

CAREERS FOR CHARACTERS

As a response to the current emphasis on career skills, each of my eighth-grade students becomes a character in a novel or short story he or she has read and finds a job for that character. In the process students read fictional works, use media center resources, read and interpret classified ads, and write and type business letters and resumes. To spark their interest, I lead a class brainstorming session for details to include in a model resume and business letter, based on a character in a work we have read, for example Lillian Wright from Asimov's "Rain, Rain, Go Away." Using our ideas, I type these two documents in the appropriate format and distribute copies to the class. (See examples on page 22.)

Next, students choose a character from a self-selected novel or short story and list the character's talents, interests, and possible hobbies. They identify possible career choices for their characters by consulting media center sources such as the *Worker Trait Group Guide*, *Chronicle Guidance Occupational Library*, *Career Discovery Encyclopedia*, *OCCU-FACTS*, etc. There's a built-in artificiality to the process, but that often adds humor and flair to the assignment!

After identifying possible character careers, students investigate the classified sections of local newspapers in order to select possible job prospects for their characters. The students cut out the ads and rewrite them in sentence form, spelling out any abbreviations.

In the next step, each student writes a letter of application from the character to the company offering the job. This letter follows a business letter format and can be typed in the school's computer center. Students use our model letter of application for reference.

Finally, the student completes a resume for the character. Any names, dates, or places must be connected to the plot or the setting of the literary piece. Some students can benefit from a blank resume format developed in class.

This project helps students to integrate various resources such as the fictional source, the media center, a personal computer, and the newspaper.

Overview of Components, Exploring Character

Adaptations of the project could make it appropriate for both older and younger students. And, of course, although the career research in this project applies to a fictional character, students can use the same information to investigate personal career choices.

Shelley Mattson Gahn, Liberty Middle School, West Chester, Ohio

Careers for Characters

Sample Documents for "Rain, Rain, Go Away" by Isaac Asimov

APPLICATION LETTER

521 Stargazer Avenue
Outer Limits, Ohio 45012
July 30, 2010

Mr. William Jones, President
Jones Detective Agency
7411 Murphy Park Road
Outer Limits, Ohio 45012

Dear Mr. Jones:

I am interested in the position of assistant detective which you advertised for recently in the *Sugar-Coated Times*. For the past two years I have been keeping careful surveillance of my neighbors, Mr. and Mrs. Sakkaro. The mysterious disappearance of the Sakkaro family is not a mystery to me because of my close observation of their unusual habits. My experience with my neighbors has made me aware of my talent for undercover work.

The enclosed resume will give you more details of my background. I would like to use my experience for the Jones Detective Agency. I would appreciate the opportunity of meeting you.

I am available for an interview at your convenience.

Sincerely yours,

Lillian Wright

Some Key Aspects of Application Letters

1. Begin your letter with a positive statement about your job skills.
2. Include the position you are applying for.
3. Include how you heard of the position.
4. Explain why you are interested, and that you have included a resume.
5. Let the employer know that you are available for an interview.
6. Review business letter format, if necessary.

RÉSUMÉ

Lillian Wright

ADDRESS: 521 Stargazer Avenue
Outer Limits, Ohio 45012

TELEPHONE: (461) 247-3313

EMPLOYMENT GOAL: I would like to work for a detective agency.

PERSONAL: Date of Birth: October 1, 1977
Place of Birth: Spaced Out, Ohio
Health: Good
Social Security Number: 211-11-1111

EDUCATION: Outer Limits High School
1991—1995 333 Alien Avenue, Outer Limits, Ohio 45012

INTERESTS: Star gazing, washing windows, and people watching

WORK EXPERIENCE: Dieting for a Sugar-free Life
1995—1998 820 Sweetness Street, Outer Limits, Ohio 45012, (461) 222-2121
Duties: Advisor

REFERENCES: Mr. Sakkaro, Expert Stargazer, 522 Stargazer Avenue, Outer Limits, Ohio 45012, (461) 222-2323
Mr. George Wright, Couch Potato, 521 Stargazer Avenue, Outer Limits, Ohio 45012, (461) 247-3313

Résumé Reminders

1. No abbreviations.
 2. Include at least one work experience.
 3. Include at least two references.
 4. Include dates for the education and work experience sections.
 5. Write the book title and the author's name at the top of your character's résumé.
- Note: In some cases, information won't be included in the story. You can infer information such as work experience and education, but be prepared to explain your choices.