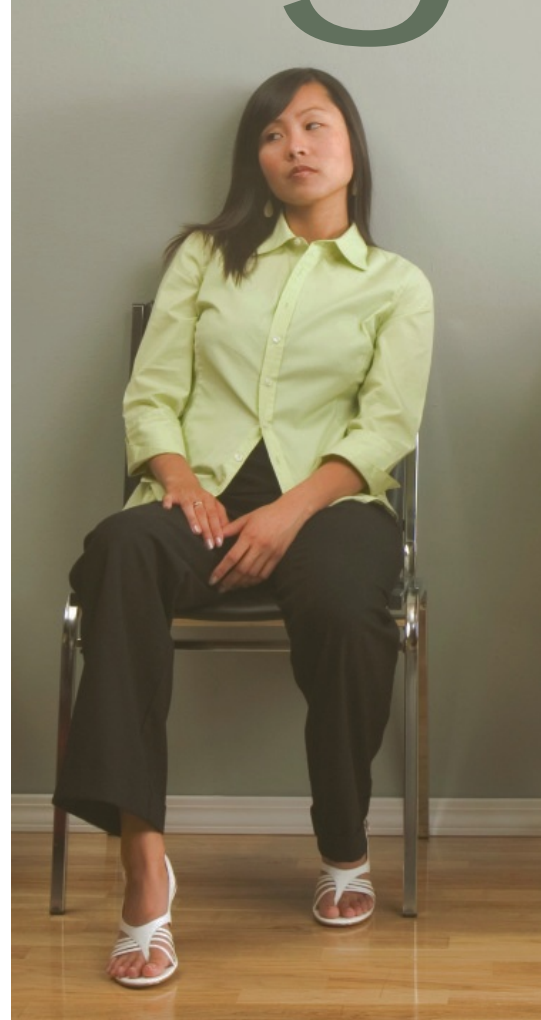


# Landing

## What skills do you need?

You might think a good education and top grades are enough to get a good job. So it may surprise you to learn that employers look for other important skills, as this article from *The Daily Mail* reports.



“People **who**

### Before you read

What do you think employers mean by ‘the soft skills’ that graduates need for work?

“Half the country’s leading employers **are** unable to fill graduate vacancies because students lack **basic work skills**”

**H**alf of Britain’s leading employers are unable to fill graduate vacancies because students lack basic work skills, a recent survey

reveals. Bosses are forced to leave prized graduate jobs open every year – even though universities are turning out soaring numbers of students.

Employers blame their continued recruitment difficulties on the low calibre of graduates – even those armed with degrees. Why? Many have such poor communication skills that bosses are worried about allowing them to answer the phone, sit in meetings or give presentations. One graduate going for a job at an investment bank began his interview saying: “You alright mate?”

The survey of 211 leading UK employers, including Goldman Sachs, Microsoft, Government departments and GlaxoSmithKline, reveals that bosses are finding it increasingly tough

# a JOB

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soft employability skills to get hired. We lost quite a few students through the psychometric testing stages because of a lack of numerical and verbal reasoning skills."

Among organisations failing to fill their graduate posts last year, the average number of vacancies was 12. However, five per cent left more than 50 jobs unfilled. The shortfalls forced bosses to call in expensive contractors to get the work done, the survey found.

Carl Gilleard, AGR chief executive, says: "Much more effort needs to be made in schools to get the message across that going to university and coming out with good grades, while an achievement, is not enough to land a graduate level job. You have to develop your skills and experience, and learn to demonstrate you have got those skills and experience. People who put in applications full of spelling mistakes on online application forms deserve what they get. Over the last few years, employers have raised the stakes. Their requirements have grown because of the demands of their business. They are looking for people of a higher calibre and graduates have not really caught on to that." Gilleard adds: "Once again, we are seeing an increase in the number of graduate level vacancies, which is great news for anyone applying for a graduate job this year."

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to recruit capable candidates – despite repeated warnings to students to work on "soft skills" such as team-working and commercial savvy.

Forty-three per cent of employers polled by the Association of Graduate Recruiters (AGR) said they had unfilled graduate vacancies last year, against fewer than a third in 2005. And 55 per cent of bosses anticipate facing recruitment shortfalls in 2007. Of these, 62 per cent are not expecting to receive sufficient applications from graduates with the necessary skills.

## Soft skills

In its winter review, the AGR says employers feel there is an "inadequate supply of applicants of sufficient calibre". It adds: "They go on to explain that many candidates are academically suitable but lack soft skills such as communication as well as verbal and numerical reasoning."

One telecoms company reports: "We received more than sufficient applications but I think whilst the candidates have the academic ability, they didn't have the communication and

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## ►►► Landing a JOB

What skills do you need?

### TEST 1 Verbal Reasoning

Read the passage and the three statements that follow. If the statement is true based on the information or opinions contained in the passage, answer A, if the statement is obviously false based on the passage, answer B, and if you cannot say without further information, answer C.

Many companies find it beneficial to employ students during the summer. Permanent staff often take holidays during this period, even though many companies find they are busier and require extra staff. Summer employment also attracts students who may return as qualified recruits to a company when they have completed their education. Ensuring that the students learn as much as possible about the company encourages their interest in working on a permanent basis. Companies pay students on a fixed rate without paid holidays or sick leave.

- Some companies have more work to do in summer when students are available.  
A ☐ B ☐ C ☐
- Students in summer employment are given the same paid holiday benefit as permanent staff.  
A ☐ B ☐ C ☐
- Students must also obey the company's dress rules.  
A ☐ B ☐ C ☐

# Test four of your skills



### TEST 2 Numerical Reasoning

#### Newspaper Readership

Newspapers	Readership (millions)		Percentage of adults reading each paper in 2007	
	1997	2007	Male	Female
<i>The Record</i>	3.6	2.9	7	6
<i>Daily Post</i>	13.8	9.3	24	18
<i>The Gazette</i>	1.1	1.4	4	3
<i>The Chronicle</i>	8.5	12.7	30	23
<i>The Messenger</i>	4.4	4.9	10	12

- Which newspaper was read by a higher percentage of females than males in 2007?  
A *The Record* ☐  
B *Daily Post* ☐  
C *The Gazette* ☐  
D *The Chronicle* ☐  
E *The Messenger* ☐
- What was the combined readership of *The Chronicle*, *The Record* and *The Gazette* in 1997 (in millions)?  
A 10.6 ☐  
B 8.4 ☐  
C 9.5 ☐  
D 13.2 ☐  
E 7.8 ☐



The article mentions several reasons why graduates fail to land a job: inappropriate language, poor spelling and weak verbal and numerical reasoning skills. Do you have what it takes to work in the UK? Take our tests to find out.



3 Which newspaper showed the largest change in female readership between 1997 and 2007?

- A *The Record* ☐
- B *Daily Post* ☐
- C *The Gazette* ☐
- D *The Chronicle* ☐
- E Cannot Say ☐

## TEST 3 Communication

1 Which of the following introductory greetings are not appropriate for an interview?

- A What's up? ☐
- B Good afternoon. ☐
- C Nice to meet you. ☐
- D How's it going? ☐
- E How're you doing? ☐

2 Which of the following parting greetings are not appropriate for an interview?

- A I had a really nice time. ☐
- B See you. ☐
- C Thank you very much for seeing me. ☐
- D Goodbye. ☐
- E Take care. ☐

## TEST 4 Spelling

Read the following job application and find the spelling mistakes. There are ten mistakes altogether.

I would like to aply for the position you advertised in the newspaper last week. I am currantly working in the evenings as a pizza delivery person but for personnal reasons, would preffer to find a day job. I have excelent spoken and writen communication skills and feel I have a grate deal to offer you're company.

### \* GLOSSARY

**vacancy:** (n) job opening  
**calibre:** (n) the quality of something, especially a person's ability  
**savvy:** (informal adj) having practical understanding of something  
**psychometric testing:** (n) tests that measure psychological abilities and processes

Answers  
→ Page 31



Now go to  
page 30 for  
a language  
activity.