

Introduction for Instructors

What is the difference between job *survival* and job *success*? We all know that success can help to ensure survival and even breeds more success, but for many, keeping a job seems to be just a matter of survival—a daily struggle to get to work, get along with the boss, and make it to closing time. However, the strategies you give your students for *surviving* on the job are many of the same strategies you would give for excelling at it as well. As you work through *Job Survival* with them, remind students that these are skills and lessons for the future as well as the present. You are not only helping them to keep their current jobs, you are helping them to get even better jobs in the future. You are helping them to manage their careers.

Provide each student with a bright yellow folder on the first day of class. This will be used to compile important lists and motivational materials. As the instructor, you may choose to have students include more or fewer items in their folders than mentioned in this guide.

The exercises and activities in the workbook and in these resources often require small group work. Small group rotation is key. Assign each student a number, and then create groups based on even, odd, multiples of, and so on. Be creative, but try not to allow the same groups to form at every class meeting. Part of the course is learning to get along with many different kinds of people—an important teamwork skill that will translate to their working lives.

“Until Next Time” activities are preview sections that ask the students to think about an idea, concept, or action as it pertains to them. These are provided in lieu of specific homework assignments. Students may write answers if you prefer.

Some in-class exercises require written responses and the use of descriptive words. Compile a list of “outlaw words” or “stop words” that students may not use. Post these in a prominent spot where they may be easily seen by the entire class. Include on the list types of words, such as derogatory terms and curse words, as well as words such as “good,” “nice,” “fun,” “easy,” and so on, because these say little about how a student actually feels or thinks.

Most importantly, stay positive. The workbook takes a very realistic approach to the basic tenets of job survival. I intended it to be honest and direct. But there is only so much encouragement a worksheet or a bullet point can give. As their teacher, coach, and mentor, your energy and enthusiasm can push them to be honest with themselves and find practical strategies for improving their job survival.

An optional introductory activity follows. If time allows, the activity will help to focus the class on the subject at hand as well as act as an icebreaker.

Introductory Activity: The Good, the Bad, and the Future

Objectives: Set the tone for the coursework, provide a focal point for the students, and encourage thought about past and future job experiences

Format: Individual to whole group

Time: 20–30 minutes

Materials: 3-by-5 index cards, pens, chart paper, marker

1. Write the following statements on the board or overhead while reading them aloud to the class:
 - *The best job I ever had was _____.*
 - *My boss was effective because _____.*
 - *I worked well there because I was able to _____.*
2. Pass an index card to each student. On the blank side of the card, ask students to write the word “BEST.” On the lined side, have them write one or two words to fill in each blank in the statements. Then direct students to set aside their cards.
3. Write the following statements on the board or overhead while reading them aloud to the class:
 - *The worst job I ever had was _____.*
 - *My boss was not effective because _____.*
 - *I did not work well there because I was able/not able to _____.*
4. Pass a second index card to each student. Ask students to write the word “WORST” on the blank side of the card. On the lined side, have them write one or two words to fill in each blank and set aside.
5. Write the following statements on the board while reading each aloud:
 - *A job I think I will have in the future is _____.*
 - *I will look for a supervisor who is able to _____.*
 - *I will work well in this position because I will _____.*
6. Pass a third index card to each student. On the blank side of the card, ask the students to draw a question mark. On the lined side, have them fill in the blank for each statement with one or two words and set aside.
7. Ask random volunteers to read aloud their “?” card responses.

8. Place a chart paper titled “?” on the board or a wall. Allow at least two more students to read their responses. Then pause and ask, “Are any of these responses similar in any way?”
9. Write the similarities on the “?” chart paper.
10. Call on each student randomly until every student has read their “?” responses aloud. Instruct students to raise their hands every time they hear the similarities listed on the chart paper.
11. Continue in the same way for the “WORST” and “BEST” responses.
12. When all three charts are displayed, look for similarities on the “BEST” and “WORST” charts. Make a ceremony of throwing away their worst experiences.
13. Keep the other two charts posted in the classroom for potential motivation. They may be read at the beginning of each session as an attention getter.