

HAVE A SUGGESTION ? Leave a comment and say hi!

Job Hunt

FIELD

Guide

A collection of tips, tools and advice for job hunters; from Annabel Blake at bigkidlab.com

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[!\[\]\(95b425611cbd2b8716a140cf67c81822_img.jpg\) Who made this?](#)

The Intro

Hello!

You, dear reader, are on the job hunt. I've just been there. Searching for a job in 2020 has been one of the toughest personal challenges I've faced - so much so that I wanted to collect the tools, tips and advice that held me up and gave me hope - in case it could be helpful to you too.

As a general note, these resources may not be applicable to all industries and are likely skewed towards design and tech. Similarly, this isn't a prescriptive guide; simply take what you need and leave the rest!

This resource is, and will always be free; but if you find it *particularly* useful, perhaps consider [buying me a virtual coffee!](#)

Good luck out there    Annabel

The Basics

How to use this guide

This guide is designed to be worked through sequentially. Each section builds upon the next. How deep you dive or shallow you skim is entirely up to you!

 = Hazards and negative thoughts

 = Highly recommended tools

 = Power up and stand out

Quick start checklist

- ☐ Get a hype person
 - Someone to cheer you on
- ☐ Find a mentor/advisor (this may be the same person as your hype person)
 - Someone who has knowledge of the industry you'd like to work in. [See NPR.](#)
- ☐ Set a job search schedule
 - You may decide to search for jobs 1 morning a week, then submit applications for jobs 2 mornings a week.
- ☐ Set up a dream database
 - Make a list of dream companies you want to work for before you begin. Keep an eye on their job boards over the coming months. ✨ [Notion helps.](#)

Check-in with yourself

If you're feeling a little lost in the dark- ground yourself before you begin with these tools and articles for self reflection.

- [Myers-Briggs](#)
- [Via Character Strengths](#)
- [Values assessment worksheet](#)
- [Wait but Why](#): how to pick a career(that actually fits you)
- Mark Andreessen's [Guide to Career Planning](#) + building a career portfolio
- Ness Labs: [What are your adjacent skills?](#)

✨ Check out [A job to love](#) by School of Life or one of their career classes.

01 The CV

Preparing your CV

Write first edit later. Begin by grabbing yourself a fresh clean sheet of paper/ word document.

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1. Start with a story vomit. Write out a timeline of your work over the last 5 (ish) years. Mind Map might also be your style.
 - For each job, dot point list: your responsibilities, key projects and outcomes.
2. Time to edit. What do you want each role to primarily demonstrate?
 - Initiative? Technical abilities? Creativity? Once you have nominated a key focus for each role, only keep the 2-4 dot points that singularly support that focus. This ensures your CV has depth & breadth.

⚠️ **"I'm stuck for words"** Google similar roles and search for active job descriptions. Match these keywords and keep your language plain and simple.

✨ [Resume Worded](#) uses AI to scan your resume and give you tailored feedback!

Designing your CV

One page. You're going to fit everything onto one page. If you've done a good job editing then everything's going to fit & if in doubt, keep it simple(2 fonts; 2 colours)!

The sections I use are:

- Name, address and contact details
- A short 'about' statement (3 lines max)
- Experience
- Education
- Awards
- Side projects/additional skills/Volunteer I don't always include this, but it can be a great creative way to highlight your passions +++ initiative. Especially if you don't have many roles at this stage in your career.

⚠️ **Save your document** as a PDF and title it firstname_lastname_resume.pdf (not myresume_final_finalfinal_FINAL_V03.pdf).

⚠️ [Update your LinkedIn](#) so everything is consistent.

🔥 **Wherever you make your resume** (inDesign, Canva, Google docs) export with interactive links so readers can go directly to your website/email in one click!

02 The Portfolio

Tip Top Tips

No graphic design skills? No worries! Even a simple digital version of your CV can be effective; like [this](#), or [this](#). I've also seen Instagram and Notion portfolios!

Find reference and [inspiration portfolios](#) [Like this one!](#)

Keep a simple, predictable pattern for each case study (i.e. the problem, the process, the solution)

Get the basics right make sure you have about, work and contact pages.

Consider a portfolio review [Femke is great](#)

Show your passion!

✨ **How to write your bio/about page** a great [go-to guide](#) if you're stuck

✨ **Check out [That Portfolio Book](#)** (Whilst I didn't use this book- it is highly recommended)

✨ **My favourite web builder** is [Squarespace](#) (simple, responsive, competitively priced). [Webflow](#) also has a stack of portfolio templates.

⚠️ **"I didn't save some of my previous work!"** It's ok if you don't have artefacts of your process work; take some time to re-do key sections for demonstration (draw some wireframes, re-do an affinity map or [create some new mockups/ try CANVA](#)).

03 The Application

Tip Top Tips

Version your CV. If you're consistently applying for 2-3 different roles, consider creating versions of your CV that are specific to each role. I.e. your product *manager* CV and your product *designer* CV.

Find a referral. If you know someone in the company who can refer you for the job this can go a long way in ensuring your resume is read through.

Apply Anyway. *You don't need to tick off 100% of the required criteria.* Apply even if you fulfill only 60%; show your passion, enthusiasm and eagerness to learn in lieu of the other 40%. You never know!

Building a longlist

Jobs can be hiding anywhere 👁️ Search for jobs on; Company job boards, [creative community job boards \(more here\)](#), [Angel Co](#), LinkedIn Jobs, Seek and Jora. Make sure to contact recruiters in your area (google them!) and touch base with your network.

Finally, don't forget to look under rocks; for companies that don't advertise any open jobs but might create one for you, if you reach out. You never know!

🌟 **Keep track** of your longlist with [Notion's free job application database](#) or this [product one](#) by @meshtimes (I use Notion for everything)

Applying for jobs

On average, out of the 100 roles I have on my longlist, around 5 are in the 'dream job' category and 95 are 'safer' roles.

Get started on the 'safer' roles first as a warm up; it's always good to have a few interviews under your belt before walking into the interview you're *extra* nervous about. Next, you're going to give the 'dream jobs' some extra UMPH!

🔥 **The Extra UMPH!** Ways to demonstrate your passion when applying for your dream job:

- Film a creative video
- Create a custom webpage on your website that greets the company directly
- Reach out to someone on the team you're looking to join (ahead of applying) and ask if you can grab coffee with them to learn more about the team/what they do.
- Redesign part of their product as a case study
- Attend any events the company is hosting
- Send the team director a physical application i.e. a printed book or scroll.
- Do something very uniquely *YOU!*

⚠️ **"It's not what you know, it's who you know"** There's a smidge of truth to this. Take the time to nurture *authentic* professional relationships. If you feel like your network is a bit thin, give it some love! Reach out to people you admire, friends of friends, or join a community like the [Startmate Fellowship](#) (AUS) to connect with likeminded people.

The Cold Email

The cold email can really fly ... or it can flop (I've experienced both). Here are some tips to stop the flop.

- Keep it short (<60 second read).
- Keep it relevant (do your research about the company, person and role).
- Keep it authentic (speak from the heart and personalise the email).
- Keep it kind (be considerate of their time and don't demand a reply).
- ✓ Find a warm introduction if you can!

⚠️ **Read** [Tim Ferris' 5 tips for emailing busy people](#) , this [excellent HBR guide](#) and the ['art of the cold email'](#) on Medium before you hit send.

04 The Interview

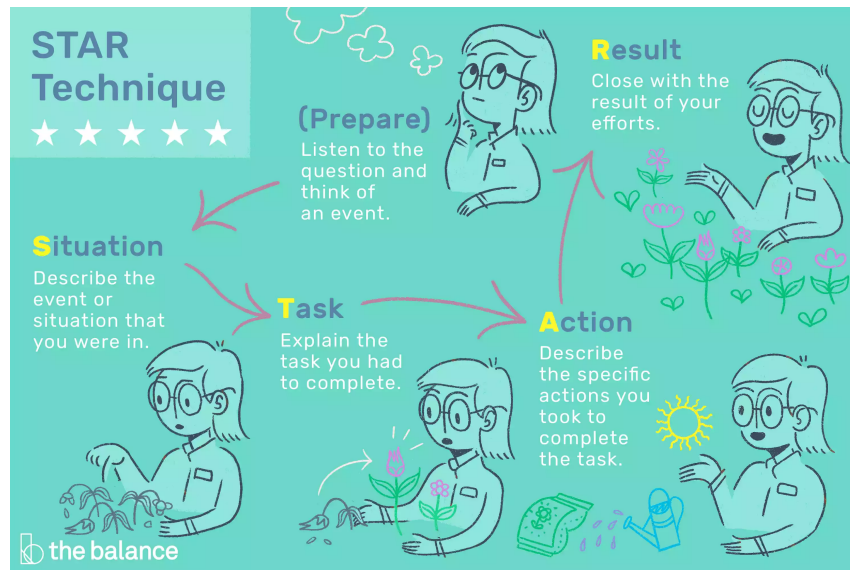
Crafting your story

1. Revisit the 5 year timeline you made earlier in 01 and for each phase/job list out:
 - one highlight
 - one lowlight; and
 - one thing you learned
2. Now take a step back and identify the top 3 things you can do *extremely well* overall and 1 thing you're working on/would like to do in the future.
3. Time to write your elevator pitch.
 - Your <1 minute introduction that says; 1) Who you are as a professional right now, 2) how your past got you here, 3) what you love about what you do and 4) what excites you about the future.

Preparing for the Interview

- Review the most common interview questions.
 - An extensive [list of questions can be found here](#)
 - The most common questions I've personally been asked are listed in Appendix 1
- Look up your interviewer on LinkedIn.
- Make sure you've researched the company you're applying for.
- Prepare and practice the STAR method for answering questions.

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[Illustration by Jon Marchione. © The Balance](#)

✨ **Know your worth** [Compensation 101](#) is a great guide for setting salary expectations. Check how your salary stacks up with [The Salary Project](#) - and if you're in tech 👉👉👉 [please read this](#) guide to salary negotiations!

During the Interview

Do your thing. You're well, *well* prepared for this! And remember, you don't need to answer questions straight away- don't be afraid to ask for a minute to consider the question, take a deep breath and gather your thoughts.

⚠️ **"I'm not good enough"/ Imposter Syndrome** One tip I was given to combat these doubts in the moment was; *don't judge yourself, just state the facts*. "I only worked on this for 3 months" → "I worked on this for 3 months".

05 The Case Study

Tip Top Tips

Point out the flaws Admit when you made mistakes. Propose things that you would have done differently in hindsight. This shows impressive self reflection skills + growth.

Have a beginning, middle and end. Set up a linear story before you begin.

You've made it through the first few interviews! Perhaps you've been asked to prepare a case study, a take home assignment or a live problem. Here's a list of resources that help me build and deliver case study presentations.

- [Femke's great case study template](#) and [take home assignment video](#)
- [A long example of a UX research case study](#) that includes a follow up and reflection section.
- [The Minto Pyramid](#). Keep your main presentation to **10 slides** (you can do it!). Move supporting evidence/slides into an appendix section that you can dive into during question time.

The Self Love

💖 **Be kind to yourself.** I know that after a few solid months of receiving rejection emails in my inbox, my heart was feeling heavy.

- Keep a 'fuzzies' folder
 - Fill it with compliments, and things that make you feel good. For days when you're feeling down or doubt yourself.
- Pace yourself
 - Settle in for the long haul- if it's quick, that's a win! But if it's long, you're well prepared.
- Eat a good dinner
 - Because yum.
- Walk around the block
 - Because sun + exercise
- [Worry time App](#)
- Reduce 'noise'
 - I use ✨Feedly [RRS to filter news](#)
 - Put screen time limits on Twitter, LinkedIn and your email inbox.
- Find a good psychologist
 - If you don't already have a psychologist, in AUS your mental health plan can give you a number of free sessions; time and space to get to know yourself better. Make an appointment with your GP to start.
- Lifeline (kind and caring counsellors available 24/7 in Australia). For INTL readers, simply google search your regional crisis phone hotline.
- Remember: ***you are not your career.*** You are so, so much more.

Appendix 1

Common Interview Questions

- What do you do?
- How did your past get you where you are?
- What do you love most about what you do?
- What excites you about the future?
- How have you handled and overcome conflict in a team/with a contractor?
- A client is unhappy with a path you've chosen- how do you respond to their concerns?
- A junior member of your team is unmotivated and not taking any accountability for their mistakes- what do you do?
- What insights did you come up with from your research and how did you come to them? How did these insights change the product?
- When presenting a new idea to a client, how do you support your decision or suggestion?
- How do you prioritise tasks or work on more than 1 thing at once?
- What would your previous boss rate you /10? What could you do to get to 10?
- What are you working on? What do you want to improve on?
- Proudest accomplishment?
- Where do you see yourself in 5 years?
- Tell me about a time when you worked on a team?
- Tell me about a time you failed/a lowlight. What would you do differently?
- Tell me about a time when you disagreed with a coworker?
- Why do you want to work at this company?

Questions to ask in your interviewer in return

- What types of skills is the team missing that you're looking to fill with a new hire?
- What do you expect a new hire to achieve in the first 3 months on the job?
- What does a typical day look like?
- What's the most surprising or delightful part of your job?
- What's different about working here than anywhere else you've worked?
- Is there anything else I can provide you with that would be helpful?
- How are the teams structured and how do you all work together?
- What's the biggest challenge someone might face in this role?



Who made this?

This guide is a collection of tips, tools, resources and advice that has helped me ([Annabel Blake](#)) find jobs. It started as a personal collection, however after a few friends have recently been going through the same journey I decided to share.

A special shout out to [Alessio](#) for his advice & wisdom 🙌 much of which can be found in this guide.

Over the years I've been a professional free-skier representing Australia in world cups, experimented in Google's Creative Labs, conducted research in a cognitive neuroscience lab and co-founded an award-winning [kids media and design studio](#). Now, you can find me researching at [CANVA](#) (my new job!) and petting office doggo's.

This guide is and will always be free! If you found it *particularly* useful, perhaps consider [buying me a virtual coffee](#); this helps fund my side projects and pay for web hosting services.



Support me on Ko-fi

Good luck out there 💖💖💖 Annabel