Choosing and Asking Job References

Pick people who can speak well about you, ask them the right way, and keep their details ready.

Name _____ · Date _____

Reference
Someone who an employer can speak to in order to verify or ask questions about a potential employee's background, work experience, or work ethic.

Personal reference
A person who knows you well enough to talk about your positive qualities. Examples: a teacher, coach or neighbor.

Professional reference
Someone you have worked with in some capacity, who can verify your work experience. Examples: a supervisor or volunteer leader.

Remember: Most employers don't want family members as references. Always ask a person before you list them.

Step 1: Identify 3–5 people that you might be able to use as a professional or personal reference

Name	Personal or professional	How they know me	Phone or email	Said yes?
	☐ Personal ☐ Professional			☐
	☐ Personal ☐ Professional			☐
	☐ Personal ☐ Professional			☐
	☐ Personal ☐ Professional			☐
	☐ Personal ☐ Professional			☐

Step 2: Write a script asking that person for a reference

> Hi _____, I'm applying for a job as _____ at _____.
>
> Would you be willing to be a reference for me? They may call or email you.
>
> Is _____ the best number or email?

Example: "Hi Ms. Rivera, I'm applying for a job as a stock clerk at Hilltop Grocery. Would you be willing to be a reference for me? They may call or email you. Is 555-0142 the best number?"

My script (change the words so they sound like you)

_____

_____

_____

Step 3: Practice the script out loud, alone or with a partner. Then ask each person and check "Said yes?" in Step 1.

Tip: Thank them, and tell them when you get the job. Keep this list with you when you fill out job applications.

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