What are “References”?  
- People that employers can contact for more information about you  
- Do not include this information with your resume, as you want to meet with the employer first; you also want to protect your references from being contacted unless you have reached the interview stage  
- Three people are usually the minimum, but more can be to your advantage; for example, 3 business and 3 personal  

When Are They Used?  
- Bring your reference list to the interview  
- Some employers may require the list when you apply for a position (usually it is requested on the job posting or application)  

Who Are Suitable References?  
- Work related: former or present employers, supervisors, colleagues, customers, suppliers  
- Personal: contacts in volunteer organizations where you volunteered, instructors, bank managers, landlords, other people that you have assisted  
- Typically, these people should have known you for at least one year  

How to Create a List  
- Ask potential references for permission to use them  
- Provide them with a copy of your current resume  
- Discuss what they could say about you to potential questions that employers may ask  
- Contact them soon after you give their name to a potential employer. Tell them the name of the company/organization, the position, the name of the person who might be contacting them, if you know it. This will prepare them in advance for the employer to contact them  
- Thank your references by letter, email or phone, whether or not you obtained the job  

Remember:  
- Keep your eye out for good references: people who you work closely with and you have done good work for and other individuals who you have assisted, supervisors who have helped you learn and grow; people who you have worked with in volunteer positions  
- Avoid family members, as this does not look professional  

TIPS  
- Use 3 – 4 references. Get permission first and provide references with an update.  
- List in order of strongest and relevant contact, easily reached  
- Reference calls focus on: technical strength, ability to get the job done, ability to work with others, stability, development and potential  
- References could include: current and / or past employer, someone who reported to you, teaching reference, peer, volunteer you may have worked with  
- Provide the name, job title and name of the organization or business when listing references  
- Business landline or cell phone, email or residence line (if permission given)
REFERENCE LISTS

- Use same “header” as your resume

SAMPLE FORMAT

Joe Applicant
789 Employment Avenue Hamilton, ON L8P 1X2
Home: 905.121.3456  Email: joeapplicant@email.com

References

1. John Doe – Administrator
   Department of XXXXXXX
   McMaster University
   Hamilton, ON XXX XXX
   B: 905.XXX.XXXX Ext. XXXXX
   Email: XXXX@mcmaster.ca

2. Jane Referee – Administrative Co-ordinator
   The XXXXXXX Department
   McMaster University
   Hamilton, ON XXX XXX
   B: 905.XXX.XXXX Ext. XXXXX
   C: 905.XXX.XXXX
   Email: XXXX@mcmaster.ca

3. Ken Doe – Chairman of the Board (former)
   The Helping Place
   50 Altruism Avenue
   Oakville, ON
   B: 905.789.1234
   C: XXX.XXX.XXXX
   Email: XXXX@email.com

EMLOYEE CAREER SERVICES | success@mcmaster.ca