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PREPARING FOR LICENSURE AND EMPLOYMENT



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After completing this chapter, you will be able to:

LO 1

Describe the process of taking and passing your state licensing examination.

LO 2

Determine your career focus by using the Inventory of Personal Characteristics and Technical Skills.

LO 3

List the different salon business categories.

LO 4

Develop a cover letter, resume, and employment portfolio.

LO 5

Know how to explore the job market, research potential employers, and operate within the legal aspects of employment.

OUTLINE

WHY STUDY HOW TO PREPARE FOR LICENSURE AND EMPLOYMENT? 1026

PREPARE FOR LICENSURE 1027

PREPARE FOR EMPLOYMENT 1031

ARRANGE FOR A JOB INTERVIEW 1045

There are plenty of great jobs out there for energetic, hardworking, talented people. If you look at the top professionals in the cosmetology field, you will find they were not born successful; they achieved success through self-motivation, energy, and persistence. Like you, these stylists began their careers by enrolling in cosmetology school. They were the ones who used their time wisely, planned for the future, went the extra mile, and drew on a reservoir of self-confidence to meet challenges. They owe their success to no one but themselves, because they created it. If you want to enjoy similar success, you must prepare for the opportunities that await you.

No matter what changes occur in the economy, there are often more jobs available for entry-level cosmetology professionals than there are people to fill them. This is a tremendous advantage for you, but you still must thoroughly research the job market in your geographical area before committing to your first job (figure 30-1). If you make the right choice, your career will be on the road to success. If you make the wrong choice, it will not be a tragedy, but it may cause unnecessary delay.

why study

HOW TO PREPARE FOR LICENSURE AND EMPLOYMENT?

Cosmetologists should study and have a thorough understanding of how to prepare for licensure and employment because:

- You must pass your State Board Exam to be licensed, and you must be licensed to be hired; therefore, preparing for licensure and passing your exam is your first step to employment success.
- A successful employment search is a job in itself, and there are many tools that can give you the edge—as well as mistakes that can cost you an interview or a job.
- The ability to pinpoint the right salon for you and target it as a potential employer is vital for your career success.
- Proactively preparing the right materials, such as a great resume, and practicing interviewing will give you the confidence that's needed to secure a job in a salon you love.



figure 30-1
Job listings are posted online at various job boards.

After reading the next few sections, you will be able to:

LO 1 Describe the process of taking and passing your state licensing examination.

Prepare for Licensure

Before you can obtain the career position you are hoping for, you must pass your state licensing examinations (usually a written and a practical exam) and secure the required credentials from your state's licensing board by filling out an application and paying a fee. For details on fees, testing dates, requirements, and more, visit the website of your State Board of Cosmetology or your state's department of licensing.

Many factors will affect how well you perform during that licensing examination and on tests in general. They include your physical and psychological state; your memory; your time management skills; and your academic skills, such as reading, writing, note taking, test taking, and general learning.

Of all the factors that will affect your test performance, the most important is your mastery of course content. However, even if you feel that you have truly learned the material, it is still very beneficial to have strong test-taking skills. Being **test-wise** means understanding the strategies for successfully taking tests.

Preparing for the Written Exam

A test-wise student begins to prepare for a test by practicing good study habits and time management. These habits include the following:

- Have a planned, realistic study schedule.
- Read content carefully and become an active studier.
- Keep well-organized notes.
- Develop a detailed vocabulary list.
- Take effective notes during class.
- Organize and review handouts.
- Review past quizzes and tests.
- Listen carefully in class for cues and clues about what could be expected on the test.

More holistic or “whole you” hints to keep in mind include the following:

- Make yourself mentally ready and develop a positive attitude toward taking the test.
- Get plenty of rest the night before the test.
- Dress comfortably and professionally.



DID YOU KNOW?

If you have a physician-documented disability, such as a learning disability, your state may allow you extra time to take the written exam or even provide a special examiner. Ask your instructor and check with your state licensing board. Be certain to make any special arrangements well in advance of the test date.



figure 30-2
Candidates taking an in-house school exam

- Anticipate some anxiety (feeling concerned about the test results may actually help you do better).
- Avoid cramming the night before an examination.
- Find out if your state uses computers for the written portion of the test. If so, make certain you are comfortable with computerized test taking.

On Test Day

After you have taken all the necessary steps to prepare for your test, there are a number of strategies you can adopt on the day of the exam that may be helpful (figure 30-2):

- Relax and try to slow down physically.
- Review the material lightly the day of the exam.
- If possible, do a “test drive” to the site before test day if you are unsure of the location. Some exams may be administered at your school and some may be given in alternate locations.
- Arrive early with a self-confident attitude; be alert, calm, and ready for the challenge.
- Read all written directions and listen carefully to all verbal directions before beginning.
- If there are things you do not understand, do not hesitate to ask the examiner questions.
- If possible, skim the entire test before beginning.
- Budget your time to ensure that you have plenty of opportunity to complete the test; do not spend too much time on any one question.
- Wear a watch so that you can monitor the time.
- Begin work as soon as possible, and mark the answers in the test carefully but quickly.
- Answer the easiest questions first in order to save time for the more difficult ones. Quickly scanning all the questions first may clue you in to the more difficult questions.
- Make a note of the questions you skip so that you can find them again later. If the test is administered online you may not be given this option. Some software prevents you from moving forward without answering all questions on the page first. Discuss this with your instructor or the testing facility before taking the exam.
- Read each question carefully to make sure that you know exactly what the question is asking and that you understand all parts of the question.
- Answer as many questions as possible. For questions that cause uncertainty, guess or estimate.
- Look over the test when you are done to ensure that you have read all questions correctly and that you have answered as many as possible.

- Make changes to answers only if there is a good reason to do so.
- Check the test carefully before turning it in. (For instance, you might have forgotten to put your name on it!)

Deductive Reasoning

Deductive reasoning is the process of reaching logical conclusions by employing logical reasoning. Deductive reasoning is a technique that students should learn to use for better test results.

Some strategies associated with deductive reasoning include the following:

- Eliminate options known to be incorrect. The more incorrect answers you can eliminate, the better your chances of identifying the correct answer.
- Watch for key words or terms. Look for any qualifying conditions or statements. Keep an eye out for phrases and words such as *usually*, *commonly*, *in most instances*, *never*, and *always*.
- Study the **stem**, which is the basic question or problem. It will often provide a clue to the correct answer. Look for a match between the stem and one of the choices.
- Watch for grammatical clues. For instance, if the last word in a stem is *an*, the answer must begin with a vowel rather than a consonant.
- Look at similar or related questions. They may provide clues.
- When answering essay questions, watch for words such as *compare*, *contrast*, *discuss*, *evaluate*, *analyze*, *define*, or *describe*, and develop your answer accordingly.
- When questions include paragraphs to read and questions to answer, read the questions first. This will help you identify the important information as you read the paragraph.



Understanding Test Formats

There are a few additional tips that all test-wise learners should know, especially with respect to the state licensing examination. Keep in mind, of course, that the most important strategy of test taking is to know your material. Beyond that, consider the following tips on the various types of question formats.

True/False

- Watch for qualifying words (*all*, *most*, *some*, *none*, *always*, *usually*, *sometimes*, *never*, *little*, *no*, *equal*, *less*, *good*, *bad*). Absolutes (*all*, *none*, *always*, *never*) are generally not true.
- For a statement to be true, the *entire* statement must be true.
- Long statements are more likely to be true than short statements. It takes more detail to provide truthful, factual information.

Multiple Choice

- Read the entire question carefully, including all the choices.
- Look for the best answer; more than one choice may be true.
- Eliminate incorrect answers by crossing them out (if taking the test on the test form).
- When two choices are close or similar, one of them is probably right.
- When two choices are identical, both must be wrong.
- When two choices are opposites, one is probably wrong and one is probably correct, depending on the number of other choices.
- “All of the above” and similar responses are often the correct choice.
- Pay special attention to words such as *not*, *except*, and *but*.
- Guess if you do not know the answer (provided that there is no penalty).
- The answer to one question may be in the stem of another.

Matching

- Read all items in each list before beginning.
- Check off items from the brief response list to eliminate choices.

Essays

- Organize your answer according to the cue words in the question.
- Think carefully and outline your answer before you begin writing.
- Make sure that what you write is complete, accurate, relevant to the question, well organized, and clear.

Remember that even though you may understand test formats and effective test-taking strategies, this does not take the place of having a complete understanding of the material on which you are being tested. In order to be successful at taking tests, you must follow the rules of effective studying and be thoroughly knowledgeable of the exam content for both the written and the practical examination.

The Practical Exam

In order to be better prepared for the practical portion of the examination, the new graduate should follow these tips:

- Practice the correct skills required in the test as often as you can.
- Participate in mock licensing examinations, including the timing of applicable examination criteria.
- Familiarize yourself with the content contained in the examination bulletins sent by the licensing agency.
- Make a list of equipment and implements you are expected to bring to the examination.
- Make certain that all equipment and implements are clean and in good working order prior to the exam.



- If allowed by the regulatory or licensing agency, observe other practical examinations prior to taking yours.
- If possible, locate the examination site the day before the exam to ensure that you do not get lost on test day. You can also time your drive the day before, just to make sure you are on time for the actual exam.
- As with any exam, listen carefully to the examiner's instructions, and follow them explicitly.
- Focus on your own knowledge and do not allow yourself to be concerned with what other test candidates are doing.
- Follow all infection control and safety procedures throughout the entire examination.
- Look the part. Every little bit helps; make certain your appearance is neat, clean, and professional.

After reading the next few sections, you will be able to:

- LO 2** Determine your career focus by using the Inventory of Personal Characteristics and Technical Skills.
- LO 3** List the different salon business categories.
- LO 4** Develop a cover letter, resume, and employment portfolio.

Prepare for Employment

When you chose to enter the field of cosmetology, your primary goal was to find a good job after being licensed. Now you need to reaffirm that goal by reviewing a number of important questions.

- What do you really want out of a career in cosmetology?
- What particular areas within the beauty industry are the most interesting to you?
- What are your strongest practical skills? In what ways do you wish to use these skills?
- What personal qualities will help you have a successful career?

One way that you can answer these questions is to copy and complete the Inventory of Personal Characteristics and Technical Skills ([figure 30-3](#)) on the next page. After you have completed this inventory and identified the areas that need further attention, you can determine where to focus the remainder of your training. In addition, you should have a better idea of what type of establishment would best suit you for your eventual employment.

During your training, you may have the opportunity to network with various industry professionals who are invited to the school as guest speakers. Be prepared to ask them questions about what they like least and



INVENTORY OF PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTIC	Exc.	Good	Avg.	Poor	Plan for improvement
Posture, Deportment, Poise					
Grooming, Personal hygiene					
Manners, Courtesy					
Communication skills					
Attitude					
Self-motivation					
Personal habits					
Responsibility					
Self-esteem, Self-confidence					
Honesty, Integrity					
Dependability					

INVENTORY OF TECHNICAL SKILLS

TECHNICAL SKILL	Exc.	Good	Avg.	Poor	Plan for improvement
Hair shaping/cutting					
Hairstyling					
Haircoloring					
Texture services, Perming					
Texture services, Relaxing					
Manicuring, Pedicuring					
Artificial nail extensions					
Skin care, Facials					
Facial makeup					
Other					

After analyzing the above responses, would you hire yourself as an employee in your business? Why or why not?

State the short-term goals that you hope to accomplish in 6 to 12 months:

State the long-term goals that you hope to accomplish in 1 to 5 years:

Ask yourself: Do you want to work in a big city or small town? Are you compatible with a sophisticated, exclusive salon or a trendy salon? Which clientele are you able to communicate with more effectively? Do you want to start out slowly and carefully, or do you want to jump in and throw everything into your career from the starting gate? Will you be in this industry throughout your working career, or is this just a stopover? Will you only work a 30- or 40-hour week, or will you go the extra mile when opportunities are available? How ambitious are you, and how many risks are you willing to take?

figure 30-3

Inventory of personal characteristics and technical skills

most in their current positions. Ask them for any tips they might have that will assist you in your search for the right salon. In addition, be sure to take advantage of your institution's in-house placement assistance program if available when you begin your employment search (figure 30-4).

Your willingness to work hard is a key ingredient to your success. The commitment you make now in terms of time and effort will pay off later in the workplace, where your energy will be appreciated and rewarded. Having enthusiasm for getting the job done can be contagious, and when everyone works hard, everyone benefits. You can begin to develop this enthusiasm by establishing good work habits as a student.

How to Get the Job You Want

There are several key personal characteristics that will not only help you get the position you want, but will also help you keep it. These characteristics include the points listed below:

- **Motivation.** This means having the drive to take the necessary action to achieve a goal. Although motivation can come from external sources—parental or peer pressure, for instance—the best kind of motivation is internal.
- **Integrity.** When you have integrity, you are committed to a strong code of moral and artistic values. Integrity is the compass that keeps you on course over the long haul of your career.
- **Good technical and communication skills.** While you may be better in either technical skills or communication skills, you must develop both to reach the level of success you desire.
- **Strong work ethic.** In the beauty business, having a strong **work ethic** means taking pride in your work and committing yourself to consistently doing a good job for your clients, employer, and salon team.
- **Enthusiasm.** Try never to lose your eagerness to learn, grow, and expand your skills and knowledge.

A Salon Survey

According to the U.S. Census Bureau's most recently compiled data as of this printing, there are more than 1.1 million professional salon and spa establishments in the United States aloneⁱ. These salons employed more than 758,000 active cosmetology professionalsⁱⁱ. This year, like every year, thousands of cosmetology school graduates will find their first position in one of the eight basic types of salons described below. As you research salons, focus on the type of salon that you believe will be the best fit for you.

Small Independent Salons

Owned by an individual or two or more partners, this kind of operation makes up the majority of professional salons (figure 30-5). The typical independent salon has five styling stations, but many salons have up to 40. Usually, the owners are hairstylists who maintain their own clientele while



figure 30-4
Your school advisor can help you find employment.

ACTIVITY

For one week, keep a daily record of your performance in the following areas, and ask a few of your fellow students to provide feedback as well.

- Positive attitude
- Punctuality
- Diligent practice of newly learned techniques
- Teamwork
- Professional appearance
- Regular class and clinic attendance
- Interpersonal skills
- Helping others



Courtesy of Diane Hughes Photography.

figure 30-5
Perfect 5th in Mooresville, NC is an independent salon.

managing the business. There are nearly as many types of independent salons as there are owners. Their image, decor, services, prices, and clientele all reflect the owner's experience and taste. Depending on the owner's willingness to help a newcomer learn and grow, a beginning stylist can learn a great deal in an independent salon while also earning a good living.

Independent Salon Chains

These are usually chains of five or more salons that are owned by one individual or two or more partners. Independent salon chains range from basic hair salons to full-service salons and day spas. These salons offer everything from low-priced to very high-priced services.

In large high-end salons, stylists can advance to specialized positions in color, nail care, skin care, or other chemical services. Some larger salons also employ education directors and style directors, and stylists are often hired to manage particular locations.

Large National Salon Chains

These companies operate salons throughout the country, and even internationally. They can be budget-priced or value-priced, haircut-only or full service, mid-priced or high-end. Some salon chains operate within department store chains. Management and marketing professionals at the corporate headquarters make all the decisions for each salon, such as size, decor, hours, services, prices, advertising, and profit targets. Many newly licensed cosmetology professionals seek their first jobs in national chain salons because of the secure pay and benefits, additional paid training, management opportunities, and corporate advertising. Also, because the chains are large and widespread, employees have the added advantage of being able to transfer from one location to another.

Franchise Salons

Another chain salon organization, the franchise salon has a national name and a consistent image and business formula that is used at every location. Franchises are owned by individuals who pay a fee to use the name; these individuals then receive a business plan and can take advantage of national marketing campaigns. Decisions such as size, location, decor, and prices are determined in advance by the parent company. Franchises are generally not owned by cosmetologists, but by investors who seek a return on their investment.

Franchise salons commonly offer employees the same benefits as corporate-owned chain salons, including on-the-job training, health-care benefits and advancement opportunities.

Basic Value-Priced Operations

Often located in busy, low-rent shopping center strips that are anchored by a nearby supermarket or other large business, value-priced outlets depend on a high volume of walk-in traffic. They hire recent cosmetology graduates and generally pay them by the hour, sometimes adding commission-style bonuses if an individual stylist's sales pass a certain level. Haircuts are usually reasonably priced and stylists are trained to work fast with no frills.

Mid-Priced Full-Service Salons

These salons offer a complete menu of hair, nail, and skin services along with retail products. Successful mid-priced salons promote their most profitable services and typically offer service and retail packages to entice haircut-only clients. They also run strong marketing programs to encourage client returns and referrals. These salons train their professional styling team to be as productive and profitable as possible. If you are inclined to give more time to each client during the consultation, you may like working in a full-service salon. Here you will have the opportunity to build a relationship with clients that may last over time.

High-End Image Salons or Day Spas

This type of business employs well-trained stylists and salon assistants who offer higher-priced services to clients. They also offer luxurious extras such as five-minute head, neck, and shoulder massages as part of the shampoo and luxurious spa manicures and pedicures. Most high-end salons are located in trendy, upscale sections of large cities; others may be located in elegant mansions, high-rent office and retail towers, or luxury hotels and resorts. Clients expect a high level of personal service, and such salons hire professionals whose technical expertise, personal appearance, and communication skills meet their high standards. Medical spas, often owned by physicians, are offshoots of day spas (figure 30-6).

figure 30-6
A high-end salon



Booth Rental Establishments

Booth renting (also called chair rental) is possibly the least expensive way of owning your own business, but this type of business is regulated by complex laws. For a detailed discussion of booth rental see Chapter 32, *The Salon Business*.

Resume Development

A **resume** is a written summary of a person's education and work experience. It tells potential employers at a glance what your achievements and accomplishments are. If you are a new graduate, you may have little or no work experience, in which case, your resume should focus on skills and accomplishments. Here are some basic guidelines to follow when preparing your professional resume.

- Keep it simple, limit it to one page.
- Print a hard copy from your electronic version, using good-quality paper.
- Include your name, address, phone number, and e-mail address on both the resume and your cover letter.
- List recent, relevant work experience.
- List relevant education and the name of the institution from which you graduated, as well as relevant courses attended.
- List your professional skills and accomplishments.
- Focus on information that is relevant to the position you are seeking.

The average time that a potential employer will spend scanning your resume before deciding whether to grant you an interview is about 20 seconds. That means you must market yourself in such a manner that the reader will want to meet you. If your work experience has been in an unrelated field, show how the position helped you develop transferable skills. Restaurant work, for example, helps employees develop customer-service skills and learn to deal with a wide variety of customers.

As you list former and current positions on your resume, focus on achievements instead of detailing duties and responsibilities. Accomplishment statements enlarge your basic duties and responsibilities. The best way to show concrete accomplishment is to include numbers or percentages whenever possible. As you describe former and current positions on your resume, ask yourself the following questions:

- How many regular clients did I serve?
- How many clients did I serve weekly?
- What was my service ticket average?
- What was my client retention rate?
- What percentage of my client revenue came from retailing?
- What percentage of my client revenue came from color or texture services?

If you cannot express your accomplishment numerically, can you address which problems you solved or other results you achieved? For instance, did your office job help you develop excellent organizational skills?

This type of questioning can help you develop accomplishment statements that will interest a potential employer. There is no better time for you to achieve significant accomplishments than while you are in school. Even though your experience may be minimal, you must still present evidence of your skills and accomplishments. This may seem a difficult task at this early stage in your working career, but by closely examining your training and school clinic performance, extracurricular activities, and the full- or part-time jobs you have held, you should be able to create a good, attention-getting resume.

For example, consider the following questions:

- Did you receive any honors during your course of training?
- Were you ever selected “student of the month”?
- Did you receive special recognition for your attendance or academic progress?
- Did you win any cosmetology-related competitions while in school?
- What was your attendance average while in school?
- Did you work with the student body to organize any fundraisers? What were the results?

Answers to these types of questions may indicate your people skills, personal work habits, and personal commitment to success (figure 30-7).

Since you have not yet completed your training, you still have the opportunity to make some of the examples listed above become a reality before you graduate. Positive developments of this nature while you are still in school can do much to improve your resume.



figure 30-7
Excelling in school can help you build a good resume.

The Do's and Don'ts of Resumes

You will save yourself from many problems and a lot of disappointment right from the beginning of your job search if you keep a clear idea in your mind of what to do and what not to do when it comes to creating a resume. Here are some of the do's:



- **Always put your complete contact information on your resume.** If your cell phone is your primary phone, list its number first, and add a land line if you have one.
- **Make it easy to read.** Use concise, clear sentences and avoid overwriting or flowery language.
- **Know your audience.** Use vocabulary and language that will be understood by your potential employer.
- **Keep it short.** One page is preferable.
- **Stress accomplishments.** Emphasize past accomplishments and the skills you used to achieve them.
- **Focus on career goals.** Highlight information that is relevant to your career goals and the position you are seeking.
- **Emphasize transferable skills.** The skills mastered at other jobs that can be put to use in a new position are **transferable skills**.
- **Use action verbs.** Begin accomplishment statements with action verbs such as *achieved, coordinated, developed, increased, maintained, and strengthened*.
- **Make it neat.** A poorly structured, badly typed resume does not reflect well on you.
- **Include professional references.** Use only professional references on your resume, and make sure you give potential employers the person's title, place of employment, and telephone number.
- **Be realistic.** Remember that you are just starting out in a field that you hope will be a wonderful and fulfilling experience. Be realistic about what employers may offer to beginners.
- **Always include a cover letter.** See [figure 30-16](#), on page p. 1046, for an example of one, which assumes you have targeted and visited salons in advance, as advised in this chapter.
- **Note any skills with new technologies.** Include software programs, web development tools, and computerized salon management systems.

Here are some of the don'ts for resume writing:

- **Avoid salary references.** Don't state your salary history.
- **Avoid information about why you left former positions.**
- **Don't stretch the truth.** Misinformation or untruthful statements usually catch up with you.

If you don't feel comfortable writing your own resume, consider seeking a professional resume writer or a job coach. There may be employment agencies that can help you as well; many online job-search websites offer easy-to-use resume templates.

Marla Styles

143 Fern Circle • Anytown, USA, 12345 • 123.555.1234 • MarlaStyles@mye-mail.net • StyledToTheNines.blogspot.com

Objective

My objective is to obtain an apprentice position in an upscale salon focusing on haircolor and education so I may become a seasoned hair designer.

Education

ABC Academy of Hair Design Cosmetology, Chicago, IL, May 2015

Awards: Received Award for Best Student Haircut - International Beauty Show 2013

Oak Park River Forest High School, Oak Park, IL, May 2012

Overall GPA: 3.0

Clubs: Paint/Sketch Club, Theater Club, Yearbook Committee

Qualifications

- Creative, energetic and devoted to the cosmetology industry.
- Hold a current Illinois cosmetology license and have a strong knowledge of trends.
- Proven ability to retain clients and was booked solid with requests during my final four months of training.
- Served as mentor to new students of the ABC Academy of Hair Design Cosmetology

Professional Experience

Creative

- Won the student contest for best makeover.
- Developed an outstanding digital portfolio of photos showing cut, color, bridal styles, and makeovers.

Sales

- Increased chemical services to 30 percent of my clinic volume by graduation.
- Named Student of the Month for best attendance, best attitude, highest retail, and most services delivered.

Client Retention

- Developed and retained a school-clinic client base of over 75 individuals, both male and female.

Team Spirit

- Mentored new students and was their peer resource for the first three months of training.
- Volunteered myself as the “go-to person” for other students to consult regarding formal hairstyles.
- Created the official ABC Academy of Hair Design Cosmetology Facebook page, where I regularly shared new industry information.

Administration

- Supervised a student “salon team” that developed a business plan for opening a 12-chair, full-service salon. This project earned an “A” and was recognized for thoroughness, accuracy, and creativity.
- Reorganized a school facial room for greater efficiency and client comfort.
- Led the reorganization of the school dispensary, allowing for increased inventory control and the streamlining of clinic operations.
- Internet savvy with abilities in Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint.

References

Please see the attached page for references.

figure 30-8

A resume for those with little work experience focuses on achievements.



DID YOU KNOW?

Use your creativity and artistic abilities as a hairstylist to create a resume that represents your style and sets you apart from the competition. Do a search for contemporary resumes on Pinterest, for instance, for ideas to get started on color options, new styles and formatting to create a unique resume.

Review **figure 30-8**, on page p. 1039, which represents an achievement-oriented resume for a recent graduate of a cosmetology course. Remember that you are a total package, not just a resume. With determination, you will find the right position to begin your cosmetology career. Utilize all available resources during your resume development and job search process. For example, there is an abundance of best practice information available on the Internet, or you can communicate with an individual you may already know who has gone through the hiring process and can provide recommendations. Milady also has fantastic resources that can provide you with additional assistance when you begin your job search. One such Milady online resource to help with resume development and overall job search success is *Beauty & Wellness Career Transitions*.

Employment Portfolio

As you prepare to work in the field of cosmetology, an employment portfolio can be extremely useful. An **employment portfolio** is a collection of photos and documents that reflect your skills, accomplishments, and abilities in your chosen career field. You may choose to have a printed or an online portfolio (**figure 30-9**).

While the actual contents of the portfolio will vary from graduate to graduate, there are certain items that have a place in any portfolio.

A powerful online or printed portfolio includes the following elements:

- Diplomas, including high school and cosmetology school
- Awards and achievements received while a cosmetology student
- Current resume, focusing on accomplishments
- Letters of reference from former employers
- Summary of continuing education and/or copies of training certificates

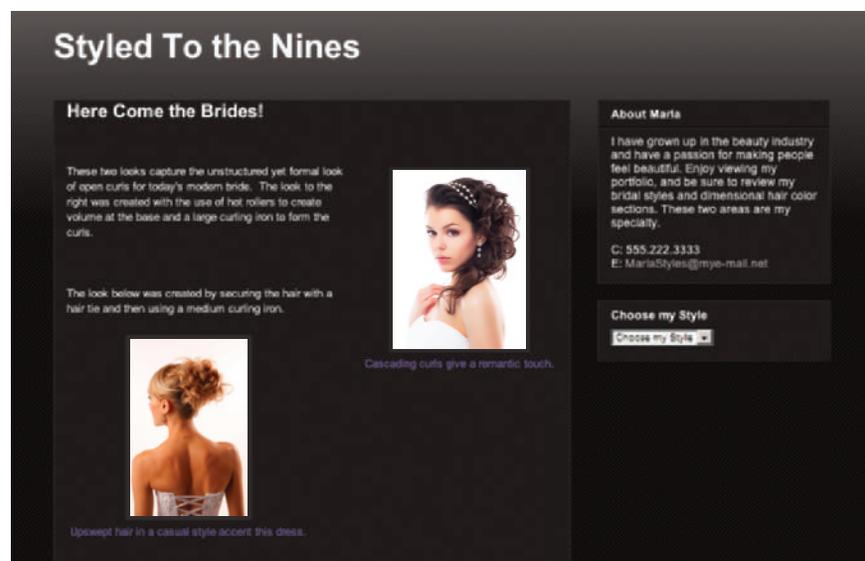


figure 30-9

Bridal showcase in an online employment portfolio (Photo credits: © gromovataya/Fotolia [Brunette bride]; © furmananna/Fotolia [Blond bride])

- Statement of membership in industry and other professional organizations
- Statement of relevant civic affiliations and/or community activities
- Before-and-after photographs of services that you have performed on clients or models
- Brief statement about why you have chosen a career in cosmetology
- Any other information that you regard as relevant

When you write the statement about why you chose a career in cosmetology, you might include the following elements:

- A statement that explains what you love about your new career
- A description about the importance of teamwork and how you see yourself as a contributing team member
- A description of methods and ideas you would use to increase service and retail revenue (**figure 30-10**).

Once you have assembled your portfolio, ask yourself whether it accurately portrays you and your career skills. If it does not, identify what needs to be changed. If you are not sure, run it by a neutral party for feedback about how to make it more interesting and accurate. This kind of feedback is also useful when creating a resume. The portfolio, like the resume, should be prepared in a way that projects professionalism.

- For ease of use, you may want to separate sections of a printed portfolio with tabs.
- A bound portfolio should be easy to carry and show to potential employers and clients.
- If you are showing your online portfolio, be sure your electronic device is fully charged and the web page is bookmarked for easy retrieval.
- The photos should all be the same dimensions.

figure 30-10

Prospective colorists should target haircolor specialty salons like Minardi Salon in NYC, which uses Minardi Color Perfect Lighting.

Online Portfolios

If you are technologically savvy or can hire someone to assist you, create a digital portfolio or an online showcase of your work. However, don't expect potential employers to take the extra time to visit a website or view a DVD. Bring along a printed copy of everything you want the employer to see.

Make it a habit to take photos of your work for your portfolio. Bring in models and practice the latest haircut, styling, or coloring techniques. Take compelling before and after photos to show your ability to transform your clients. For ideas, browse the Internet by doing a Google image search for "hairstyling portfolios." Showcase your versatility by providing photos of various hair designs so your potential employer will gain a sense of your abilities.



There are many options you can use to create an online or electronic version of your portfolio. You can simply save your photos and scanned documents on a DVD, or you can easily create an online portfolio for free by utilizing a blog. Websites such as blogger.com or wordpress.com offer free blog sites that can easily serve as your online portfolio.

Do your homework, research carefully, and think long-term. You, your portfolio, and web address want to be around for years to come. If creating a website is currently not in your budget, then create a “Fan Page” on Facebook to showcase your work. Remember: Your fan page is your business page and a representation of your professional image.

Targeting the Establishment

One of the most important steps in the process of job hunting is narrowing your search. Listed below are some points to keep in mind when targeting potential employers.

- Accept that your first job will probably not be your dream job. Few people are so fortunate.
- Do not wait until graduation to begin your search. If you do, you may be tempted to take the first offer you receive instead of carefully investigating all possibilities before making a decision.
- Locate a salon that serves the type of clients you wish to serve. Finding a good fit with the clients and staff is critical from the outset of your career (**figure 30-11**).
- Make a list of area salons or spas. The Internet will be your best source for this. If you are considering relocating to another area, go to anywho.com for a complete listing of businesses in every state, or find top salons in any region or city at citysearch.com. You may also want



figure 30-11

Independent salons, like Salvatore Minardi in Madison, NJ, reflect the owner's taste, which gives you clues as to whether or not you'll fit in.

Photo by Michael Watson.

to do a Google search for your area of interest and city, using key words such as *haircolor salon Portland*, for example.

- Watch for salons that advertise locally, to get a feel for the market each salon is targeting. Then check the salon's website or see if it is part of a social network, such as Facebook.
- Check out websites and social networking sites for various types of salons. If you contact them, don't waste their time. Get right to the point that you are a student, and ask specific questions about the profession.
- Keep the salon's culture in mind. Do the stylists dress like you? Are the clients in different age groups or just one? Look for the salon that will be best for you and your goals.

Field Research

A great way to find out about potential jobs is to network. Actually get out there, visit salons, and talk to salon owners, managers, educators, and stylists. Whether your first contact is online, in person, or on the phone, sooner or later you'll want to arrange a face-to-face meeting or an exploratory visit to the salon. To set up a salon visit, consider the following:

- If you call, use your best telephone manner; speak with confidence and self-assurance. If you e-mail, be brief, and check spelling and punctuation. Do not text message salon owners or managers, unless they request that you do so.
- Explain that you are preparing to graduate from school in cosmetology, that you are researching the market for potential positions, and that you have a few quick questions.
- If the person is receptive, ask whether the salon is in need of any new stylists, and how many the salon currently employs.
- Ask if you can make an appointment to visit the salon to observe sometime during the next few weeks. If the salon representative is agreeable, be on time! When timing allows, confirm the appointment the day before, via e-mail ([figure 30-12](#)).

Remember that a rejection is not a negative reflection on you. Many professionals are too busy to make time for this kind of networking. The good news is that you are bound to discover many genuinely kind people

Dear Ms. (or Mr.) _____,

This is just a quick reminder that I'll be visiting your salon this Friday, June 12th, at 2:00 PM. I am looking forward to meeting with you, and I am eager to observe your salon and staff at work. If you should need to reach me before that time for any reason, please call or text me at _____, or e-mail me at _____.

Sincerely,
(Your name)

WEB RESOURCES

To start looking for a cosmetology job, begin at these websites:

Industry specific:
americansalonmag.com
behindthechair.com
modernsalon.com
salonemployment.com
salongigs.com
spaandsalonjobs.com

General:
careerbuilder.com
resumeedge.com
craigslist.org
jobbank.com
jobs.net
monster.com
snagajob.com

figure 30-12
Sample appointment confirmation

who remember what it was like when they started out and who are willing to devote a bit of their time to help others who are beginning their careers.

The Salon Visit

When you visit the salon, take along a checklist to ensure that you observe all the key areas that might ultimately affect your decision making. The checklist will be similar to the one used for field trips that you probably have taken to area salons while in school. Keep the checklist on file for future reference, so that you can make informed comparisons among establishments (figure 30-13).

After your visit, always remember to follow up with a handwritten note or email, thanking the salon representative for his or her time (figure 30-14). Do this even if you did not like the salon and would never consider working there (figure 30-15).

Never burn your bridges. Instead, build a network of contacts who have a favorable opinion of you.

figure 30-13
Salon visit checklist

SALON VISIT CHECKLIST

When you visit a salon, observe the following areas and rate them from 1 to 5, with 5 considered being the best.

- _____ **SALON IMAGE:** Is the salon's image consistent and appropriate for your interests? Is the image pleasing and inviting? What is the decor and arrangement? If you are not comfortable or if you find it unattractive, mark the salon off your list of employment possibilities.
- _____ **PROFESSIONALISM:** Do the employees present the appropriate professional appearance and behavior? Do they give their clients the appropriate levels of attention and personal service, or do they act as if work is their time to socialize?
- _____ **MANAGEMENT:** Does the salon show signs of being well-managed? Is the phone answered promptly with professional telephone skills? Is the mood of the salon positive? Does everyone appear to work as a team?
- _____ **CLIENT SERVICE:** Are clients greeted promptly and warmly when they enter the salon? Are they kept informed of the status of their appointment? Are they offered a magazine or beverage while they wait? Is there a comfortable reception area? Are there changing rooms and attractive smocks?
- _____ **PRICES:** Compare price for value. Are clients getting their money's worth? Do they pay the same price in one salon but get better service and attention in another? If possible, take home salon brochures and price lists.
- _____ **RETAIL:** Is there a well-stocked retail display offering clients a variety of product lines and a range of prices? Do the stylists and receptionist (if applicable) promote retail sales?
- _____ **IN-SALON MARKETING:** Are there posters or promotions throughout the salon? If so, are they professionally made, and do they reflect contemporary styles?
- _____ **SERVICES:** Make a list of all services offered by each salon and the product lines they carry. This will help you decide what earning potential stylists have in each salon.

SALON NAME: _____

SALON MANAGER: _____

Dear Ms. (or Mr.) _____,

I appreciate having had the opportunity to observe your salon/spa in operation last Friday. Thank you for the time you and your staff gave me. I was impressed by the efficient and courteous manner in which your stylists served their clients. The atmosphere was pleasant, and the mood was positive. Should you ever have an opening for a professional with my skills and training, I would welcome the opportunity to apply. You can contact me at the e-mail address and phone number listed below. I hope we will meet again soon.

Sincerely,
(your name, address, telephone, e-mail address)

figure 30-14
Sample thank-you note

Dear Ms. (or Mr.) _____,

I appreciate having had the opportunity to observe your salon in operation last Friday. I know how busy you and all your staff are, and I want to thank you for the time that you gave me. I hope my presence didn't interfere with the flow of your operations too much. I certainly appreciate the courtesies that were extended to me by you and your staff. I wish you and your salon continued success.

Sincerely,
(your name)

figure 30-15
Thank-you note to a salon at which you do not expect to seek employment

After reading the next few sections, you will be able to:

LO 5 Know how to explore the job market, research potential employers, and operate within the legal aspects of employment.

Arrange for a Job Interview

After you have graduated and completed the first two steps in the process of securing employment—targeting and observing salons—you are ready to pursue employment in earnest. The next step is to contact the establishments that you are most interested in by sending them a resume and requesting an interview. Choosing a salon that is the best match to your skills will increase your chances of success.

Many salons have websites with special employment areas, others post on salon- or job-related websites. Follow instructions exactly for filling out

figure 30-16
Sample resume cover letter

Your Name
Your Address
Your Phone Number

Ms. (or Mr.) _____
Salon Name
Salon Address

Dear Ms. (or Mr.) _____,

We met in August when you allowed me to observe your salon and staff while I was still in cosmetology training. Since that time, I have graduated and have received my license. I have enclosed my resume for your review and consideration.

I would appreciate the opportunity to meet with you and discuss either current or future career opportunities at your salon. I was extremely impressed with your staff and business, and I would like to share with you how my skills and training might add to your salon's success.

I look forward to meeting with you again soon.

Sincerely,
(your name)

forms or sending resumes. (Some salons don't want attachments, such as letters of recommendation or digital portfolios sent with the resumes.) In rare instances, you may need to send a resume and cover letter (**figures 30-8 and 30-16**) by traditional snail mail. Comply with the salon's guidelines.

Mark your calendar to remind yourself to make a follow-up contact. A week after submitting your resume is generally sufficient. When you call or e-mail, try to schedule an interview appointment. Keep in mind that some salons may not have openings and may not be granting interviews. When this is the case, send a resume, if you have not already, and ask the salon to keep it on file should an opening arise in the future. Be sure to thank your contacts for their time and consideration.

Interview Preparation

When preparing for an interview, make sure that you have all the necessary information and materials in place (**figure 30-17**), including the following items:

Identification

- Social Security Number
- Driver's license number
- Names, mailing addresses, email addresses and phone numbers of former employers
- Name, phone number and email address of the nearest relative not living with you

PREPARING FOR THE INTERVIEW CHECKLIST

RESUME COMPOSITION

1. Does it present your abilities and what you have accomplished in your jobs and training?
2. Does it make the reader want to ask, "How did you accomplish that?"
3. Does it highlight accomplishments rather than detailing duties and responsibilities?
4. Is it easy to read? Is it short? Does it stress past accomplishments and skills?
5. Does it focus on information that is relevant to your own career goals?
6. Is it complete and professionally prepared?

PORTFOLIO CHECKLIST

- _____ Diploma, secondary, and post-secondary
- _____ Awards and achievements while in school
- _____ Current resume focusing on accomplishments
- _____ Letters of reference from former employers
- _____ List of, or certificates from, trade shows attended while in training
- _____ Statement of professional affiliations (memberships in cosmetology organizations, etc.)
- _____ Statement of civic affiliations and/or activities
- _____ Before and after photographs of technical skills services you have performed
- _____ Any other relevant information

Ask: Does my portfolio portray me and my career skills in the manner that I wish to be perceived? If not, what needs to be changed?

figure 30-17

Preparing for the interview checklist

Interview Wardrobe

Your appearance is crucial, especially since you are applying for a position in the image and beauty industry (figure 30-18). It is recommended that you obtain one or two interview outfits. You may be requested to return for a second interview, hence the need for the second outfit. Consider the following points:

- Is the outfit appropriate for the position?
- Is it both fashionable and flattering, and similar to what the salon's current stylists wear? (If you haven't visited the salon, walk by or check out its website to gauge its style culture so that you can dress accordingly.)
- Are your accessories both fashionable and functional (for example, not noisy or so large that they would interfere with performing services)?
- Are your nails well groomed?
- Is your hairstyle current? Does it flatter your face and your overall style?
- Is your makeup current? Does it flatter your face and your overall style?
- (For men:) Are you clean shaven? If not, is your beard properly trimmed?
- Is your perfume or cologne subtle (or nonexistent)?
- Are you carrying either a handbag or a briefcase, but not both?

figure 30-18

Dressed for an interview





HERE'S A TIP

When you contact a salon to make an appointment for an interview, you may be told that they are not currently hiring but would be happy to conduct an interview for future reference. Never think that this would be a waste of time.

Take advantage of the opportunity. Not only will it give you valuable interview experience, but it may also provide opportunities that you would otherwise miss.

Supporting Materials

- **Resume.** Even if you have already sent a resume, take another copy with you.
- **Facts and figures.** Have ready a list of names and dates of former employment, education, and references.
- **Employment portfolio.** Even if you have just two photos in your portfolio and they are pictures of haircolor and styles you did for friends, bring them along.

Review and Prepare for Anticipated Interview Questions

Certain questions are typically asked during an interview. Being familiar with these questions will allow you to reflect on your answers ahead of time. You might even consider role-playing an interview situation with friends, family, or fellow students. Typical questions include the following:

- Why do you want to work here?
- What did you like best about your training?
- Are you punctual and regular in attendance?
- Will your school director or instructor confirm this?
- What skills do you feel are your strongest?
- In which areas do you consider yourself to be less strong?
- Are you a team player? Please explain.
- Do you consider yourself flexible? Please explain.
- What are your career goals?
- What days and hours are you available for work?
- Are there any obstacles that would prevent you from keeping your commitment to full-time employment? Please explain.
- What assets do you believe that you would bring to this salon and this position?
- What computer skills do you have?
- How would you handle a problem client?
- How do you feel about retailing?
- Would you be willing to attend our company's training program?
- Would you please describe ways that you provide excellent customer service?
- What consultation questions might you ask a client?
- Are you prepared to train for a year before you have your own clients?

Be Prepared to Perform a Service

Some salons require applicants to perform a service in their chosen discipline as part of the interview, and many of these salons require that



DID YOU KNOW?

It can be difficult for new graduates to afford the two or three outfits necessary to project a confident and professional image when going out into the workplace. Fortunately, several nonprofit organizations have been formed to address this need. These organizations receive donations of clean, beautiful clothes in good repair from individuals and manufacturers. These are then passed along to women who need them. For more information, visit Wardrobe for Opportunity at wardrobe.org and Dress for Success at dressforsuccess.org.

you bring your own model. Be sure to confirm whether this is a requirement. If it is, make sure that your model is appropriately dressed and properly prepared for the experience and that you bring the necessary supplies, products, and tools to demonstrate your skills.

The Interview

On the day of the interview, try to make sure that nothing occurs that will keep you from completing the interview successfully. You should practice the following behaviors in connection with the interview itself:

- Always be on time or, better yet, early. If you are unsure of the location, find it the day before, so there will be no reason for delays.
- Turn off your cell phone! Do not arrive with ear buds or a hands-free cell phone device in your ear.
- Project a warm, friendly smile. Smiling is the universal language.
- Walk, sit, and stand with good posture.
- Be polite and courteous.
- Do not sit until you are asked to do so or until it is obvious that you are expected to do so.
- Never smoke or chew gum, even if one or the other is offered to you.
- Do not come to an interview with a cup of coffee, a soft drink, snacks, or anything else to eat or drink.
- Never lean on or touch the interviewer's desk. Some people do not like their personal space broached without an invitation.
- Try to project a positive first impression by appearing as confident and relaxed as you can be (figure 30-19).
- Speak clearly. The interviewer must be able to hear and understand you.



figure 30-19
Interview in progress

ACTIVITY

Find a partner among your fellow students and role-play the employment interview. Each of you can take turns as the applicant and the employer. After each session, conduct a brief discussion regarding how it went; that is, what worked and what didn't work. Discuss how your performance could be improved. Bear in mind that a role-playing activity will never predict exactly what will occur in a real interview. However, the process will help prepare you for the interview and boost your confidence.

- Answer questions honestly. Think about the question and answer carefully. Do not speak before you are ready, and not for more than two minutes at a time.
- Never criticize former employers.
- Always remember to thank the interviewer at the end of the interview.

Another critical part of the interview comes when you are invited to ask the interviewer questions of your own. You should think about those questions ahead of time and bring a list if necessary. Doing so will show that you are organized and prepared. Some questions that you might consider include the following:

- What are you looking for in a stylist?
- Is there a job description? May I review it?
- Is there a salon manual? May I review it?
- How does the salon promote itself?
- How long do stylists typically work here?
- Are employees encouraged to grow in skills and responsibility? How so?
- Does the salon offer continuing education opportunities?
- What does your training program involve?
- Is there room for advancement? If so, what are the requirements for promotion?
- What key benefits does the salon offer, such as advanced training and medical insurance?
- What outside and community activities is the salon involved in?
- What is the form of compensation?
- When will the position be filled?
- May I contact you in a week regarding your decision?
- May I have a tour of the salon?



Do not feel that you have to ask all of your questions. The point is to create as much of a dialogue as possible. Be aware of the interviewer's reactions and make note of when you have asked enough questions. By obtaining the answers to at least some of your questions, you can compare the information you have gathered about other salons and choose the one that offers the best package of income and career development.

Remember to follow up the interview with a thank-you note or e-mail. It should simply thank the interviewer for the time he or she spent with you. Close with a positive statement that you want the job (if you do). If the interviewer's decision comes down to two or three possibilities, the one expressing the most desire may be offered the position. Also, if the interviewer suggests that you call to learn about the employment decision, then by all means do so.

Legal Aspects of the Employment Interview

Over the years, a number of legal issues have arisen about questions that may or may not be included in an employment application or interview, including ones that involve race/ethnicity, religion, and national origin, marital status, sexual orientation and if you have children. Generally, there should be no questions in any of these categories. Additional categories of appropriate and inappropriate questions are listed below:

- **Age or date of birth.** It is permissible to ask the age if the applicant is younger than 18. Otherwise, age should not be relevant in most hiring decisions; therefore, date-of-birth questions prior to employment are improper.
- **Disabilities or physical traits.** The Americans with Disabilities Act prohibits general inquiries about health problems, disabilities, and medical conditions.
- **Drug use or smoking.** Questions regarding drug or tobacco use are permitted. In fact, the employer may obtain the applicant's agreement to be bound by the employer's drug and smoking policies and to submit to drug testing.
- **Citizenship.** Employers are not allowed to discriminate because an applicant is not a U.S. citizen. However, employers can request to see a Green Card or work permit.

It is important to recognize that not all potential employers will understand that they may be asking improper or illegal questions. If you are asked such questions, you might politely respond that you believe the question is irrelevant to the position you are seeking, and that you would like to focus on your qualities and skills that are suited to the job and the mission of the establishment.

Employee Contracts

Employers can legally require you to sign contracts as a condition of employment. In the salon business, the most common ones are non-compete and confidentiality agreements. Salon owners often invest a great deal in training, and they don't want you taking all that education to a



DID YOU KNOW?

These are examples of illegal questions as compared to legal questions:

Illegal Questions

How old are you?
Please describe your medical history.
Are you a U.S. citizen?
What is your native language?

Legal Questions

Are you over the age of 18?
Are you physically able to perform this job?
Are you authorized to work in the United States?
In which languages are you fluent?



competing salon across the street once your apprenticeship or initial training is complete. Non-compete agreements address this issue, prohibiting you from seeking employment within a given time period and geographic area after you leave employment with them. Often, non-compete agreements also forbid employees from gathering and keeping client records, including client phone numbers. A contract cannot interfere with your right to work, and as a result, these contracts must be very specific and are sometimes controversial. If you are presented with any contract, take it home, read it, and make certain you completely understand it. If you do not completely understand any part of it, consult with a labor-law attorney before signing it.

The Employment Application

Any time that you are applying for any position, you will be required to complete an application, even if your resume already contains much of the requested information. Your resume and the list you have prepared prior to the interview will assist you in completing the application quickly and accurately.

Doing It Right

You are ready to set out on your exciting new career as a professional cosmetologist. The right way to proceed is by learning important study and test-taking skills early and applying them consistently.

Think ahead to your employment opportunities and use your time in school to develop a record of interesting, noteworthy activities that will make your resume more exciting. When you compile a history that shows how you have achieved your goals, your confidence will grow.

Always take one step at a time. Be sure to take the helpful preliminary steps that we have discussed when preparing for employment.

Develop a dynamic portfolio. Keep your materials, information, and questions organized in order to ensure a high-impact interview.

Once you are employed, take the necessary steps to learn all that you can about your new position and the establishment you will be serving. Read all you can about the industry. Attend trade shows and take advantage of as much continuing education as you can manage. Become an active participant in efforts to make the cosmetology industry even better. See Chapter 31, *On the Job*, to learn some great strategies for ensuring your career success.

As you transition into your new career as a beauty professional, let us Milady continue the journey with you. Be sure to visit the MiladyPro.com website. In addition to helping you prepare for your State Board Exam, MiladyPro.com offers access to materials designed to help you hit the ground running and grow your skill set, assuring long-term success no matter where you may take your career.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1 What habits and characteristics do test-wise students have?
- 2 What is deductive reasoning?
- 3 What are the four most common testing formats?
- 4 List and describe the different types of salon businesses available to cosmetologists.
- 5 What is a resume?
- 6 What is an employment portfolio?
- 7 List the items that should be included in your employment portfolio.
- 8 What are some questions that you should never be asked when interviewing for a job?

STUDY TOOLS

- **Reinforce what you just learned:** Complete the activities and exercises in your Theory or Practical Workbook, or your Study Guide.
- **Expand your knowledge:** Search for websites about the topics in this chapter and make a list of additional resources.
- **Study and prepare for your quiz:** Take the chapter test in your Exam Review or your Milady U: Online Licensing Prep.
- **Re-Test your knowledge:** Take the Chapter 30 Quizzes!
- **Learn even more:** Look up in a dictionary or search the internet for the definitions of any additional terms you want to learn about.

CHAPTER GLOSSARY

deductive reasoning	p. 1029	The process of reaching logical conclusions by employing logical reasoning.
employment portfolio	p. 1040	A collection, usually bound, of photos and documents that reflect your skills, accomplishments, and abilities in your chosen career field.
resume	p. 1036	Written summary of a person's education and work experience.
stem	p. 1029	The basic question or problem.
test-wise	p. 1027	Understanding the strategies for successful test taking.
transferable skills	p. 1038	Skills mastered at other jobs that can be put to use in a new position.
work ethic	p. 1033	Taking pride in your work and committing yourself to consistently doing a good job for your clients, employer, and salon team.