

# Applications – The Tricky Sections

## CRIMINAL HISTORY

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Read the question carefully. Does it ask for all convictions or only convictions within a certain number of years?

Answer honestly. If you lie, the employer will eventually find out the truth.

If yes, then what? You have a few options:

- Provide a list of your convictions including the conviction dates
- Offer a conviction summary, such as “drug related, 2003”
- Write “will discuss in interview”
- Provide a conviction summary followed by “will discuss in interview”

If you write that you will discuss your history in an interview, be prepared to do so.

## EMPLOYMENT GAPS

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Is the gap due to incarceration? If you worked in prison, use the experience.

How old is the gap? Employers generally want only 3-5 positions or 7-10 years of history.

If it will help, give years of employment instead of the month and year.

Gap Fillers:

- Any legal work you performed such as mowing lawns, scooping driveways in your neighborhood, driving a friend to work every day, or caring for a relative
- Volunteer work, even if it is court ordered
- Enrollment in school for GED, trades, or college

If there is absolutely no way to fill the gap, you still have options:

- As with your criminal history, you can write “will discuss in interview”
- If the gap is due to incarceration, treatment, or simply being involved in negative situations, be honest, but also explain that it is no longer an issue
- Share anything positive you did during the employment gap, or positive things you have done since

The key is to show the employer that you were productive during your gap, that you learned new skills, and that you are now ready to succeed as an employee.

## **REASONS FOR LEAVING A JOB**

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Do you have a good reason for leaving? If so, put it down.

If not, do your best to **avoid using negative reasons** for leaving such as:

- Fired, terminated, or quit
- Injured at home or at work
- No transportation or too far away
- Personal reasons or illness
- Personality conflict or disagreements with boss
- Fighting
- Racism, sexism, or other discrimination
- Boredom
- Childcare issues
- Low pay
- Not enough hours or scheduling issues
- Arrest or incarceration
- Attendance
- Inability to do the job
- Travel
- My mother/father/girlfriend/PO made me
- Don't know

If possible, **provide a positive reason** for leaving:

- Laid off or resigned
- Obtained a better or more career oriented position
- Seasonal employment, temporary employment, or position ended
- Career change
- Lack of work hours available
- Found a better opportunity
- Business closed or company went out of business
- Returned to school
- Relocated or change in living situation
- Left to care for a relative
- Self-employment
- Obtained a full-time position or a permanent position
- Looking for more responsibility
- Personal reasons or illnesses that have been resolved

If you do not remember why you left, contact the employer and ask. If nothing else, this will tell you what the employer will say about you if they are contacted.

If there is absolutely no positive way to explain why you left a job, you can use “will discuss in interview” here as well.

**CAUTION: DO NOT USE “WILL DISCUSS IN INTERVIEW” MORE THAN TWICE ON THE SAME APPLICATION!**