Write the following statement on the board:

   Job seekers whose first language is not English are at a disadvantage when looking for a job.

MATERIALS

• How Being Bilingual Can Boost Your Career article
• Understanding How Being Bilingual Can Boost Your Career handout
• Daniel Gordon’s Resume

EXPLAIN

1. Ask students to discuss in pairs whether they agree or disagree with the statement on the board and why. Once students have discussed for a few minutes, ask them to share their thoughts in a class discussion.

2. Distribute the article, How Being Bilingual Can Boost Your Career. Ask students to read and annotate it, underlining parts that express the most important ideas of the article, then writing questions they have about the article in the margins.

3. After reading, distribute Understanding How Being Bilingual Can Boost Your Career handout and ask students to complete it.

4. Ask students to share their responses with a partner.

NOTE
For guidance on teaching annotation, see “How to Teach Annotation” in the User’s Guide, found at www.tinyurl.com/cunycareerkits.
Discuss responses as a whole class.

In addition to translators, there are many jobs that require bilingual workers.

Are language skills something that should be included on a resume?

- Yes!

Why?

- It tells employers that you have a skill they may need or that may add value to their business.

Now, we’ll think about the best ways job-seekers can highlight their language skills. Distribute Daniel Gordon’s Resume. Ask students to read the instructions at the top, and work on the assignment with a partner.
How Being Bilingual Can Boost Your Career

New York City Department of Education Press Release (01/11/16) Chancellor Farina Announces Expansion of Language Access Services

Efficiency, responsibility, punctuality, good communication and teamwork skills are characteristics that employers look for in their workers. However, one less obvious talent has rapidly become the hottest job skill across many industry sectors. Do you know what that skill is? The ability to speak more than one language. From sales and social work to nursing and banking, there is an increase in the number of jobs in which the ability to speak more than one language is desired.

In a tough job market, it’s smart to make yourself more valuable to your employer. Being bilingual, which means being fluent in a second language, can not only help you stand out among prospective employers, it can also open doors to opportunities that are not available to those without foreign language skills. As the country becomes more diverse, businesses are responding to a greater number of people, both employees and customers, who don’t speak English, and the ability to communicate in another language has become a significant advantage in the workforce. According to a survey conducted by the U.S. Committee on Economic Development, nearly 80% percent of business leaders felt their companies would be more successful if they had more internationally aware employees on their staff.

So which languages can give you a leg up on the job market? Insiders agree the most popular and marketable languages are Spanish, German, French, Italian, Russian and Japanese, with a growing emphasis on Mandarin, given China’s booming economy. Individual sectors with a strong demand for bilingual workers include (but aren’t limited to) Retail, Healthcare, Hospitality, Education, Technology, Manufacturing, and Government jobs.

Retailers have become aware of the advantages of having a bilingual staff in reaching and serving customers who speak little or no English, or for conducting
business in other countries. The North American Sales Services Division of the makeup and hair care company, Sebastian International, focuses on telemarketing, order entry and customer service for the United States, Canada, Jamaica and Puerto Rico. Sales Services Director Maureen Clemmons recently decided that every new hire in her division would have to be able to speak a second language—any language. “If you are in a Vietnamese neighborhood, you have Vietnamese hairdressers. As a company, we cannot afford not to be able to talk to these customers,” says Clemmons. “Having a staff that can speak eight languages has already paid off in increased sales. We have people who only want to deal with us because someone here speaks their language.”

One of the people Clemmons hired was Sudi Parvaresh, a native of Iran who—in addition to being fluent in English and Farsi—can speak some French, German, Arabic and Turkish. Parvaresh recalled that when she arrived in the United States in 1981, the fact that she spoke several languages “was not a plus” and rarely came up in job interviews. But at Sebastian, her language abilities meant a starting salary that was 26% higher than those of her fellow order-entry clerks and played a part in her speedy promotion to supervisor.

Bilingual workers are also in demand in Healthcare. As immigration increases, the demand for bilingual Healthcare workers is growing. “Patients are more comfortable if they can talk to someone who understands their language, as well as the beliefs and values of their culture,” explains Anita Hold, R.N. Sam Romero, president of a Healthcare recruiter specializing in bilingual and bicultural workers, agrees, “People are discussing delicate, sensitive matters, so you shouldn’t have a 10-year old child interpreting for his mother’s obstetrician (a doctor who provides prenatal and birthing care to pregnant people). But it happens.”

Employers in the Hospitality field have noted that hotel and restaurant workers who are able to speak the languages of their guests are better able to make them feel at home. Equally important, the Hospitality industry commonly hires workers who are not fluent in English. Staff who speak the languages of non-English speaking workers may be called upon to act as translators, to support training efforts and to troubleshoot when problems arise. Bilingual employees who take on these roles increase their value to their managers, which will help their path to promotion.

Though estimates differ (from $1 more an hour to 10 or 15 percent more overall), many experts agree that speaking more than one language can lead to higher pay—a fact that holds true whether you’re working as a hotel room attendant, customer service representative, manager or executive. Wendi Colby, director of human resources at the Willard InterContinental Hotel, is quick to agree, “The individual that spoke more languages would have a better chance for a managerial role, whatever the next level would be. They are able to deal with a wide array of clients, employees.” •
Understanding How Being Bilingual Can Boost Your Career

Please answer the following questions in complete sentences:

1. According to the article, is being bilingual an advantage or an obstacle to getting a job? Provide three examples from the article, in your own words.

2. What industries are highlighted in this article as examples of sectors needing bilingual workers?

3. Why did Sebastian International’s Sales Service Division decide that all new hires would need to be bilingual?

4. Give a specific example of when an interpreter may be needed in a Healthcare situation.

5. How can being bilingual lead to promotion in the Hospitality industry?
Daniel Gordon’s Resume

In the following resume, circle all of the different places that the applicant says in some way that he speaks more than one language. (He says it many times: see if you can find them all).

DANIEL L. GORDON
1455 Brooke Street
Sugar Land, TX 77478
Tel: 713-687-0081
Email: danielg@freemail.com

Career Objective
Seeking a position in a reputed organization where my skills and abilities can be explored to the fullest and where the scope of work will enhance my career growth.

Summary of Qualifications
- 8 years of total work experience
- Strong interpersonal skills
- Positive attitude and adaptable to change
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills
- Fluent in two languages—English and Spanish (read, write and speak)
- Work experience in the hospitality and IT industry

Computer Skills
- Proficient with Microsoft Suite—Excel, Word, Internet and MS Windows
- Knowledge of hardware—PC, Mac

Professional Experience
APRIL 2010–PRESENT
XYZ Software Services, NY
Bilingual Customer Service Manager
  - Provided support to all customer queries in two languages
  - Responsible for handling a big team and training bilingual customer service representatives
  - Manage and analyze customer feedbacks, follow-up methods and quality of after sales service
  - Improving customer service based on client feedback
  - Development of new policies and procedures for better organizational benefits

JANUARY 2007–MARCH 2010
ABC Communications Pvt. Ltd., Texas
Customer Service Representative
  - Responsible for handling customer inquiries
  - Kept a check on pricing, delivery and product information in a call center environment
• Provided support to the sales team
• Assisted in the development of new policies and techniques
• Involved in market research surveys on customer needs and requirements

JUNE 2004–DECEMBER 2006
Ford Matt Co Pvt. Ltd., Texas
Assistant Sales Manager
• Provided support to the sales team
• Prepared weekly reports and monthly reports for sales team and sales management
• Trained and motivated team members to achieve sales and customer service goals
• Built long-term relationships with business clients

MAY 2000–JUNE 2004
RST Group, Texas
Customer Service Representative
• Provided customer service in the hospitality department
• Assisted all customers via phone, digital communication and in-person
• Handled all customers in English and Spanish language
• Responsible for attending customer queries, solving problems and providing detailed information on the services provided

Educational Qualifications
• Bachelor’s Degree in Computer Science from ABC University, Texas, 1998
• Graduated from Bernard High School, 1997

A. Why do you think Donald Gordon kept talking about being bilingual in his resume?

B. If you are bilingual, would you put it on your resume? Why or why not?
From Sales to... Anything! Transferable Skills in Retail

Students read and discuss a short article on the benefits of working in the Retail industry “at least once in their lives,” and create a chart of skills that can be strengthened by working in Retail.

PREP

• Read From Sales to...Anything! Transferable Skills in Retail article

MATERIALS

• From Sales to...Anything! Transferable Skills in Retail article
• Retail Skills chart

EXPLAIN

1 Write the following statement on the board and ask students to discuss in pairs whether they agree or disagree and why:

Working as a sales associate is one of the best ways to prepare for an advanced career in any field.

2 Once students have discussed for 5 minutes, ask them to share their thoughts.

3 Employers want employees who have “soft skills,” or the workplace skills that allow them to be successful in working with others in order to accomplish their jobs. What do you think are some examples of these workplace skills?

Answers will vary. Sample answers can include: Communication, teamwork, being friendly and welcoming, listening, being dependable, completing tasks, being on time, time management, being organized, etc.

4 Explain that the class is going to read an article about how working in Retail can help them prepare for future careers in many different industries. Distribute the article From Sales to...Anything! Transferable Skills in Retail and ask students to read and annotate it, marking anything that seems important, interesting, surprising or confusing.

NOTE
For guidance on teaching annotation, see “How to Teach Annotation” in the User’s Guide, found at www.tinyurl.com/cunycareerkits.


5 Discuss the following questions with the class after they have read the article.

- What do you think is the main idea of the article?
  > There are many skills learned by working in Retail that are transferable to other industries.

- How do the examples or statements support the main idea? Be specific.
  > Answers will vary but should include statements about the soft skills people learn and how they apply to other industries.

- What do you think was the author’s purpose in including quotes from people who started out in Retail?
  > To show how transferable Retail skills are by giving examples of successful people who used Retail-related soft skills to advance.

6 Distribute the Retail Skills chart and ask students to work in pairs to complete it. Emphasize that students can list a variety of response for each item. Point out that the last row is blank. Ask students to come up with a skill that has not yet been discussed or listed.

7 Once the pairs have completed the chart, ask pairs to share their answers. Then have each pair share the skill they came up with at the bottom of the chart. If other pairs listed the same skill, ask them to raise their hand to share their response next. Continue until everyone has shared with the class.
From Sales to...Anything! Transferable Skills in Retail

Adapted from: https://www.forbes.com/sites/nicoleinbachreyhle/2014/07/29/everyone-should-work-retail-once-in-their-lives/#7b13d32250a5
http://www.rasmussen.edu/degrees/business/blog/importance-of-first-jobs/
https://www.collegerecruiter.com/blog/2017/02/14/why-employers-covet-soft-skills-developed-working-in-the-restaurant-and-retail-industry/

A Case for Retail

Retail is everywhere. Whether you’re running an errand, buying a cup of coffee, browsing in stores, or shopping online, Retail is part of daily life. While many people love to shop, most overlook the benefits that working in Retail can have on their future career—whether you end up in the Retail industry or not.

“I have enjoyed shopping all my life, but have never actually worked in the Retail industry,” says Sharon Detweiler from Libertyville, Illinois. Detweiler adds that she thinks working in Retail would not be ideal because she doesn’t think she could deal with the customers. “Customers can be difficult. I know because I’m one of them,” Detweiler explains.

Detweiler is not alone in her thoughts. Even by taking your own personal poll among friends, it’s likely that most of them would vote against working in Retail if given the choice. But hiring managers, regardless of industry, have a different perspective. According to a study sponsored by the National Retail Federation, hiring managers across all industries believe that Retail jobs teach valuable skills that are transferable to other jobs. Retail experience on a resume tells hiring managers that a job applicant is friendly (76 percent), follows directions (72 percent), knows how to—and can—work with anyone (70 percent), is a hard worker (63 percent), works well under pressure (66 percent), can learn things quickly (65 percent) and shows initiative and is a self-starter (64 percent).

Five reasons everyone should work Retail at least once in their lives

REASON #1: Being on the other side of the checkout counter introduces you to a variety of people beyond your own family and friends. In addition, by putting yourself in other people’s shoes, it can help you gain cultural awareness, empathy, patience and respect for individuals from all walks of life. Mike Catania, co-founder of PromotionCode.org, an online business that provides promotional codes and print coupons to consumers, started out in customer service. “At a call center, you talk to people with experiences and personalities all across the board, and you have to assist them as well.”
**REASON #2:** Working in Retail introduces you to the realities of consumer behavior including the joys of working with friendly patrons and the frustrations of working with grouchy, rude, upset, difficult, or uninterested customers. These experiences can help you better respond to real-life situations and to deal with a wide range of both positive and negative behaviors. Patrick West, CEO of a New York City-based marketing agency, adds, “I see far too many candidates who lack the understanding of what it takes to hustle to work, punch in, service patrons and do it all over again the next day. In my field, dealing with tricky or difficult clients is not uncommon; people with restaurant or Retail experience know how to handle a difficult customer properly.”

**REASON #3:** Having to work hours that may not be ideal for your social or personal calendar can help give you stronger appreciation for the time you do have off and motivate you to use your free time well. Plus, it signals to employers across all industries that you are flexible, dependable and hard working. “Employees of the service industry are well-equipped to handle the unknown,” says Dawn Crowder, owner of Carolina Clover Jewelry and Gifts. “Retail industry employees are used to working nights or weekends, pulling double shifts or dealing with schedule changes and handling huge volumes of rushes. That helps develop drive, and a better work ethic.”

**REASON #4:** Working Retail introduces you not only to customer service, but also to marketing, merchandising, inventory management, logistics, numerical challenges and much, much more. It helps develop problem solving and critical thinking skills. You just may surprise yourself at what you find most enjoyable,
and to learn where your strengths lie. Andy Chan, founder of Prime Opt, a career coaching center, says “Restaurant and Retail workers develop critical thinking and problem solving skills, because a manager will not always be around to provide instructions or make decisions.”

**REASON #5:** Having to work with a wide variety of colleagues is a great way to learn from others, learn about yourself, and find balance in your working habits. When you work in a Retail environment, you are put in a position to be a team player. Even if commission plays a role and competition is part of the job, being in a team environment will teach you lessons that working alone will never do.

“Because of the nature of the work, it is impossible to accomplish goals without the help of the entire team. If even one person ‘drops the ball,’ the entire system fails and the customer suffers,” explains Kari Grittner, Accounting/Finance Chair at Rasmussen College.

**The Bottom Line**

“Soft skills are often underrated by job applicants, but they are critical skills that employers use to evaluate candidates,” says Denise Natishan, Senior Partner at Cameron Smith & Associates, a firm that helps organizations find and hire people for management positions.

Natishan sums it up this way: “Time management, communication, working in a team environment, problem solving and adaptability are among the key soft skills employers want. They want someone with a strong work ethic, positive attitude, and the ability to accept criticism and grow from it. These are skills easily obtained while working in Retail jobs.”
## Retail Skills

Work in pairs to complete the chart. The last row has been left blank. Name a skill that has not been listed and complete the row.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SKILL</th>
<th>Example of how this skill might be useful in Retail</th>
<th>Other careers where this skill could be valuable and why</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Patience</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working Under Pressure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Awareness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taking Initiative</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Name a skill that has not been listed and complete the row.
Working on Commission

Students learn about the advantages and disadvantages of working in commission-based sales and the characteristics and skills needed to be successful. They read and annotate an article, create a quiz for a classmate to answer, and write about whether commission-based sales might be a good career choice for them.

PREP

- Read Is a Commission-Based Sales Job Right for You? article
- Be prepared to explain vocabulary: commission-based, phenomenal

MATERIALS

- Is a Commission-Based Sales Job Right for You? article
- Write Your Own Quiz: Is a Commission-Based Sales Job Right for You? handout
- Advantages and Challenges in Commission-Based Sales handout
- Writing Activity: Accepting or Rejecting a Commission-Based Job handout

EXPLAIN

Sales jobs in Retail can either be commission-based, where you receive a base salary plus money for each sale that you make, or non-commission-based, where you receive only a base salary (which is higher than commission-based salaries).

What are some advantages of working in commission-based sales?

- You can make a lot more money than in non-commission sales because the more sales you make, the more money you earn.
- You are more independent because the amount of sales you make is up to you, rather than being set by a supervisor.

What are some advantages of working in non-commission-based sales?

- You do not have the pressure to sell a certain amount of merchandise in order to make the money you need.
- You are not competing with co-workers to make sales.
Distribute Is a Commission-Based Sales Job Right for You? article. Ask students to read and annotate it, underlining unfamiliar words and marking anything they find interesting, confusing or surprising.

When students are finished ask:
- Were there any words you were unfamiliar with?
- What did you find interesting in the reading that you didn’t know before?
- Were you surprised by any of the facts that you learned?
- Did you read anything that was confusing?

You will now use sentence stems to write a quiz for a classmate to take, based on the article. Distribute Write Your Own Quiz: Is a Commission-Based Sales Job Right for You? handout and ask students to develop their questions.

When students are finished, have them exchange papers with a partner and complete each other’s quizzes. Point out that they need to supply a quote from the text to support each of their answers. Afterwards, they should exchange papers again and correct each other’s quizzes.

Explain that the article described both the advantages and disadvantages of working on commission. Distribute Advantages and Challenges in Commission-Based Sales handout. Have the students work in pairs to complete the handout, listing the advantages and disadvantages, and citing supporting evidence from the text.

Discuss the answers with the class. Also discuss:
- Have you ever had a job where part of your salary was based on commissions? What was that experience like?
- Which job type appeals to you: a traditional salary or commission-based pay? Why?

Distribute Writing Activity: Accepting or Rejecting a Commission-Based Job. Explain to the class that they are going to pretend they have been offered a commission-based sales job. Each student should write a paragraph either accepting or rejecting the job. They should include 3 examples from the reading to explain their decision.

Ask a few students to volunteer to share their answers.
Is A Commission-Based Sales Job Right For You?

Adapted from https://www.forbes.com/sites/jacquelynsmith/2012/11/15/is-a-commission-based-job-right-for-you-3/2/#14df56236df5
https://www.forbes.com/sites/lizryan/2017/01/14/is-it-smart-to-take-a-straight-commission-job/#5b26df035f9d
https://www.monster.ca/career-advice/article/commission-versus-salary-canada

Which is better: knowing you’ll get a steady salary every week or the having chance to earn more money through a commission-based sales job? The answer, unsurprisingly, depends on who you are, which type of job best matches your needs and goals, and what environment and pay structure works for you.

If you’re thinking about jumping into a commission-based career, keep in mind that there’s a specific combination of skills and personality traits that the job requires. In a commission-based sales job, you may earn a set salary, but much of your pay comes from commissions, or bonuses, that come from making sales. If you aren’t able to make the sales, you’ll be missing out on higher pay. If someone is wondering if a commission-based job is right for them, Art Sobczak, President of BusinessByPhone.com, says, “I would ask them if they want to control their own salary and if they have a strong desire to succeed.” If they relate to both of those things, “then they may be a good fit for a commission-based job.”

“Of course, there will be times when you put in lots of hours and might not immediately see the fruits of your labor, especially in the early days. The question is: can you ride it out?” notes business writer Dawn Papandrea. Two key factors in earning top commissions is training and time.
“When I first started out, earnings were a concern,” says sales representative Rebecca Smith. At the time, she was a single mom with just a little bit of savings. “I knew I had to provide for two young daughters, so that was my driving force.” Today, Smith has built up a stable portfolio of clients. “I’m able to afford things I never thought possible when I started as a struggling single mom 11 years ago.”

According to Sobczak, “The superstars in sales are hard workers who realize it’s not a ‘get rich quick’ profession. They are the ones who are constantly trying to do better by learning, researching and getting to know their product and customers.”

Furthermore, Liz Ryan, a business writer, warns, “Training can be the make or break factor. Look for an employer who will train you to be successful in your new career. Many of them will not give you enough training and support to pay your living expenses with your commissions.” She suggests that applicants for commission-based sales jobs ask employers what percentage of trainees are still with their companies after one year, and what kind of income they earn.

But the environment in commission-based sales jobs can also be challenging since co-workers are competitors. Some employees thrive in this environment and are motivated by the competition to perform better—are you one of them? As Wendy Weiss, an author and sales coach notes, “The 80/20 rule definitely applies to commission-based sales jobs. The top 20% of producers make 80% of the commissions.”

Phenomenal communication skills are also essential for commission-based jobs. “A great salesperson asks questions and spends most of the time listening to the customer and understanding who they are and what they want,” Sobczak explains, adding that successful salespeople are “great interviewers and performers.”

Some communications skills can be learned, but you have to be naturally outgoing and comfortable talking to people, says bestselling author and lecturer, Steve Schiffman. “Most people have some natural conversational skills, but in sales you have to ask the right questions and plan what you’re going to say to your customers.”

A confident, positive attitude is another essential personality trait. “This is a job that relies on how you feel,” Sobczak says. “You can’t get discouraged when you don’t make a sale or you’ll hurt your chances to make the next one.” Salespeople who are nervous about the risks of losing sales can get burned out quickly from the pressure.

In many ways, the upside and downside to commission-based jobs can be summed up with the same sentence: the more you sell, the more you earn. A fixed salary is a good choice if you need or prefer a predictable cash flow. For people who are confident in their selling skills—and who don’t lose sleep worrying about where their next paycheck is coming from—a higher level of commission brings the possibility of greater rewards.

---

1 phenomenal: incredible, amazing, remarkable
Write Your Own Quiz: Is a Commission-Based Sales Job Right for You?

Use the sentence stems below to develop questions from *Is a Commission-Based Sales Job Right for You?* The goal is to make a quiz to test your classmate’s knowledge. Do not write the answers to the questions. That will be your partner’s job.

When it is time to take each other’s quizzes, provide a quote from the text that supports each of your answers.

1. Why do commission-based salespeople have to ________________________________?
   
   A. Answer:
   
   B. Supporting Quote:

2. Why are the personality traits of being ________________________________ and ________________________________ useful for commission-based salespeople?
   
   A. Answer:
   
   B. Supporting Quote:

3. In your own words, explain how ________________________________.
   
   A. Answer:
   
   B. Supporting Quote:
Section 8

4 In a commission-based sales setting, it might be necessary for a worker to ____________________________
_______________________________ Why is this?

A. Answer:

B. Supporting Quote:

5 Why is ____________________________ not enough to ensure success
as a commission-based salesperson?

A. Answer:

B. Supporting Quote:

6 How can ____________________________ get in the way of being successful
as a commission-based salesperson?

A. Answer:

B. Supporting Quote:

7 Why is it so important to ____________________________ in this career?

A. Answer:

B. Supporting Quote:
Advantages and Challenges in Commission-Based Sales

In your own words, write three advantages of working in Commission-Based Sales, according to the article. Provide a quote from the article to support each paraphrase. Then, write down three things you think might be challenging about working in Commission-Based Sales based on the article.

**ADVANTAGES OF WORKING IN COMMISSION-BASED SALES:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advantages</th>
<th>Supporting Quote</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CHALLENGES OF WORKING IN COMMISSION-BASED SALES:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenges</th>
<th>Supporting Quote</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Writing Activity: Accepting or Rejecting a Commission-Based Job

You have been offered a commission-based sales job. Write a short paragraph either accepting or rejecting the position. Give three reasons supporting your decision, using information from the reading as the basis for your decision.

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
Starting Your Own Business Series*

In this series, students learn about starting a business from a number of different angles. They perform calculations using statistics about small business employment in New York City. They read narratives from New Yorkers who have started their own businesses. Students also practice using some of the online services available to New Yorkers hoping to open their own businesses.

**ACTIVITIES IN THIS SERIES**

9.1 • Calculating with Percents: Small Businesses in New York City*

9.2 • Small Business Narratives in Retail*

9.3 • The Nuts and Bolts of Launching a Business*

9.2 • Starting an Online Business
Calculating with Percents: Small Businesses in New York City*

Students read a brief passage about small business employment in New York City, perform calculations using percents drawn from information in the passage, and interpret pie charts and bar graphs.

PREP
- This activity requires prior knowledge of calculating with percents.
- Complete all worksheets for this activity to be used as answer keys.
- Be prepared to discuss the terms: Self-employed, small business owner, owner-operator, entrepreneur

MATERIALS
- Prediction Guide: Types of Businesses in NYC worksheet, cut along the dashed lines
- Types of Businesses in NYC worksheet
- Pie Chart: New York City Businesses worksheet
- Bar Graph: Change in Number of NYC Businesses, 2001-2012
- Bill’s Report worksheet

EXPLAIN
1. When many people consider career choices, they think about getting hired by a company or organization, but working for oneself is an option too. What is a term for someone who works for themselves?
   - Self-employed, small business owner, owner-operator, entrepreneur.

2. Why would someone want to open their own business?
   - You are your own boss. You make all the decisions—set the hours, can choose your own clients and decide how big or small the business becomes.
   - Passion for a project! Some people start their own business out of a passion to serve a particular population by providing a specific service—sometimes one that might not yet exist, or is lacking in a particular area.

*RAENs will provide regional adaptations.
Some qualified workers who have had difficulty getting hired by employers for a variety of reasons, including their appearance, past experiences or other factors, can become very successful entrepreneurs. Sometimes the factors that deterred employers from hiring them make them especially appealing to clients, for example, women-owned construction companies or businesses owned by formerly incarcerated workers.

3 What might be especially challenging about owning your own business?

- Everything rests on you. In addition to becoming an expert in the service you provide, you also need to know a lot about and be good at running a business. You’re responsible for paying yourself and any employees, making sure people who sell you materials or services are paid on time, finding the best prices for materials and services you’ll need, finding clients, advertising, and more!

- For one-person businesses, if you are unable to work, for example due to illness, personal reasons or vacation, your business may be closed and may not generate revenue—or you may need to find a way to cover your absence or generate income while you are away.

- For businesses with more than one employee, you are responsible for hiring, training and terminations. You’re responsible for understanding labor laws and ethical practices—how much employees should be paid, what benefits they should receive, managing their schedules, preparing their tax forms and more.

4 Ask students to write down the names and/or services of businesses in their neighborhood that might be owned by entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurs may be the only employee of their business, or they may employ others. When students are finished writing the names of small businesses and business owners, ask them to share some of them with the class and write them on the board.

- Examples can include:

  - bodegas
  - “Mom and Pop” pharmacies
  - hardware or other store
  - laundromats
  - dog walkers
  - babysitters and nannies
  - handypersons
  - accountants
  - restaurant owners (restaurateurs)
  - caterers
5 Distribute the *Prediction Guide: Types of Businesses in NYC*. Don’t worry if you don’t know the answer—take a guess. By the end of the lesson you will learn the correct answers.

6 Once they’re done, ask students who thinks they have the highest percentage for the first question. Take notes on the board. Then ask if anyone has an answer that is higher. Continue until you have the highest guess for the first question. Then do the same to get to the lowest. Continue this for the remaining questions. You will return to this sheet at the end of the lesson.

7 Distribute *Types of Businesses in NYC*. Ask students to work individually to complete the handout. Once they are done, ask them to talk about the passage with a partner. Write the passage on the board and fill in the blanks one by one. If there is disagreement, ask students to discuss their answers until there is consensus.

The passage reads:

*New York City is a city of small businesses. Of the approximately 220,000 businesses located in the City, 98% are small (fewer than 100 employees) and 89% are very small (fewer than 20 employees). These businesses already employ nearly half of the City's workforce and they are growing. Very small businesses were responsible for nearly a quarter of the new hires in the City between 2007 and 2012.*

8 Ask students to underline other numbers and/or measurements in the paragraph: *Fewer than 100, 89%, nearly a quarter, etc.*

9 Ask your students to consider this statement: “Of the approximately 220,000 businesses located in the City, 98% are small.” *What does 98% mean? Can someone explain it without using the word “percent”?”* This is a way to get a sense of your students’ understanding of percents. Look for students to explain that almost all businesses in New York City are small. Hopefully, one of your students will say that 98 out of every 100 businesses are small. If no one says this, this is an opportunity to explain the meaning of *per cent* (“for every 100”). Then, see if anyone knows how to find out the number of small businesses in New York City.

\[ .98 \times 220,000 \]

10 Distribute *Pie Chart: New York City Businesses*. Ask students to work on it independently for five minutes before allowing them to work in groups of 2-3.

11 When students are finished, share the answer key you’ve prepared to review their responses. Ask who might use a graph like this.
Distribute *Bar Graph: Change in Number of NYC Businesses, 2001–2012*. Ask students to take a few minutes to try to understand what kind of information is in the graph. Give them a few more minutes to share with a partner. Bring the class together and ask the following questions:

**In your own words, what do the numbers on the left side of the graph (vertical) mean?**
- *Groupings of businesses according to the number of employees they have.*

**In your own words, what do the numbers along the bottom of the graph represent?**
- *The percent change in the number of businesses in each category between 2001 and 2012.*

I want to have a better understanding of how this works. Who can explain what this graph tells us about businesses of 10-19 employees?
- *In 2012 there were 7% more businesses employing 10-19 people than there were in 2001.*

Ask students to write the following statement underneath the graph:

> **Write at least three true statements, based on the information in this graph.**

Ask students to write their statements on their own. As they finish, ask them to share with a partner. Do they agree that all the statements are true? Then see if they can write a few more true statements together.

Write the following statement on the board:

> **Between 2001 and 2012, businesses with the largest number of employees experienced the greatest growth.**

Ask students to talk in groups of 2-3 and decide if the statement is true or false. Ask them to be prepared to explain their answer. If they think the statement is false, they should re-write it to make it true.
Take a vote and see how many students think the statement is true and how many think it is false. Have students on both sides explain their reasoning.

There are many ways to answer this question. Here is one possible response:

- The statement is false. There was a 3% decrease in the number of businesses with 1000+ employees. The categories of businesses with the largest increases were businesses with 5-9 employees (a 15% increase) and businesses with 1-4 employees (a 11% increase).

After a few students have explained their thinking, take another vote. If many students still think it is true, explain why it is false.

Return to the Prediction Guide and ask students to correct their original answers based on their work in today’s lesson.

**OPTIONAL ACTIVITY: Bill’s Report**

Ask students to get into groups of 2-3 and discuss the worksheet. There are two levels of answers here:

- We know that the total number of businesses cannot be more than 220,000, but according to Bill’s graph there are 415,800 businesses in NYC. Also, a full pie chart represents 100%—here we have 189%. Also, since pie charts represent 100%, the 98% should be almost the whole thing, not about half.

- The root of Bill’s misunderstanding is that the very small businesses are a subset of small businesses. So the 89% is part of the 98%. A better version of the graph might just show small businesses (98%) vs. large businesses (2%). The graph in the previous pie chart worksheet would also work.
Prediction Guide: Types of Businesses in NYC

1. What percentage of businesses in NYC employ more than 100 people?

2. What percentage of businesses in NYC employ less than 100 people?

3. What percentage of businesses in NYC employ less than 20 people?

4. How many businesses are there in NYC?
Types of Businesses in NYC

Use each of the following to fill in the blanks in the passage below.

New York City is a city of small businesses. Of the approximately ____________
businesses located in the City, ________________ are small (fewer than 100
employees) and 89% are very small (______________ employees). These
businesses already employ ________________ of the City’s workforce and they are
growing. Very small businesses were responsible for nearly a quarter of the new hires in
the City between 2007 and ________________.

This passage was adapted from http://www1.nyc.gov/assets/smallbizfirst/downloads/pdf/small-business-first-report.pdf
New York City is a city of small businesses. Of the approximately 220,000 businesses located in the City, 98% are small (fewer than 100 employees) and 89% are very small (fewer than 20 employees). These businesses already employ nearly half of the City’s workforce and they are growing. Very small businesses were responsible for nearly a quarter of the new hires in the City between 2007 and 2012.
Section 9.1

1. How many NYC businesses have fewer than 100 employees? Show your work.

2. How many NYC businesses have more than 100 employees? Show your work.

3. How many NYC businesses have fewer than 20 employees? Show your work.

4. Fill in missing information in the pie chart above.

5. Which title for this graph do you think is best? Write it above and be prepared to explain your choice.
   A. Businesses in New York City
   B. New York City Employment
   C. Small Businesses Strengthen New York City’s Economy
BAR GRAPH:
Change in Number of New York City Businesses, 2001-2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Employees</th>
<th>Percentage Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1000+ Employees</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>500-999 Employees</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>250-499 Employees</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100-249 Employees</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-99 Employees</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-49 Employees</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-19 Employees</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-9 Employees</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-4 Employees</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, County Business Patterns

This chart is from http://www1.nyc.gov/assets/smallbizfirst/downloads/pdf/small-business-first-report.pdf
Bill’s Report

Bill works for the City of New York. His boss asked him to create a graph that showed the breakdown of the kinds of businesses in the city to show that it is important for New York City’s government to support small businesses. He checked over his work and didn’t see any mistakes, but he feels like there is something wrong. He brings it to you for help.

What problems do you see in Bill’s graph?
Small Business Narratives in Retail*

Students read narratives about people who started their own Retail businesses, then consider the steps necessary to open those businesses.

**PREP**

Write the following questions on the board:

1. What type of products does the business sell?
2. Why did the owner(s) start this business?
3. What steps do you think the entrepreneur took to open this business?

**MATERIALS**

- *Mix it Yourself: Guerra Paint and Pigment Corporation* article
- *From Backup Singers to Business Owners: Tish and Snooky Bellomo of Manic Panic* article
- *Coming Home: Todd Buckingham of Buckingham Hardware* article

**EXPLAIN**

1. We’re going to read about people who have started Retail businesses and consider what it takes to start your own business. Do you know anyone who runs their own business—someone in your family, a neighbor?

2. Divide the class into three groups and assign each group one of the articles to read. As they read, students should underline parts of the article that address questions #1 and #2 on the board.

3. When they are finished reading, students should discuss the article as a group and write answers to #1 and #2 on a piece of paper.

4. Ask students to share their responses and write them on the board.

5. Ask students to discuss in their group the steps that they think are required to start this business, and write the list of required steps to answer #3. Some of the steps are mentioned in some of the articles, and others will need to be identified by students’ close consideration of what it takes to start a business. What are all the steps the business owner needed to take to bring their business from idea to opening day?
There are dozens of steps a business owner needs to take to become a fully operating business, depending on the type of product or service being offered. Some of the steps for developing a Retail business include: identifying or developing a product that you want to sell, developing a name for the business, securing a location, if appropriate, deciding on product prices, advertising your business, and lots more!

6 When groups are finished writing their lists, ask them to share with the class and write the steps on the board.

7 For the teacher: In New York City*, there are over 6,000 rules that businesses have to comply with. (Not all 6,000 apply to the same business!) To make it easier for New Yorkers to start businesses, there are many free city services that help future business-owners know what they need to do to open up shop and remain a vendor in good standing with the city. There are free courses in how to file the proper legal documents, how to secure funding, even how to compete to have the City of New York as a customer for minority or women-owned businesses. The Office of Small Business Services offers courses in these and other topics. Some of these resources appear on the next page.
New York City’s Office of Small Business Services offers free courses in all five boroughs to help New Yorkers open small businesses.


New York City has business services specifically designed to help immigrants open small businesses.


There are also resources customized for women starting their own businesses.

https://we.nyc/
Mix it Yourself: Guerra Paint and Pigment Corporation

Art Guerra founded Guerra Paint and Pigment as part of his search to find the paints he needed as an artist. In the 1970s, Art Guerra was hired through CETA, a government program, to create public murals on buildings throughout the Lower East Side. His only problem was the paint. “The first thing I did was go out and buy poster paint,” explains Art Guerra. “I bought a can of this beautiful, bright red. I added a little white to the red and it turned gray. I couldn’t figure it out, so I called the paint company and they said that they added black to the red pigment to make it darker. I was like, What? That’s not how you make a color darker!”

Paint is created by mixing pigment, or the raw color, with a base, such as acrylics for art projects or latex for painting walls. Because pigment is expensive, commercial paint tends to use as little pigment as possible, adding water, ammonia and other chemicals, instead. As a result, commercial colors often do not mix well and will fade more quickly over time. Art Guerra’s solution as an artist was to buy pigment directly from a commercial paint manufacturer and mix it himself. One additional benefit was that by mixing the paint himself he could add as much pigment as he wanted, creating saturated or intense colors.

While working on his murals, artists kept coming over to his site to ask how he was getting such vibrant colors. They told him that he should open his own store where
customers could create their own custom mixed paints. When his mural project ended, Art took their advice. He opened Guerra Paint and Pigment in 1984 in the Lower East Side, a location he chose because of the neighborhood’s cheap rents and because he knew the area after spending six years painting murals there.

“My store became a little hangout and people started discovering it. Artists would come to hang out in the neighborhood and they’d notice my little store. I’d give them a demonstration of how to use pigments to make your own paint and they’d be floored.”

Guerra Paint and Pigment’s business model is unique. They buy and prepare pigment for use in paint. Instead of buying ready-mixed paints, customers buy pigment and paint base separately. They can either mix the pigment and base on their own or on location at the store. The store teaches customers how to mix paints and has online tutorials.

Art Guerra was joined by partners Jody Bretnall and Seren Morey in 2000 as demand for their product increased. Seren Morey is in charge of the store, and Jody Bretnall is in charge of the workshop where pigments are processed and the paint is mixed.

Although artists were the primary target market, decorators and do-it-yourself home painters have jumped on the bandwagon. Guerra pigments have been used to paint everything from apartment walls to stage sets to Lady Gaga’s piano.

Guerra Paint and Pigment has built up the largest rare pigment collection in the world. They currently have over 230 colors in stock and are always looking for new pigments. Colors are being discovered or created constantly all over the world. At the same time, other colors fall out of fashion and are no longer produced. These colors become extinct when the last ounce of pigment is used. This is where Guerra Paint and Pigment steps in. “I opened my store with very little. I learned to call up old paint companies and ask if they had any old pigments lying around that they didn’t want. And they’d say, ‘Sure, we have a whole corner of pigments we don’t use anymore,’” explains Art Guerra.

“It’s like a treasure hunt,” Jody Bretnall adds. “We just got 1,000 pounds of a dark blue pigment from Germany. It was originally going to be used on a super high end Porche or other luxury car, but the color was rejected by the automaker. Now it’s on sale here.”
From Back-up Singers to Business Owners: Tish and Snooky Bellomo of Manic Panic

Adapted from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4wRrtxrjGps
https://www.manicpanic.com/ourhistory
https://www.atlasobscura.com/articles/manic-panic-isnt-just-a-hair-dye-brand-it-was-the-first-punk-store-in-america
https://www.popmatters.com/010301-manicpanic-2496101434.html

Back in the 1970s, Snooky and Tish Bellomo fell in love with New York's punk rock scene. They formed their own girl group and sang back-up for Blondie. As they went from tour to recording appointments, the other musicians noticed and complimented their personal style. On 7/7/77, they decided to put their fashion sense to work, opening Manic Panic, America's first punk boutique.

"Everybody used to copy the way we looked. Right before we opened Manic Panic, we were in Blondie. People used to look at us and see what we were wearing, and then start wearing it themselves, so we decided we would capitalize on it a bit and open this little shop," explains Tish Bellomo. "We knew where to find stuff. When we were in high school we went to thrift shops. We'd buy all these great old vintage dresses from the '20s and '30s and '40s. Because we were poor, we could never get new clothes, so we started thrift shopping and we had original stuff that nobody else had."

They opened Manic Panic with no business experience and almost no money. Snooky Bellomo had saved $250 from her department store job, which was just enough money to pay the first month's rent on their St. Marks Place storefront. "St. Marks wasn't cool then. It was a wasteland. It was like this battle zone, there were all these empty store fronts. No one was shopping there. But we could afford it," Snooky Bellomo said. Between the two sisters and their friend and former partner, Gina, they managed to come up with the rent every month.

The sisters were living with their mother in the Bronx, enabling them to put everything they earned through sales or by working outside jobs back into the
business. Their store was furnished by pulling discarded mannequins out of a department store dumpster. The floors and ceiling were painted black to hide the cracks. They drilled holes in the wall to hold stiletto heels to save both space and the cost of shoe racks. They traveled from their Bronx home each day to scour thrift and vintage stores for high heeled shoes and boots, sharkskin suits, poodle skirts, sunglasses and any other item that they liked—the more extreme, the better—to resell at their boutique.

They opened the store in July 1977. By December, they realized that the store was going to make it, largely because it was the only store that sold punk style clothes, accessories and beauty products. One of their most popular items was their neon hair dyes which they brought in from England.

These brightly colored hair dyes ended up saving—and changing—their business when they were forced out of their St. Marks Place location in 1989, as the neighborhood became trendy and their rent quadrupled, leaving them with no store and nowhere to go. They relocated to Snooky’s then-boyfriend’s studio apartment and piled cases of hair dye in every shade of the rainbow up to the ceiling.

Without a brick and mortar store, they concentrated on selling hair dye over the phone and through mail order. They targeted beauty stores, stylists and hairdressers as well the individual customers they’d kept. Even when they’d had a physical store, they’d always taken phone orders and mailed products to customers who were unable to visit their location. They now capitalized on that mailing list to help their business rebound. Their daily routine included taking phone orders, sorting through cases of hair dyes to find the right jars and then racing to UPS before it closed while packing the items in the backseat of the car.

They moved all over lower Manhattan throughout the next ten years from sublet to short term lease before settling in Long Island City with their new business model—one that includes both wholesale and retail customers and that relies heavily on phone and online sales. They promote their products through how-to videos, personal appearances at beauty and trade shows and on social media. They recently launched a professional line of dyes aimed at hair and beauty professionals. Manic Panic has about 30 employees and makes several million dollars in sales annually. Katy Perry’s blue hair and Rihanna’s red are both due to Manic Panic dyes.

However, Manic Panic’s moving days may not be over. “Now that we’ve pioneered Long Island City, once our lease is up here, we hear that they’re raising our rent. We’re not going to be able to stay, so we’re going to have to move again. So here we go pioneering not only the hair dye revolution, but the New York City real estate problem. You keep pioneering a new neighborhood and then you get trumped out of it as people with more money come in. That’s the nature of the beast,” Tish says.
Todd Buckingham’s goals were simple. He wanted to live in his hometown of Croghan, New York, and he wanted to run his own business. He started by analyzing the town and its surrounding area as well as the already existing businesses. Todd decided to open a full-service hardware store in 1995, concentrating on the needs of his rural community by selling a variety of products including home, farm and garden hardware, paint, power tools, heating, welding, plumbing and electrical supplies.

Three years later, Todd added a sporting goods section to his store, reflecting both his own interests in basketball, football, hunting, fishing and camping, as well as those of consumers in the area. His Great Outdoors section features equipment for a variety of activities popular in the rural area including fishing, camping, hunting, hiking, snowshoeing, as well as vacuum packers to save your catch or prize.

He further expanded his offerings in 2006 by adding a rental department where customers can rent everything from carpet shampooers, Sanders, and cutoff saws, to brush cutters, stump grinders and chippers. Customers can call or stop in to make a reservation. They can also rent available items on the spot.
Buckingham Hardware’s business model relies on evaluating and adapting to community needs, customer service and an online marketing presence through his website and Facebook page. In addition to selling hunting equipment, Todd Buckingham teaches the Hunter Education course necessary for first time hunting licenses. He is also a member of the Croghan Improvement Association.

Customer service starts with free popcorn at his store and goes on to include training his sales team to answer customer questions on do-it-yourself projects and a rewards program. He researches his competitors’ products and prices to ensure that his are the lowest in the area. Buckingham Hardware currently has 5 employees and generates almost $1,000,000 in sales annually.

In 2005, Todd Buckingham won PRO Hardware’s Retailer of the Year award. Paul Diamond, Bostwick-Braun sales representative, said, “Todd is a terrific business person—computer literate, aggressive, and a trendsetter. He knows his competition and even posts their higher prices in his store. He is in sync with what has to be done to be successful.”

Mark Foss, PRO Hardware program director for Bostwick-Braun, adds, “Todd continues to work on merchandising, margin maintenance, and inventory. He is constantly refining his product mix and the services offered. The results he has achieved in his store’s brief existence would be the envy of most retailers.” Todd Buckingham was also honored with a Young Retailer of the Year award in 2004.
The Nuts and Bolts of Launching a Business*

Students research the legal requirements of opening a business. They learn how to use the website of New York City’s Department of Small Business Services* to find the required steps to open the imaginary business of their choice.

PREP

- Navigate to https://www1.nyc.gov/nycbusiness/wizard. Familiarize yourself with this site. Students will use it in this activity.
- Write the website above on the board.

MATERIALS

- This activity requires computer use.

EXPLAIN

1. Did you know that hair braiders are required to have a license to work? Many professions, particularly ones in which a worker has the potential to cause harm to the public, require licenses. Plumbing, nursing, food preparation and education are just a few of the dozens of professions that require professional licenses. These licenses are granted by the state and usually require a set number of training or education hours, a set number of supervised work hours, and the passing of a certifying exam.

Just as health inspectors inspect restaurants to make sure the food they provide is safe for customers to eat, other types of businesses are regulated as well. As entrepreneurs plan to open their businesses, one of their important tasks is to research and comply with legal requirements.

2. New York City has recognized that it is sometimes difficult for a new business owner to understand the legal requirements of starting a business. The Mayor’s Office recently created a way to simplify the process so that businesses can open quickly. After all, new businesses are good for the economy. People preparing to open a new business can take free courses through New York City’s Office of Small Business Services in everything from creating a business plan to applying for grants or finding investors to advertising. They can even enter contests to win start-up money. In addition, they can find out the legal requirements by taking a short survey online.
Today we are going to explore a website that helps New Yorkers figure out the steps required to open a business. Ask students to navigate to the URL on the board. Circulate to make sure all students are at this page before going to the next step.

Ask students to imagine a type of Retail business they would like to learn about opening, for example a business that sells t-shirts or tennis rackets. They will select Retail as the business type from the drop-down menu. They will then imagine certain details of their business, for example, if they have employees or if they will be working alone, if they will have a “brick-and-mortar” shop or if they will be working from home. After answering a few questions, they will receive a list of requirements for opening that type of business.

https://www1.nyc.gov/nycbusiness/wizard
Click on **Start New Scenario**. You will be asked a series of questions about your imagined business. After answering the questions, you will receive a list of requirements for opening that type of business.

When students are finished, have them read about the requirements, then discuss the following questions as a class:

- How was your experience of finding requirements for your imagined business?
- What were some of the required steps on your list?
- What additional steps that are not on your list do you think you would have to take?
- Do you think you would like to become a small business owner at any point in the future? Why or why not?
Starting an Online Business

Students read about Casper Mattress as a case study of an online business. They then read about the steps to opening an online business, review the Casper website and analyze some of the decisions made by the company described in the reading.

PREP

Write the following questions on the board:

1. What products does this online business sell?
2. Why did they choose this product?
3. Why did they choose to open an online business instead of a brick and mortar store?
4. What steps do you think are needed to open an online retail business?

MATERIALS

- Casper Mattresses: An Online Wake-Up Call reading
- How to Start an Online Business reading
- Online Business Vocabulary handout
- Casper Website handout
- Casper Case Study worksheet

EXPLAIN

1. We’re going to read about an online business. Have you bought something online? Why did you buy it online instead of going to a store?
   - It’s more convenient; I don’t have to leave the house.
   - Easier to find things online than go to a store; more choices.
   - Can get cheaper prices online.

2. We’re going to read about the founders of Casper, the first online mattress company. Founders of a company are often called entrepreneurs.
What do you think the word “entrepreneur” means? How are entrepreneurs different from other business owners?

Entrepreneurs are the first people to start a new business, or people that change the way business is currently being done.

3 Divide the class into groups of four. Distribute Casper Mattresses: An Online Wake-Up Call reading. Each group will read the article and underline the parts that address questions #1, #2 and #3 on the board.

4 When they are finished reading, each group should choose a scribe to record the group’s responses on a piece of paper. Students should discuss their answers to #1, #2 and #3, and provide evidence for their answers from the article in the form of quotes with the information. When students are done, ask groups to share their responses to Questions #1, #2 and #3 and write them on the board.

5 Why are the founders of Casper called entrepreneurs? What did they do that was new or different?

They sold mattresses online without people seeing them in a store first.

6 All retailers have to register with the state they are located in to open a business. But online retailers have additional things to consider. Moving onto Question #4 on the board: What steps do you think are needed to open an online retail business?

Create a website so that people can learn about your products.
Have a way for people to buy your products online.
Have a way to ship products to your customers.

7 We are going to read about some of the steps necessary to open a business. First, we will read about the steps to open an online business in general. Then, we will read about the steps to open an online retail store.

8 Distribute How to Start an Online Business reading. Students should stay in their groups. Ask students to read and annotate it, marking anything that seems important, interesting, surprising or confusing. They can also circle unfamiliar words and write any questions they have in the margins.

NOTE: For instructions on annotation, see the Careerkit User’s Guide, Section 11.

9 After students complete the reading, distribute the Online Business Vocabulary handout. Students should complete the handout in their groups, referring to the reading as necessary. Review the vocabulary with the class.
10 Distribute the *Casper Website* handout.

11 Now let’s take another look at Casper. Using the photographs from their website and your reading, let’s review what Casper did to meet the five steps of opening an online store. Distribute the *Casper Case Study* worksheet and ask students to complete it in their groups.

12 Discuss the answers with the whole class.

13 Additional discussion questions:

- Casper sells mattresses and sleep supplies. How would their website change if they were selling nail polish and beauty supplies?
  - Would the website look different?
  - What would stay the same?

- Why is a “catchy” or easy to remember domain name important?
Casper Mattresses: An Online Wake-Up Call

Adapted from https://www.inc.com/ilan-mochari/2015-30-under-30-casper.html
http://www.marketingtango.com/disruptive-brand-strategy-turned-casper-500m-business/
https://simplymeasured.com/blog/what-your-brand-can-learn-from-caspers-instagram-account/#sm.000001fa0xmlz7hdmqqvro04e4q5t

In 2013, the five founders of Casper were just a bunch of would be entrepreneurs in search of a product to sell. Luke Sherwin, Neil Parikh, and Gabe Flateeman were college buddies. The trio, who moved to New York City after graduation, were trying—and failing—to launch an online business that matched retailers with people who would promote their products. “It was the classic story,” Parikh says. “Move to New York, have no money, share a room, that kind of stuff.”

Sherwin, Parikh and Flateeman ended up sharing office space with Phillip Krim, who had a struggling online advertising business of his own. Advertising wasn’t Krim’s first venture. In college, he had started an online retail business that bought and then resold a variety of products, including foam mattresses. His brief experience selling mattresses had convinced him that “the mattress industry was very behind on embracing technology and anything new.”

In California, designer Jeff Chapin, had come to the same conclusion. He had previously studied the mattress industry as part of his job at Ideo, an international design company. “We looked at their Research and Design department, their business-model and did shop-alongs in retail stores. There was nothing new, nothing innovative going on. It just seemed like a broken industry.”

A broken industry was exactly the opportunity for the five were looking for. They eagerly set about analyzing its flaws. The mattress industry is dominated by a few large conglomerates. “All this basically just means that the customer is going to keep getting hosed and hosed because there is no price comparison in this market,” says Parikh. “How can there be, when Sleepy’s, 1800Mattress, and Mattress Firm are all owned by the same people?”

Even though there are only a small number of companies producing mattresses, the mattresses sold at various retailers often
have different names and prices, making mattress buying confusing. As writer Kaliko Castille noted in her article on Casper, “A few months ago, a friend of mine moved into a new apartment and was in the market for a new bed. Before she decided on one, she wrote down the name of about ten furniture stores within 30 miles and visited each of them. My girlfriend and I tagged along, but I was quickly overwhelmed by all of the choices. Between the different brands, the firmness ratings, and the different type of mattresses, it just seemed like a daunting task.”

Casper’s solution was to sell only one model, a high-density foam mattress, to sell it only online, and to offer customers a 100-day trial period during which they could return it for a full refund with Casper paying the shipping costs. “It doesn’t make sense that if you try a bed for two minutes in a store while you’re awake, you’ll find the best long-term mattress for you,” explains Sherwin. By selling online and shipping directly to consumers, Casper lowered its overhead since it doesn’t need stores. They design and produce the mattress themselves. These factors allow the company to sell its mattresses at a lower price than many of its competitors.

Given their initial advertising budget of $30,000 and their online sales strategy, Sherwin and Parikh, who oversee sales and promotions, and Flateman, who built and is in charge of maintaining their website, came up with an online marketing strategy that relied on social media. They ran an automated chatline for insomniacs, called the Insomnobot-3000, posted cartoons and dog pictures on Instagram and humorous tweets about sleep. Instead of focusing on their product—mattresses, their strategy focused on sleep as an activity.

When Casper opened for business on April 22, 2014, their goal was to reach $1.8 million in sales in 18 months. They reached that goal within eight weeks. However, this remains a small share of a $13 billion market, with Casper currently making up just over 1% of mattress sales. According to IBISWorld retail analyst Anya Cohen, at least 95 percent of consumers prefer to buy beds in stores. Additionally, their business model is no longer unique. Other online mattress companies have sprung up as challengers. Major retailers such as Mattress Firm have opened online, direct-to-consumer stores of their own.
In response, Casper has opened showrooms where people can see and try out their mattresses. They created roving ‘Mattress Trucks’ that move from city to city, where people can hop in and test the brand. Casper also invested in pop-up stores in key cities. They opened a research facility in California with test labs in addition to their New York offices in order to update their products. They have expanded from a single mattress to three different styles, at different prices. “Can your team build and execute and innovate on a regular basis? Doing it once is easy,” Parikh notes. “Doing it over and over again and upping your game? That’s the hard part.”

They have also expanded their product line past human mattresses to include dog beds and have formed a partnership to sell sheets and pillows at Target stores. Casper increasingly sees itself less as a simple mattress company and more as a lifestyle-driven business that looks at sleep as a unique experience comparable to exercise or cooking or travel. “If I wake up in the morning and say, ‘I want to sleep a little bit better,’ I have to go and get a mattress from a furniture store, sheets from Bed Bath & Beyond—you end up having to get things from all these different places,” says Parikh. “But if you wake up in the morning and say, ‘I want to become a better runner,’ you immediately think Nike. There’s nothing like that for sleep.” Casper aims to become that.

### VOCABULARY

- **Conglomerate**: a large company made up of a number of smaller businesses
- **Daunting**: intimidating, making you feel worried about your ability to do something
- **Overhead**: the costs of operating a business
How to Start an Online Business
Adapted from https://www.wikihow.com/Start-an-Online-Business

1 Define your product or service.

Online businesses have access to millions of customers, but they also have a lot more competition. No matter what you’re trying to sell, you can bet that hundreds of online retailers have a similar idea. What makes your product stand out?

Let’s say you make jewelry. What makes yours different? If one-of-a-kind jewelry is your gig, make sure it’s truly original. If you’re selling a line of skincare products, what is your experience in the field? Check out the competition. Figure out what isn’t already being offered and find a way to fill that gap with your product.

2 Register your business.

Your business needs to be registered according to your state’s laws. Choose an official business name and fill out the appropriate paperwork to make your business is official. Before you register, it can help to have a business plan laid out. Consider your production costs, shipping costs, taxes, and web hosting fees. Know the business regulations in your state, and be sure to comply when you get things up and running.
3 **Register a domain name.**

Your domain name is your Internet address, like Nike.com. It lets your customers find you. Like the name of any other business, go for something short and catchy that will be easy for people to remember. Visit the website of a domain registration company and test out some of the names you’re interested in to see whether they’re available. Once you land on a good name, go ahead and register it.

4 **Get a web hosting service.**

There are free hosting services, but if you’re serious about running an online business long term, consider paying for one that offers all the services you need. You’ll be less likely to run into problems when your business starts to take off. It’s important to choose a hosting service that allows for growth. Some hosting services are highly structured. These are good for people who have less experience with computer programming because you can choose from different templates to easily create a website. Other web hosting services allow you to do your own programming. This gives you greater flexibility but requires more computer knowledge.
Creating Your Online Store

1. Create a website that reflects your online store.
   Elegant or funky, classical or hipster, your online store should reflect what you’re selling.

2. Your site needs to be easy for customers to use when they’re ready to buy.
   Your customers should have to make no more than 2 clicks in order to land on the page where they can make a purchase. The top of every page should have a link to your shopping cart. Make it easy for people to buy your products!

3. Get ecommerce software or an all-inclusive ecommerce web service.
   You’ll need this so your customers can view your products, enter their information and make a secure purchase. The software also keeps track of inventory and safely stores customer information.

4. Set up a third-party payment processing service such as PayPal and/or merchant account so people can use credit/debit cards to pay online.
   If you want to sell, people need a way to buy.

5. Be social.
   Keeping your name out there is key to success. Have a business account on Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn and any new social media outlets. If your business is graphically oriented, have accounts on Instagram, Flickr and Tumblr as well. Whenever there is news of any kind—a new product, a new entry, a new photo—cross-post it to all your social media sites. Make sure those sites link back to your main website, and that your website has links to all of them.
Online Business Vocabulary

Fill in the blanks with the correct vocabulary word. Refer to *How to Start an Online Business* reading for context clues.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VOCABULARY WORDS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• merchant account</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• domain name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• all-inclusive ecommerce web service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• third party processing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• ecommerce software</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• merchant account</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Michael and Olivia plan to open an online store to sell hula hoops, pet rocks, mood rings and other vintage pop items. The name of their store is “Bad Fads.” They want this to be their Internet address in order for people to find their products. They need to check to see if their ___________ is available.

Michael and Olivia plan to set up their own website. Olivia has some computer experience and Michael is good at graphic design. Since they have some, but not a lot, of computer and design knowledge, they need a ___________ that has structured designs that they can choose from and modify.

___________ or an ___________

lets Michael and Olivia manage their inventory, add or remove products from their website, calculate taxes, and everything else needed to manage a website and fulfill orders.

Michael and Olivia also need to decide how people will pay for their products. They could go with ___________ such as PayPal, where people pay the service which transfers the money to them; they could open a ___________ so that people could pay them directly through their credit or debit accounts; or they could do both!
Casper Website

The following screen captures are what a Casper customer sees as they make a purchase online.

1. The speech bubble in the lower right corner opens an online chat with a sales representative.
The chat box opens so customers can ask questions of Casper employees.

The Shopping Cart items are on the right side of the photograph.

Customers enter their credit or debit card information to pay.
Casper Case Study

Work in your groups to evaluate the steps Casper took in setting up their business. Refer to the various handouts to help respond to the questions. Your answers should cite evidence from the handouts. Some answers won’t be directly found in the readings, so you will need to make inferences for some questions.

1. Create a website that reflects your online store.

Do you think that Casper’s website reflects their product and their business? Why or why not?

2. Your site needs to be easy for customers to use when they’re ready to buy.

Do you think that Casper’s website looks easy to use? Why or why not?

3. Get ecommerce software or an all-inclusive ecommerce web service.

What tells you that Casper has ecommerce software or an ecommerce web service? Why is one necessary for running an online store?
4 Set up a third-party payment processing service such as PayPal and/or merchant account so people can use credit/debit cards to pay online.

How can people pay to buy products from Casper? Why do you think they used these payment methods?

5 Be social.

Give examples of Casper’s social media. What are some common factors? Why do you think they used that approach?
A Panel of Retail Professionals

After reading graphs and articles, students now have the opportunity to interact directly with professionals. They develop questions for the panelists, then listen to the presentation, asking their questions and taking note of the answers.

COORDINATION

Having a career panel requires a lot of preparation, but it is very engaging to students.

1 Identify professions of interest to students. You may want to create a career interest survey prior to the class.

2 Invite 5–6 panelists who work in fields of interest to students. These can include professionals and students. Students can offer some insight into the career preparation process, while professionals can discuss actually working in the field.

3 Where to find panelists:
   - Ask people you know—relatives, friends, neighbors.
   - Ask other teachers at your site for recommendations.
   - Ask student services personnel or professors at a local college. Some academic departments require that faculty complete a certain number of presentation or outreach hours per semester.
   - Ask at places of business with which you are familiar.
   - Ask students for recommendations.

4 What to ask for:
   - Explain that you teach basic education classes, or specify literacy, HSE or ESL, to adult students who are studying careers while they are working on their academic skills.
   - Explain that as part of the class you are creating a career panel, and that students are interested in hearing about their profession. Ask the panelists to be available for 1.5 hours (adjust this time as needed). Explain that you will ask them to briefly describe what they do and be available to answer questions from students.
   - Let your interest in your students come through. Talk about what impresses you about them. For example, they are parents who returned
to school after their children have graduated, or people who come to school after working a night shift, or young people who do their homework while their friends are socializing.

**Confirm, confirm, confirm**

You can never confirm too many times. It’s terrible to have panelists not show up and be left with a thin panel. Confirm the date, time and location.

**Prepare the panelists**

The panelists might have never participated in a panel before. They might be nervous and unsure of what to discuss. Choose 4-5 from the topics below.

- Email the panelists a list of 4-5 topics you would like them to discuss. Use the ones listed below or create your own.
- Can you describe what you do on a daily basis at work?
- How did you get your job?
- What do you like about it?
- What is difficult about your job?
- What majors or certificates are required? Is licensing required?
- Is there a path to advancement? What are some higher level and lower level positions on this track?
- What personality traits are a good match for this career?
- What hours do you work?
- What benefits are typical in this profession?
- How do you think this profession is changing? What do you think it will be like in 3-5 years?

Let them know that the students will also generate their own questions for discussion.

---

**TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL CAREER PANEL**

**A mix of formal and informal settings**

A mix of formal and informal settings is ideal, for example, a moderated panel followed by lunch that the panelists are invited to. Maybe your site can order pizza, or you ask students and panelists to bring their lunch. This allows for more intimate conversations and networking. Another way is to simply have the panel take up a portion of class time, ask the panelists to stay during a break before the next part of the class begins, and ask students to take advantage of the panelists’ presence.

**Be flexible**

It’s ideal if panelists can stay for the entire event, but if one needs to leave at a certain time, it may be better to have that panelist for some of the time than not at all.

**Be gracious**

Be gracious and tell the panelists the value of their participation. Also remember that this can be a rewarding experience for panelists. It’s inspiring to meet hard-working students and feel like you’ve contributed to their learning.
Preparing Students for a Career Panel

In order for the panel to be successful, students need to be prepared so that they can engage with the panelists. They should be clear on what to expect from panelists and what will be expected of them.

EXPLAIN

1. You have read graphs and maps, watched video and read written interviews. Now it’s time to meet the professionals themselves. We’ve invited professionals here today so that you can learn about their experience in the workplace.

2. The professionals we have invited work as ____________________, ____________________, and ____________________. You will hear about their experiences in the workplace and will have the opportunity to ask them questions.

3. Write at least two questions—they shouldn’t be the same—for each panelist. What is it you really want to know about this career? Make sure the questions are complete and contain no spelling or grammatical mistakes. You may ask students to write different types of questions, for example, WH-questions.

4. If students have a difficult time thinking of questions, ask for one or two examples and write them on the board.
**My Career Map**

Having studied many aspects of careers, students will now draw their own career maps, based on their work histories.

**MATERIALS**
- *My Career Map* handout
- Paper and markers

**INSTRUCTIONS FOR UPPER LEVELS**

Give the following instructions, one at a time, making sure the class completes one step before giving instructions on the next.

1. Today you are going to map your career changes, and consider what you can learn from your work so far.

   Take out two pieces of paper. On one, list your jobs in order, starting with the earliest and moving to more recent jobs. Include jobs that you’ve held as well as ones that you interviewed for, but did not hold, either because they weren’t offered to you or because you couldn’t accept.

2. Next to each job, list anything you did to help you get or find out about the job, either one you accepted or one you didn’t. This could include research about the company or the job, talking to other employees, or preparing for the interview in other ways.

3. On the other piece of paper, draw a map, with a circle around each job you accepted, and a circle with a diagonal line through it for jobs you did not accept.

4. Between each job, write the step you took to secure or try to secure that job, and draw a box around the step, for example, seeking advice from someone who already worked in the field.

5. Draw dotted lines to show how you moved from one job to the next.
Draw a legend or key, explaining what the circles, boxes and dotted lines mean. Add any additional symbols that will make your map more informative and clear.

**KEY:**
- **Step** = 
- **Job** =
- =

**Lower Level Option:**
For a more scaffolded approach, use the worksheet on the following page.
My Career Map

Tell the story of your work history by completing the chart below, from earliest to most recent.

Job:

What Made Me Interested in this Job:

What I Did to Get the Job:

Job:

What Made Me Interested in this Job:

What I Did to Get the Job:

Job:

What Made Me Interested in this Job:

What I Did to Get the Job:
Career Map Writing Activity

Students practice writing skills by analyzing their Career Map. They explore jobs they’ve had in the past, why they made the choices they did, and goals they have for the future.

*Note:* Rather than focus on one writing strategy, this activity is designed to be flexible and invites teachers to use the activity as is (good for lower level students) or incorporate a focus on a specific writing skill of their choosing, such as topic sentences, paragraph structure, or transitional sentences.

**PREP**

- Review the writing assignment.
- **OPTIONAL:** Choose a writing strategy to incorporate into the activity. This could be a skill you have already introduced or are introducing for the first time. Some possible options include:
  - **Topic Sentences:** Use sentence starters/stems to help students focus on developing effective topic sentences for their paragraphs. For example:
    - According to the article,…
    - The article focused on…
    - The key issue discussed in the article…
  - **Paragraph Structure:** Use a Sandwich Paragraph (or other) graphic organizer to help students understand the different parts of a paragraph. See the following link or google “sandwich paragraph” for more guidance. https://missisparagraphpage.weebly.com/paragraph-sandwich.html
Transition phrases/sentences: Use transitional sentence stems/starter

to help students understand strategies useful for transitioning between ideas. For example:

In addition,…
As a result,…
First,… Second,… Third,… Finally,…

MATERIALS

- Career Map Writing Activity worksheet

EXPLAIN

1 Tell students they are now going to write about their Career Map. They will need paper and pens or pencils.

2 Review any applicable writing skills you have decided to focus on, such as topic sentences, paragraph structure, transition sentences, etc. (See Prep section for examples)

3 Distribute Career Map Writing Activity worksheet. Have students read and explain the instructions and then give students time to write.
Career Map Writing Activity

Analyze your Career Map to complete the following writing activity. Each paragraph must answer all of the questions listed for each paragraph, but may also include as many more details as you would like to add. Each paragraph should have a topic sentence, details, and examples. Make sure your sentences flow with clear logic from one idea to the next and that your paragraphs address the topic completely.

PARAGRAPH 1:
Describe your Career Map. What does it look like? Is the path moving toward one specific goal? Does it move between jobs in different industries? Does it move between jobs in the same industry? Which industries does it include? Do you notice any similarities or differences between the steps you took to get new jobs? Are there any patterns that you notice? If you could sum up your map using only one word or phrase, what would it be? What did you learn from looking at your work experience laid out on paper?

PARAGRAPH 2:
Job 1: What was your first job? What steps did you take to get it? What did you like about it? What did you dislike about it? Why did you leave? What kind of job did you want next?

PARAGRAPH 3:
Job 2: What was it? What steps did you take to get it? What did you like about it? What did you dislike about it? Why did you leave? What kind of job did you want next?

PARAGRAPH 4:
Job 3: What was it? What steps did you take to get it? What did you like about it? What did you not like about it? Why did you leave? What kind of job did you want next?

PARAGRAPH 5:
Career goals: Given your career map history, your experiences and your interests, what kinds of jobs do you think you are well suited for? What kinds of jobs are you interested in learning more about? What do you know about yourself and your career goals now?
Don’t sit down and wait for the opportunities to come. Get up and make them.

— Madame C.J. Walker

MADAM C.J. WALKER, born Sarah Breedlove in 1867, started out on the cotton fields of Louisiana, and became one of the first African American women millionaires by creating specialized hair products for African-American hair. In addition to owning her own company, she owned a hair care factory where the products she invented were produced, and a beauty school where she trained “Walker agents” who became well known in Black communities. She traveled around the country giving lecture-demonstrations to build her multi-million dollar business.

Bio adapted from https://www.biography.com/people/madam-cj-walker-9522174
Photo: https://www.thefamouspeople.com/profiles/images/madam-c-j-walker-1.jpg