The Vocabulary of Job Hunting

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Sections follow the student handout. Delete a section here when you delete it from the handout.

Vocabulary: Fill in the Blank

1. vacancy
2. referral
3. transferable skills
4. tailor
5. track record
6. shortlisted / short-listed
7. career gap
8. overqualified / over-qualified
9. competency
10. culture fit
11. follow up
12. ghosted
13. counteroffer / counter-offer
14. probation

Word Partners

Part A. 1 e 2 g 3 b 4 f 5 d 6 h 7 c 8 a

Phrases: advertise a vacancy; tailor your CV to each job; a proven track record; explain a career gap; be shortlisted for an interview; make a counteroffer; work your notice period; pass your probation.

Part B. 1 vacant 2 refer 3 tailored 4 competent 5 probationary 6 follow-up / follow up

What Would You Say? Model Answers

Accept any answer that is clear, polite, and fits the situation.

1. *A friend's company has a vacancy that interests you. Ask your friend for more information.*
Model: "I saw that your team has a vacancy for a marketing assistant. Would you have fifteen minutes this week to tell me what the work is like?" Look for a request for information, not for a job.

2. *You want a former teacher or manager to be a reference. Write the first two sentences of your message.*
Model: "I hope you are well. I am applying for a junior accountant role at Nordwell, and I was wondering whether you would be willing to act as a reference." Look for a polite question (I was wondering whether, would you be willing to).

3. *An interviewer says, "Tell me about yourself." Answer in three or four sentences for a job you would like.*
Open answer. A strong answer gives present role or studies, one or two relevant achievements or transferable skills, and why this job is the next step. It does not retell a whole life story.

4. *Your job was cut when your company closed a department. An interviewer asks why you left your last job.*
Model: "My role was made redundant when the company closed its design department." Look for redundant or laid off, not fired, and a neutral tone with no complaint about the employer.

5. *Your CV shows an eight-month career gap. Explain it in two sentences.*
Model: "I took eight months out to care for a family member. During that time I completed an online course in bookkeeping and kept up with changes in the field." Accept any honest, brief reason plus what the person did.

6. *An interviewer asks a question you did not fully understand.*
Model: "Sorry, could you rephrase the question, please?" or "Just to check, do you mean…?"

7. *It has been ten days since your final interview, and you have heard nothing. Write a short follow-up email.*
Model: "Dear Ms. Lee, Thank you again for meeting me on 14 March. I wanted to follow up on my interview for the analyst role and ask whether there is any update. I remain very interested in the

position. Best regards, ..." Look for follow up, a past-tense softener, and continued interest.

8. *You receive an offer, but the salary is lower than you hoped. Respond.*
   Model: "Thank you for the offer. I'm very interested in the role. Is there any flexibility on the starting salary?" Accept a polite counter-request that shows interest first.
9. *After you resign, your manager makes you a counteroffer, but you plan to leave. Decline politely.*
   Model: "Thank you for the counteroffer. I really appreciate it, but I've decided that the new role is the right step for me, and I'd like my resignation to stand." Look for thanks, a clear decision, and no criticism of the company.

Nuance Check

1. **T.** The short document is usually called a résumé there.
2. **F.** That is a referral. A reference speaks for you later in the process.
3. **T.** Made redundant (British) and laid off (American) mean the position was cut.
4. **F.** It is the other way around: apply for a job, apply to a company.
5. **T.** Headhunters approach people directly, often for senior roles.
6. **F.** You are still in the process, usually invited to an interview.
7. **T.** It is informal, though it now appears often in news about hiring.
8. **F.** It means you have more experience or skill than the job needs.
9. **T.** Employers sometimes make a counteroffer to keep a worker who resigns.
10. **F.** That is the notice period. Probation is a trial period at the start of a job.

Language Focus: Softening Requests and Refusals

Model answers. Part A: accept any polite version that uses the word in brackets. Part B: accept any ending that fits the situation and keeps the softened tone.

1. Could you send me the job description, please?
2. Is there any flexibility on the salary?
3. I was wondering whether there is any update on my application.
4. I'm afraid I'm not available on Monday. Would Tuesday work instead?
5. Would it be possible to give you my answer next week?
6. I was wondering if you would be willing to act as a reference for me.
7. I'm afraid I can't talk right now. Could I call you back in an hour?
8. Would it be possible to work from home one or two days a week?
9. I wanted to thank you for your advice about the logistics industry.
10. Unfortunately, I have accepted another offer, so I will not be able to attend.

Notes

Format: this unit has no reading. A short introduction replaces it, and the vocabulary is grouped by the stage of a job hunt. The handout prints a key-terms table and part of the phrase bank instead of a reading. What Would You Say? replaces the comprehension questions, and Nuance Check replaces True or False.

CV and résumé: Wikipedia (Curriculum vitae, opened 26 October 2026) says résumé is the usual North American term for the short document, that a CV there is usually a full academic record, and that CV is the usual British term. Usage in other countries is mixed (some use both words); the unit says "much of the English-speaking world" rather than listing countries.

Laid off and made redundant: the American sense of laid off (job cut, not the worker's fault) follows Monster (opened 26 October 2026). In UK government guidance, a lay-off is a temporary period without work or pay, which is why the nuance note distinguishes the British sense. Fired is described as usually, not always, connected with performance or conduct.

Opinion and practice, not research: advice in the phrase bank and nuance notes (thank-you emails, asking for a salary range, being careful with counteroffers, culture fit as a possible cover for bias) reflects common career-advice practice and varies by country and industry. Whether it is acceptable to ask about pay in a first interview differs by culture, which is why it is

also a discussion question. Notice periods and probation lengths depend on national law and contracts, so the unit gives no figures. The often-quoted claim that most jobs are never advertised (figures of 70 to 80 percent) was not used: its sources are unclear.