

**WORK**

**the  
EXPERIENCE**

Learning about the modern labour market  
through work experience

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# Acknowledgements

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# Introduction

The world of work has changed considerably in the last 20 years and continues to change at a rapid pace. Some of these changes reflect new approaches to working, such as the introduction of new technologies, and others are the result of global economic developments. For many students, a period of organised work experience, whilst still in education, provides a valuable insight into the demands and rewards of individual jobs and areas of work. Such insight helps students to recognise the changes taking place at a local level. However, if students are to manage their future careers in an increasingly complex and rapidly changing world of work they need to develop some basic economic awareness and an understanding of how the work they are interested in is affected by regional, national and global developments.

A review of existing teaching resources, designed to support the use of work experience in the curriculum, found that many focus on the immediate experience, looking at things like skills needed, health and safety issues and working terms and conditions. However, few, if any, of these resources encourage students to use their work experience to gain insight into the wider world of work. This pack attempts to do that.

You might want to study the background information on the Labour Market on page 6 before using this pack. You might also want to give students a copy of the Modern Job Market handout on page 7 once the debriefings have taken place, as a reminder of the key points covered.

## Work-related learning as a statutory requirement from September 2004

From September 2004 there will be a statutory requirement that all young people should experience some work-related learning at key stage 4. Work related learning is defined as 'planned activity that uses the context of work to develop knowledge, skills and understanding useful in work, including learning through the experience of work, learning about work and working practices, and learning the skills for work'.

The Government has also made it clear that the rationale behind the introduction of statutory work-related learning from September 2004, is that :

*'All young people need to understand how the economy functions, including the role of business and financial services'.*

Work-related learning for all at key stage 4: Guidance for implementing the statutory requirement from 2004. QCA 2003

The activities in this pack are designed to support this requirement and help students to maximise their learning by meeting the key elements listed below. For further information about Work-related learning visit the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority website at [www.qca.org.uk/14-19](http://www.qca.org.uk/14-19)

A framework for work-related learning at key stage 4		
Elements of provision for all students		Through this provision students can:
1	Recognise, develop and apply their skills for enterprise and employability	describe and demonstrate the main qualities and skills needed to enter and thrive in the working world
2	Use their experience of work, including work experience and part-time jobs, to extend their understanding of work	demonstrate an understanding of the main changes happening in the world of work
3	Learn about the way business enterprise operates, working roles and conditions, and rights and responsibilities in the work place	demonstrate the basic knowledge and understanding of a range of economic concepts describe some ways that working conditions changed during the last century and give some reasons for the changes
4	Develop awareness of the extent and diversity of local and national employment opportunities	recognise the concept of the labour market (local, national, European and global) describe the main trends in employment in their local area and relate these to their career plans
7	Learn from contact with personnel from different employment sectors	understand the importance to employers of attitudes, qualifications and skills

# Careers Education and Guidance in England: A National Framework 11 - 19

The activities in this pack also support a range of learning outcomes within the National Framework for Careers Education and Guidance 11-19, as follows:

## **Self Development - Understand themselves and the influences on them:**

- recognise stereotyped and misrepresented images of people, careers and work and how their own views of these issues affect their decision making (key stage 3)

## **Career Exploration - Investigate opportunities in learning and work**

- recognise that work is more than paid employment and that there is considerable variation in the value individuals and society attach to different kinds of work (key stage 3)
- describe how the world of work is changing and the skills that promote employability (key stage 3)
- describe employment trends and associated learning opportunities at different levels (key stage 4)
- use work related learning and direct experience of work to improve their chances (key stage 4)
- identify the strengths and weaknesses of different future work scenarios and the possible implications of these for their own career development (post 16)
- make good use of opportunities to extend their knowledge and understanding of destinations relevant to personal career plans (post 16)

## **Career Management - Make and adjust plans to manage change and transition**

- consider the possible implications of changes in learning and work for their own career goals and plans including financial options (post 16)

## **Additional resources**

If you want to explore Labour Market Information in more depth with your students we produce a pack called **Go Wild with LMI** which might be of interest. Further details can be found on our website at [www.highflyerspublishing.co.uk](http://www.highflyerspublishing.co.uk)

## **How to use this pack**

All the exercises are based around the information that pupils can obtain from the questionnaire that they are asked to complete during their work experience placement. The questionnaire has been compiled so that the young person should be able to get all the answers from their main contact at their work experience placement. However, you will need to decide which sections of the questionnaire you want students to complete. It might be all of them or just certain selected sections. We would recommend collating and stapling the sections you choose, into a booklet.

It is advisable to fully brief students on how to complete the questionnaire. This can be done using the Pre-work experience briefing on page 8. Again you will need to tailor this briefing slightly to reflect the sections you have decided to include in your students' questionnaires.

Once the students return from their work experience you will need to debrief their learning using the debriefing sessions on pages 10 to 24. Again you will need to decide which sessions you want to use. Alternatively, answers to the questionnaire could be looked at by staff in other curriculum areas such as Mathematics, Geography or Economics.

*The questionnaire does not have to be completed by students whilst on work experience.* It could also be completed through a range of other activities. For example, the students might take the questionnaire to their part-time jobs and get it completed there as a summer project. They might use it as the basis to interview an employer either in their place of work or when they are in school or college as a visiting speaker. The questionnaire is simply a vehicle to gather data and this could be done in any number of ways.

## **Warning**

Please note that the information in this pack was correct at the time of going to press. Labour Market Information is continually changing due to economic, social and political pressures and Highflyers Publishing Ltd cannot be held responsible where information is no longer correct. Please check the information before using it. Thank you.

# Some background information on the Labour Market

Before using this pack you might find it useful to familiarise yourself with some of the current trends and changes taking place within the labour market. Included here are some notes which provide a quick overview of some of these issues. If you would like to know more, we have included some useful addresses and websites at the end of these notes. We have also included a handout for students who might be interested in finding out more.

The questionnaire and exercises in this pack have been designed to use the medium of work experience to raise pupils' awareness of the following issues in relation to the modern labour market:

1. Jobs are constantly changing. Both private and public sector organisations re-structure more frequently than in the past to meet the demands of customers. The increased use of ICT and changes in work practices (e.g. multi-skilling) are also drivers of change to jobs.
2. These changes to jobs also mean that the number of skills needed to do most jobs are increasing. The Skills in England 2005 report summarises the findings of skills surveys which show that higher levels of technical skills, IT skills and generic skills are required in the workplace today. Amongst the generic skills needed are numeracy, communication, teamwork and problem solving skills.
3. Qualifications are important to succeed at job seeking but personal qualities are also increasingly important. Local and national surveys of what employers want from young job seekers show that common requirements are motivation, willingness to learn and work hard, ability to use your initiative and reliability.
4. More people are working in service industries and fewer in manufacturing and agriculture. Between 2004 and 2014, manufacturing and agriculture are expected to experience around 500,000 job losses, whereas employment in the service industries is set to increase by just under 2 million.
5. Occupations are changing with the trend for more jobs in managerial, professional and technical occupations and fewer manual and lower skilled jobs continuing.
6. Firms are increasingly operating in global markets, another factor making the skills

and personal qualities of the workforce more important. The Skills Dialogue Report 'An Assessment of Generic Skill Needs' lists 'globalisation of markets and the pressures of international competition' as one of the major drivers behind changes in employment and the growth in the need for generic skills.

7. Fewer people work 9.00 – 5.00, Monday to Friday. Instead, there is a growth in forms of flexible working such as part-time working, self-employment and tele-working from home. Part-time employment has been growing for 20 years, reaching just over a quarter of all employees in 1999. During this decade the growth in part-time employment is expected to continue. Half of these new part time jobs are expected to be filled by men.
  8. There has been a large rise in the number of female employees in the last 20 years. From 2004-2014 female employment is expected to be quite static with 53% of jobs held by men and 47% by women.
  9. Many employers are facing the problems of an ageing workforce and the need to plan to replace workers who are retiring. The Skills in England 2005 report states that 'The scale of this 'replacement demand' for skills is substantial. It easily exceeds the demand created by growth of new jobs in the economy, and generally more than outweighs any negative job losses expected'.
- A review of skill needs in the property services sector found that the average age of professional surveyors is 47 and rising. (Despite this, many small firms are reluctant to employ young people because of concerns over their reliability and attitude to work.)
10. More people are travelling longer distances to their workplace. Research on the 2001 census revealed that more than 800,000 workers travel more than 30 miles to work, up by a third since the 1991 census.

For further information visit:

[www.statistics.gov.uk](http://www.statistics.gov.uk)

[www.ukces.org.uk](http://www.ukces.org.uk)

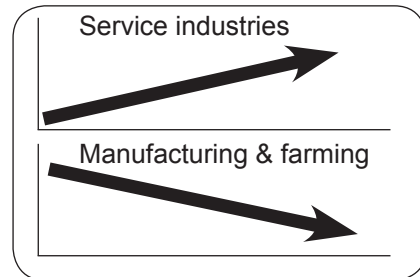
or speak to your Careers or Personal Adviser from the local Careers or Connexions Service as they often produce Labour Market Information for use with young people.

# The Modern Job Market

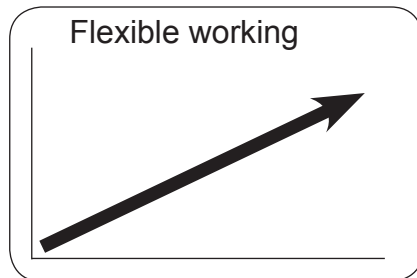
*What's going on?*



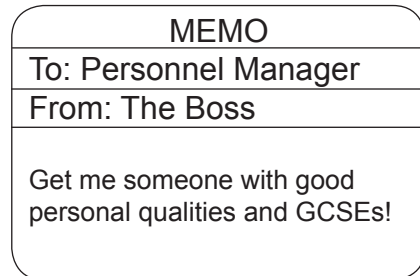
No jobs stay the same for long anymore



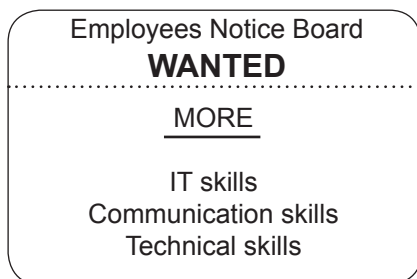
More people are working in service industries (e.g. shops, hotels). Fewer work in factories or on farms.



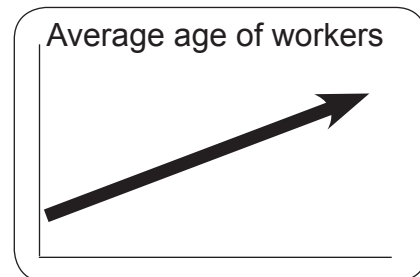
More people work part-time; at weekends; from home



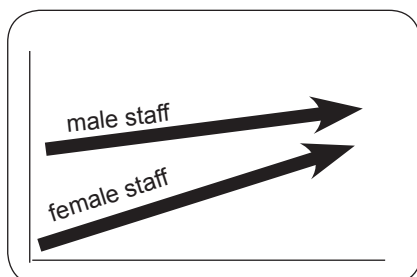
To get a good job you need to be willing to work hard; able to show initiative; reliable; as well as having qualifications.



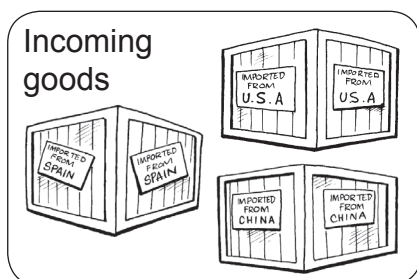
Changes to jobs means more skills are needed to do them.



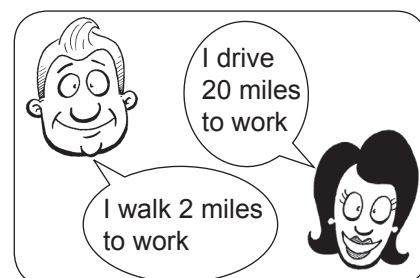
The need to replace workers who are retiring is becoming a big problem for firms.



The number of women in work is growing.



More UK firms are facing competition from overseas firms.



Fewer people work near to their homes now.

# Pre-work experience briefing for students

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## Aim

- To raise students awareness of what they might be able to learn from their work experience placements.
- To introduce the students to the questionnaire they will be taking with them on work experience.
- To give students the opportunity to practice introducing the questionnaire to their employer.

## Time

30 minutes

## Materials

A copy of the OHT Look before you leap on page 35

A copy of the Tutor Notes to support the Look before you leap OHT on page 36

Copies of the *Learning about the world of work through work experience* questionnaire on pages 27 - 34, at least all those sections that you have decided to include. It is a good idea to staple them together into a booklet.

## Tutor notes

Method 2: You might want to prepare a list of suggestions beforehand so that you can prompt them if they are very slow in responding. Things like:

- what different jobs involve
- how to do different jobs
- how it feels to work longer hours
- what it is like getting up early
- health and safety rules
- how to deal with customers
- what it is like working in a team
- how to fill in forms and paperwork
- how to use a computer
- how to answer the telephone

Method 4: You might want to research a couple of examples yourself beforehand in case they cannot think of any. Ask your Connexions PA for help with this, or other staff working with you.

## Method

1. Explain to the students that this session is part of their briefing for their up and coming work experience. Explain that in this session you want to get them thinking about what they can learn from work experience.

2. Then, either put them into small groups of about 5 or let the whole class work together (you decide) and ask them to brainstorm answers to the following question:

'What do you think you will learn from your work experience?'

If they say 'About what?', say 'About anything?'

Ask them to write down their answers or get them to call them out to you and you write them up on the board. See Tutor notes. If they struggle to do this prompt them with questions like:

Well, what might you learn about the kind of work you are doing? (how to do it, the skills you need, the sort of person it suits, etc). Ask them to think as widely as they can about what they might learn. Take feedback and write up their suggestions. Discuss. Stress to the students that you want them to use this experience to gain real insight into an area of work that interests them. They might find that having seen what is involved they don't like it at all and that is also a good learning experience.

3. Then point out that just knowing about particular jobs and what they entail is not enough today. If they are going to manage their careers in the future they need to learn how to work out what is going on in the wider world of work too. Put up the OHT Look before you leap and talk through the points using the Tutor notes provided on page 36.

4. Then ask the group to try and think of any companies which used to operate in their local area but have now gone. What happened to them? Where are they now? Have they gone completely bust? Or have they been taken over by another company and moved their operations somewhere else in the UK or overseas? See Tutor notes.

5. Then point out that when they go out on work experience you want them to learn as much as they can about the type of work they will be doing. However, their work experience placement also provides an ideal opportunity for them to begin to get a bigger picture of the

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WORLD of work. To help them do this you are going to give them a questionnaire to fill in with their employer. This questionnaire is designed to get information about some of the key features of the modern job market.

6. Give each student a copy of the questionnaire you want them to complete (see Materials). Then talk them through it. Point out there is an introductory explanation on the top of the questionnaire that they can use to explain to the employer what the questionnaire is about. Explain that they should be able to get all the answers from their main contact at their placement. However, if there are any questions this person is not able to answer, they should ask if there is anyone else they could see for the information.
7. Then talk the students through the different sections of the questionnaire (depending upon how many you have decided to include). Make sure they understand each question being asked and also that they are clear about all the options for answers. Stress that they don't have to get perfect answers, averages and sensible guesses are okay. This is not a census, just a survey to get a general picture. Also, point out that it is okay to make notes in the margins if the employer wants to add anything that won't fit into a box. Points to explain about particular questions:

Question 1 (what sort of company). This is to identify which industry sector the organisation is in. These are the standard industry sectors used in research about the job market. If their company does not fit easily into any of these categories they should tick Other and then concentrate on Question 2.

Question 8 (what percentage of your staff work part-time, etc.). Explain that there will be some overlap in the numbers recorded. For example, the figure for the number working weekends could include part or all of the total recorded for part-time employees. That is okay.

Question 15 (types of jobs available). Explain that these are the standard occupational categories used in job research. If the employer isn't sure about which category to put a job in, ask them to make their 'best guess'.

Question 21 (your suppliers and customers). You might need to give some examples like, the company might buy in raw materials, or part made goods, or they might have an accountant who comes in once a month but is not directly employed by them, etc. Their customers might be other companies that buy their goods to make other goods themselves, or they might buy them in to do training or they might be individuals like shoppers or students, etc.

8. Once you are clear that everyone understands the questionnaire and what it is covering, ask the students to get into pairs. Then ask them to roleplay as follows:  
One of them is the employer (their main contact) and the other is the student. You might want to demonstrate how to do it first. Even better, demonstrate how NOT to do it first.

STUDENT ROLE:

The student has to explain to their contact that they have to fill in this questionnaire and get them to agree to a time to do this, or to do it there and then.

EMPLOYER ROLE:

The employer has never been asked to do anything like this before (they just usually fill in a little report about the student at the end) and they want to understand exactly what they are being asked to do. They are happy to help, once they know exactly what they are being asked to do.

Then ask them to swop over. Suggest they use the *Dear Employer* introduction on the top of the questionnaire as the basis for their explanation.

9. Take feedback. How confident are they about asking their contact to help them with the questionnaire? If you noticed anyone doing this in a very confident way get them to demonstrate.
10. Finish by stressing that it is important not to lose the questionnaire as they will be expected to bring it back completed to use in the debriefing sessions. Wish them luck on their placements.