B1-B2 English Worksheet

The First-Job Trap: Why Do Entry-Level Jobs Require Experience?

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Article

Finding a first job can feel like a puzzle: employers want experience, but how can you gain it before anyone hires you? In Blackpool, 19-year-old Amy Butterworth spent months looking for work after completing an art diploma. To apply for a job at one retailer, she had to go through several checks on her phone, including filming herself and sending a picture of her passport. She then received an invitation to book an interview, but all the appointments had disappeared within two minutes. For many applicants, this frustrating process means they miss out on opportunities before speaking to a manager.

Competition is tough when vacancies attract hundreds of people. Employers may turn down candidates who lack experience rather than take a chance on an enthusiastic beginner. Amy had volunteered at a primary school, but repeated rejection damaged her confidence. She did not give up. The problem goes beyond qualifications: beginners need practical training to build up skills and learn what employers expect. Without useful guidance, they may never find out how to improve their applications. Finding employment can become a series of obstacles instead of a straightforward process.

Blackpool's Platform youth centre offers help with CVs, interviews and training. According to the council, it has helped more than 2,350 young people into learning, training or work since launching in 2022. Amy eventually found work in a bar and hopes to train as a tattooist. Such support can help newcomers get a foot in the door. But should companies demand previous experience for entry-level work or provide training themselves? Volunteering helps some people, while others cannot afford unpaid placements. A fair system should make it possible for effort to pay off, not just personal connections.

True/False

Decide if each statement is True (T) or False (F).

No.	Statement	T / F
1	Amy completed an art course before starting her job search.	
2	The retailer guaranteed Amy an interview after she completed its checks.	
3	People looking for work in Blackpool face very little competition.	
4	Amy had gained some experience by volunteering at a school.	
5	The article suggests qualifications are the only challenge for beginners.	
6	The Platform youth centre helps young people prepare CVs and get ready for interviews.	
7	Amy now has bar work and wants to train for a creative career.	
8	The writer argues that everyone can afford to work without pay.	

Phrase Match

Match each phrase (1-10) to the correct definition (A-J).

Phrases (1-10)	Definitions (A-J)
1. apply for	A. discover or learn information
2. go through	B. stop trying to achieve something
3. miss out on	C. bring a positive result after effort
4. turn down	D. formally request consideration for a job
5. take a chance on	E. lose an opportunity to enjoy or gain something
6. give up	F. offer an opportunity despite uncertainty
7. build up	G. gain an initial opportunity in a field
8. find out	H. complete or experience a series of steps
9. get a foot in the door	I. reject a person, request or offer
10. pay off	J. develop or increase something gradually

Synonym Match

Match each word (1-10) to the correct synonym (A-J).

Words (1-10)	Synonyms (A-J)
1. applicants	A. advice
2. frustrating	B. barriers
3. opportunities	C. self-assurance
4. vacancies	D. chances
5. confidence	E. abilities
6. practical	F. openings
7. skills	G. irritating
8. guidance	H. work
9. employment	I. hands-on
10. obstacles	J. candidates

Use the New Language

Choose 5 words or phrases from the worksheet and write your own sentences.

No.	Your sentence
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	

Discussion Questions

Student A	Student B
1. Have you ever applied for a job? What was the process like?	1. Is it fair to demand experience for an entry-level job?
2. Have you had a paid job? If so, what was your first one?	2. Should employers take a chance on people with no work history?
3. Have you ever gone through a difficult interview?	3. Should unpaid internships be allowed? Who might miss out on them?
4. Who gave you useful guidance when you first started working?	4. Do qualifications matter more than practical skills?
5. What skills did you build up at school or through hobbies?	5. How should schools prepare students for job interviews?
6. Have you ever wanted to give up after a rejection?	6. Should employers explain why they turn down candidates?
7. Would you enjoy an internship in another country?	7. Who should pay for training inexperienced employees?
8. Have personal connections ever helped you find work?	8. How can businesses help young people get a foot in the door?

Answer Key

True/False	1=T, 2=F, 3=F, 4=T, 5=F, 6=T, 7=T, 8=F
Phrase Match	1=D, 2=H, 3=E, 4=I, 5=F, 6=B, 7=J, 8=A, 9=G, 10=C
Synonym Match	1=J, 2=G, 3=D, 4=F, 5=C, 6=I, 7=E, 8=A, 9=H, 10=B

Example Sentences With the Phrases

No.	Example sentence
1	She plans to apply for three apprenticeships this week.
2	New starters sometimes go through several stages of training.
3	Without transport, some candidates miss out on useful opportunities.
4	An employer may turn down a candidate who lacks a required licence.
5	A good supervisor may take a chance on an eager trainee.
6	After many rejections, he was tempted to give up.
7	Weekend volunteering can help you build up useful skills.
8	Before the interview, find out what the company actually does.
9	A short placement can help graduates get a foot in the door.
10	Her determination finally began to pay off.