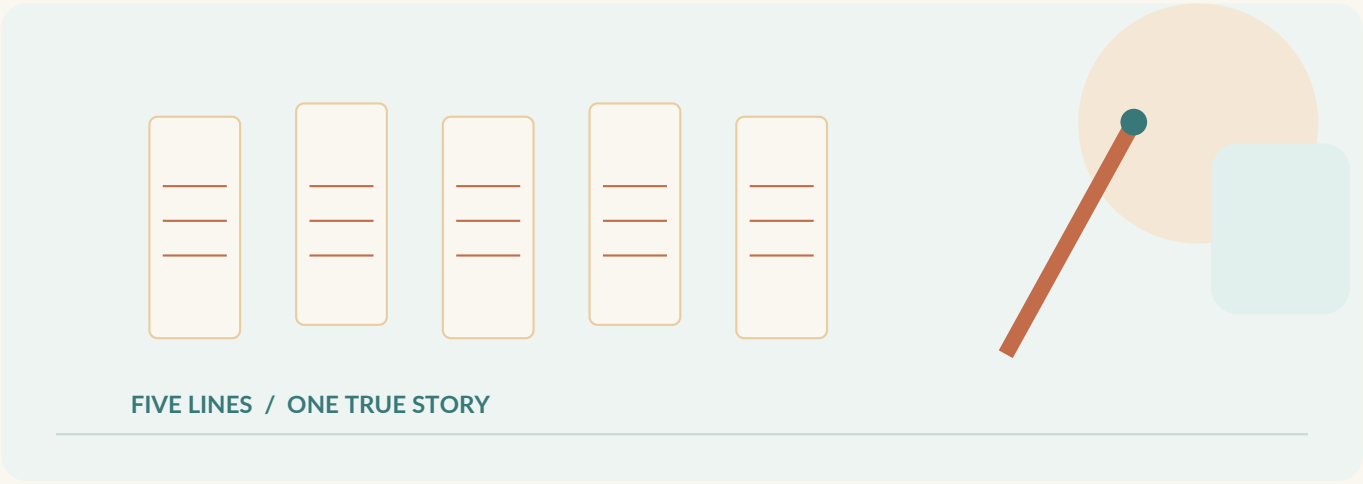


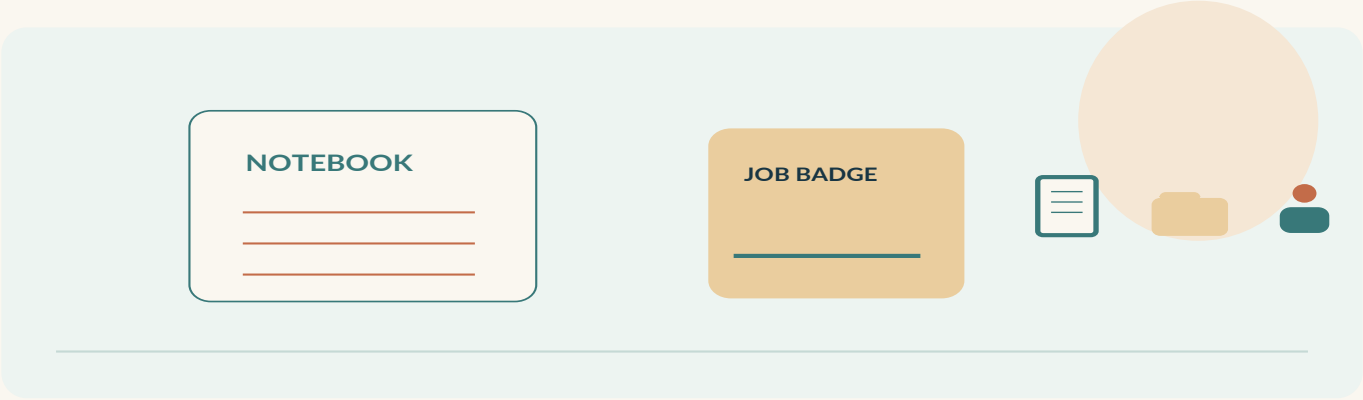
Describe Your Experience in Five Lines

THE NEXT CHAPTER — A FREE ORIGINAL READING

What you actually did can be more useful than what your old badge said.

A practical, thoughtful way to describe one genuine piece of experience in five plain sentences. You do not need to invent a promotion, list every job, explain your age, or promise that someone will hire you. You only need to begin with work you can honestly describe.

This guide offers a five-line method, three clearly fictional and different situations, a check for overstatements, and two optional private writing cards. You can write a draft, choose to share it with someone appropriate, keep it entirely to yourself, or decide that returning to work is not for you. None of those outcomes is a failure.



1. The job title is not the whole story

Someone asks what you used to do. You answer with a title: supervisor, assistant, coordinator, clerk, technician, caregiver, manager. There is a good chance the other person understands less than you intended. A title can mean very different things in two organizations. It can describe authority you had, or merely the department in which you worked. After years away, the organization itself may have disappeared; the title may sound old-fashioned, grander than the job really was, or smaller than the responsibilities you carried.

You could give a long account of the old workplace. Most readers do not need that assignment. Try taking the title off the page temporarily. What did an ordinary useful hour involve? Did you keep information accurate, help someone find the right person, check supplies, explain a procedure, resolve a handover, or prepare things so another person could begin? These are not glamorous phrases, yet they let another human picture your contribution.

We are going to make a little portrait of **one truthful cluster of experience**. Not an autobiography and not an all-purpose résumé. It could come from paid employment, an appropriately described volunteer role, a family undertaking where privacy permits, or a clearly identified personal project. Do not present voluntary or personal experience as an employer-paid job. Nor should you apologize for genuine skills because they were not acquired in a prestigious role.

Consider a person who formerly called herself *regional operations executive*. When pressed, she realizes she chiefly coordinated a rotating front desk and checked that handovers were complete. That work may be valuable. The smaller, clearer description respects it more than the inflated title. The reverse is possible too: a person who says only *I answered phones* may also have accurately recorded urgent messages, provided clear directions, and kept a three-person coverage rota functioning. The details belong to the work, not to the rank.

The first question is not *How can I make this impressive?* It is *What did I personally do that I can describe without borrowing anybody else's accomplishments?*



2. Choose one piece, not an entire career

Five lines cannot contain thirty years. That is a feature, not a defect. A short truthful description becomes possible when you choose **one kind of activity**. You might choose welcoming visitors, organizing inventory records, teaching a basic task, making a schedule, keeping a public space ready, or resolving routine questions. Choose something you really did often enough to understand and could explain without opening a confidential file.

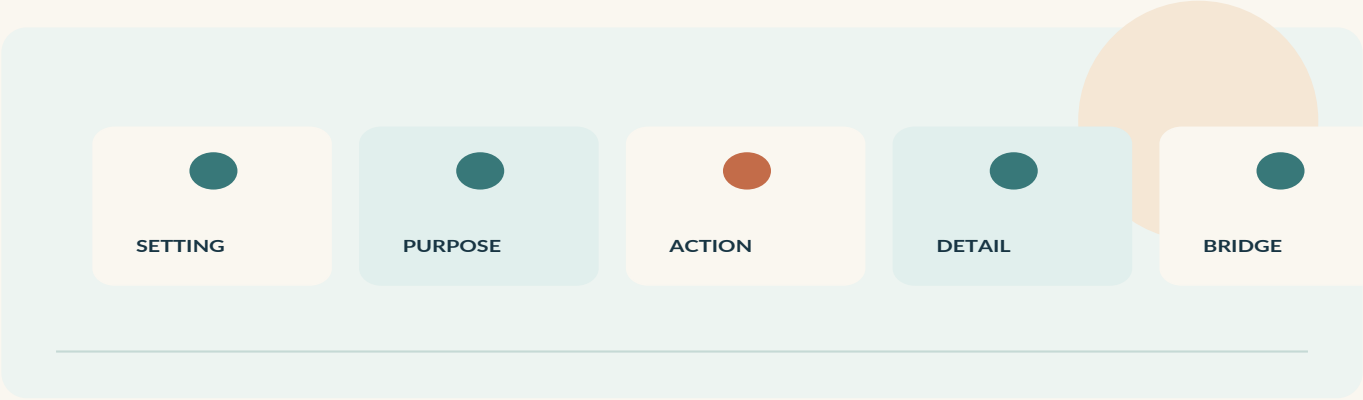
The activity does not need to match your final job. Perhaps you worked in bookkeeping for decades but enjoyed the part where you patiently explained a new process to colleagues. You can write about the teaching element without claiming to be a certified teacher. A retired builder might focus on explaining safe tool-storage routines, but should not advertise current trade certification unless it is actually held and valid. A shop worker might describe setting out stock clearly rather than asserting that she drove company sales upward.

Here is a useful limit: imagine that someone who worked beside you is listening. Could that person recognize your description as fair? You may see the task differently, but you should not depend on an invented team size, a fabricated achievement, a borrowed award, or a responsibility you never held.

If you remember three possible activities, don't try to blend them immediately. Put them in separate mental piles. Which one is easiest to support with an honest example? Which one relates to a kind of contribution you might still want to make? Which one can you describe without exposing another person's circumstances? Pick just one for today's five lines. You can make a different card later if you choose.

A limitation deserves space. You may remember the work well but not exact counts or dates. That is normal. You need not create numbers to fill the gaps. You can say *regularly* where you cannot support a frequency, or simply state the specific action. Precision means not claiming what you don't know; it does not always mean using digits.

This is a small writing task with a definite stopping point. One authentic activity, five lines, one review. No software, professional profile, or application is required.



3. The five-line frame

Each line does a different job. Together they tell a coherent story. They are not five slogans about being hardworking. A helpful first shape is:

Line 1 — Setting: Where or in what kind of situation did you do the work? Keep the description general enough to protect confidentiality.

Line 2 — Purpose or people: What needed to happen, and who or what did the task serve? Name a public-facing function or an ordinary team, not a private individual's identity.

Line 3 — Your action: What did you actually do with your own hands, words, or decisions? Use one understandable verb.

Line 4 — Verifiable detail: What factual scale, repeated practice, or concrete outcome can you honestly support? An outcome is optional when it cannot be established.

Line 5 — Honest bridge: How might that experience relate to a possible contribution now, without suggesting that you have been offered or approved for one?

You may adjust the grammar, but keep the five functions separate. This is different from the five demands in a job advertisement: those belong to understanding someone else's posting. These five lines explain **your own experience**, even if you never look at a vacancy.

Here is a deliberately ordinary, invented model, before we meet its character:

1. I helped coordinate a visitor desk at a small community venue.
2. The desk provided arrivals with directions and passed questions to the right staff member.
3. I checked the daily rota, greeted visitors, and recorded routine handover notes.
4. On one fictional month, I completed three scheduled two-hour desk shifts, for six hours in total.
5. I could use that experience in a setting needing patient visitor assistance, subject to its own training and role requirements.

Notice what is *not* included: an impressive invented job title, a claim that visitors were always satisfied, or a statement that a particular employer wants this person. The arithmetic here is only a fact within the fictional example: three shifts multiplied by two hours equals six completed hours. It says nothing about anyone else's job prospects.

4. Line one: give the work a place to stand

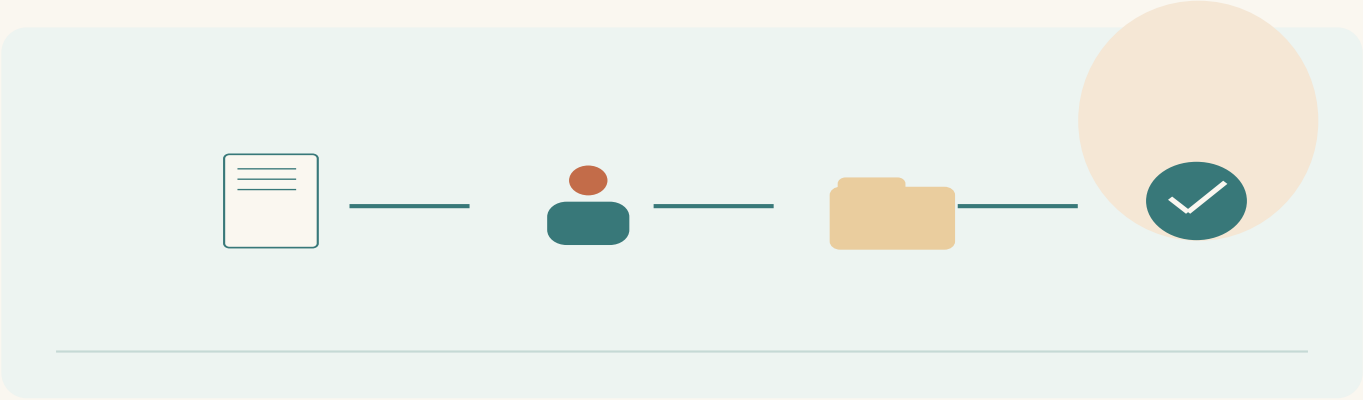
A reader needs a setting, not a complete address. Compare *I did administration* with *I supported the public enquiry desk at a small cultural venue*. The second sentence tells us why answering questions might matter. Compare *I was a clerk* with *I handled stock records for an independent shop*. The second tells us what kind of records were involved without overstating authority.

An honest setting can be very short: *During a community volunteer project ...* or *In my former paid role with a retail team ....* That small distinction protects the truth of what you did. Volunteer experience can be substantial; it does not turn into paid employment because it sounds convenient in a biography. Similarly, a personal project may prove care and persistence, but it is not automatically equivalent to industry experience or accreditation.

You may not want to share the employer's name. You may be bound by a confidentiality agreement, or the relevant work may have involved clients who never agreed to be examples. Start with a broad, accurate category. *At a neighborhood service desk* can be sufficient. *In an office where I handled private health files for a named client* is generally more detail than this exercise needs, and may violate obligations. You can explain safe, general methods without reproducing client information.

A sentence about time should also be honest. If you stopped doing a task years ago, write in the past tense. *I coordinated* is not the same as *I currently coordinate*. If a qualification has expired or you cannot confirm its standing, leave out claims that you are presently certified or licensed. This guide cannot determine whether an employer or regulator will accept your background.

Try speaking your line one aloud. Does a stranger understand the kind of setting? Does it contain a fact you can stand behind? Does it avoid details belonging to someone else? If yes, it has done its job. It need not sound prestigious.



5. Line two: say what needed doing

This line answers a modest question: *What was the point of the activity?* Do not substitute a grand mission statement. A welcoming desk needs visitors to find their way. A stockroom needs items to be located and counted correctly. A community kitchen needs volunteer instructions to be understandable. A rota needs enough clearly identified coverage so that the next person knows when to arrive.

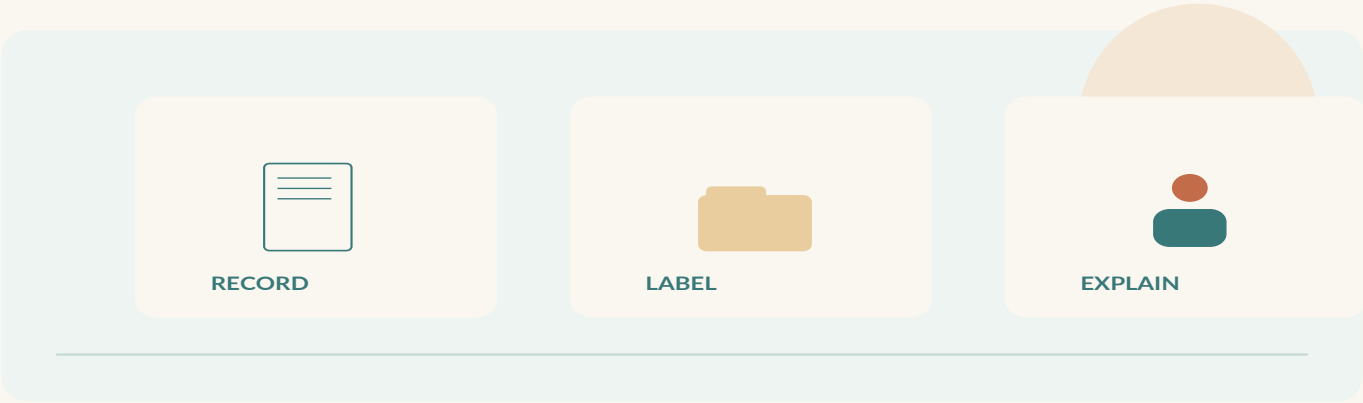
You can describe the need without claiming the whole team succeeded because of you. *The group needed reliable sign-in records* is safer and clearer than *I transformed the organization's community engagement*. *The shop needed shelves to match the inventory notes* makes sense even when you have no approved statistics showing better sales or fewer errors.

If the work involved other people's private circumstances, keep the person invisible and the task visible. For example, someone who organized transport information for relatives can say *I kept appointments and transport questions organized for a household*. There is no reason to reveal diagnoses, dates of care, the name of a dependent relative, or the contents of a private conversation. On a real application, additional information might be legally requested or voluntarily relevant, but the first five-line exercise is not the place to collect it.

Here are three different purposes written without inflated outcomes. *Customers needed to find the right counter and understand the opening process. Volunteers needed clear instructions about where equipment belonged. Colleagues needed to know which requests remained open at the end of a shift.* None promises satisfied customers, perfect safety, or a guaranteed result. Yet each lets a reader picture a useful task.

If you cannot explain the purpose, perhaps your chosen example is still too broad. *I supported operations* leaves the scene dim. Ask what somebody would have noticed if the task had simply not been done. Perhaps a box would have remained unlabelled, a message would not have reached the next shift, or a newcomer would have struggled to find a room. You are describing a need, not manufacturing a crisis to make yourself a hero.

The test for line two: it should make line three—your own action—feel necessary and understandable.



6. Line three: choose the verb you earned

Words such as *managed*, *led*, *designed*, *trained*, *improved*, and *resolved* can be accurate. They can also lend a false scale to ordinary participation if they are not supported. There is nothing weak about simpler verbs: *checked*, *recorded*, *explained*, *greeted*, *counted*, *prepared*, *sorted*, *showed*, *followed up*. The goal is a clear picture of an action, not a contest for the strongest word.

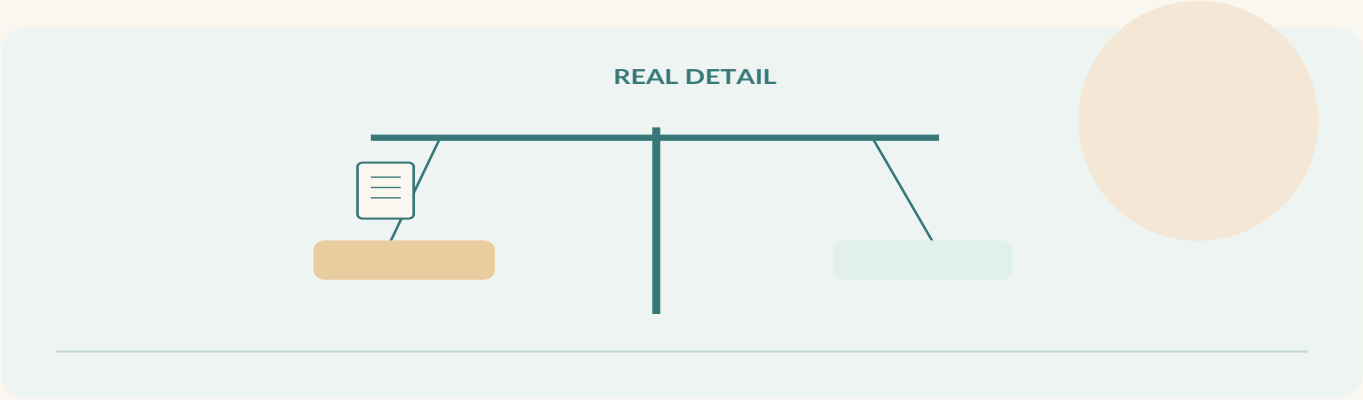
Suppose you greeted workshop visitors, handed out supplies, and told them where to go. *Coordinated all workshops* would likely say more than you did. *Greeted visitors, prepared basic supplies, and directed people to the correct room* might be exactly right. Suppose you devised the actual staffing rota, made decisions about coverage, and obtained supervisor approval. Then *prepared the shift rota and confirmed changes with the supervisor* is an honest description of your responsibility.

One line can include two or three linked actions, but too many turn it into a compressed résumé. If the line lists twelve verbs, return to the one task you selected. Keep verbs parallel and understandable. *I checked stock against the list and recorded discrepancies for a supervisor to review* is more concrete than *I did stock control and efficiency stuff*. It also makes clear that a supervisor, not you, made the later decision.

Distinguish **doing**, **assisting**, and **being authorized to decide**. You can help prepare a budget without being responsible for the budget. You can demonstrate a routine without certifying another person's competence. You can record a visitor's concern without adjudicating the concern. If an employer or member of the public will rely on your description, these are not fussy distinctions; they are a way to show trustworthiness.

If you are tempted to write *transformed*, ask what verifiable before-and-after comparison you actually possess. If none, choose the verb for the action itself. You may still have made a difference; you are simply declining to advertise a result you cannot establish.

A quiet, precise verb respects both the work and the person reading about it.



7. Line four: include proof, or admit what you cannot count

This is the hardest line for many people. Modern career language can make it seem that every useful activity must end with a percentage. Not every position kept meaningful statistics. Not every improvement can fairly be attributed to one person. And years later, numbers can become a story you have repeated so often that you forget whether you ever checked them.

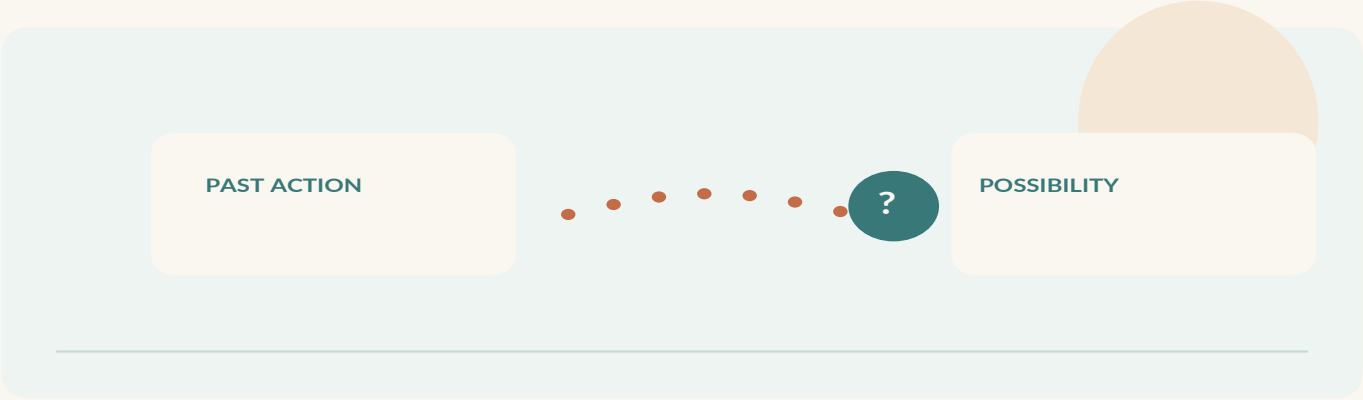
Try a **fact you can identify** instead: *I completed a handover note at the end of each scheduled shift. I helped new volunteers find the check-in procedure during three separate sessions. I maintained the weekly inventory sheet according to the shop's checking process.* These can be concrete without advertising a quantified improvement.

If you use a number, make it one you could explain. In our wholly fictional visitor-desk example, the character attended **three two-hour shifts**. Within that invented story, the multiplication is three times two, or **six hours**. Six hours of attendance is not six years of management, evidence of excellent performance, or a promise of job readiness. It is a bounded factual description of what happened inside that example.

Another kind of proof is an artifact you are entitled to describe without showing its private contents: *a checklist I prepared for colleagues*, *a schedule I updated*, *a set of labels I maintained*. If the artifact belongs to an employer, do not copy or disclose it without permission. You can still describe in general terms the method you used. If the only evidence is your own memory, say so and avoid pretending a third party has verified it.

Line four can acknowledge a limit gracefully: *I cannot confirm an exact number of enquiries, but recording them accurately was part of my regular role.* That is longer than a cheerful success metric, yet trustworthy. Often a shorter alternative works: *I maintained the handover record during my assigned shifts.*

A numerical claim should answer an honest question, not create an impression larger than the work itself. Remember: a statement can be specific without being boastful, and useful without proving a financial gain.



8. Line five: make a bridge, not a promise

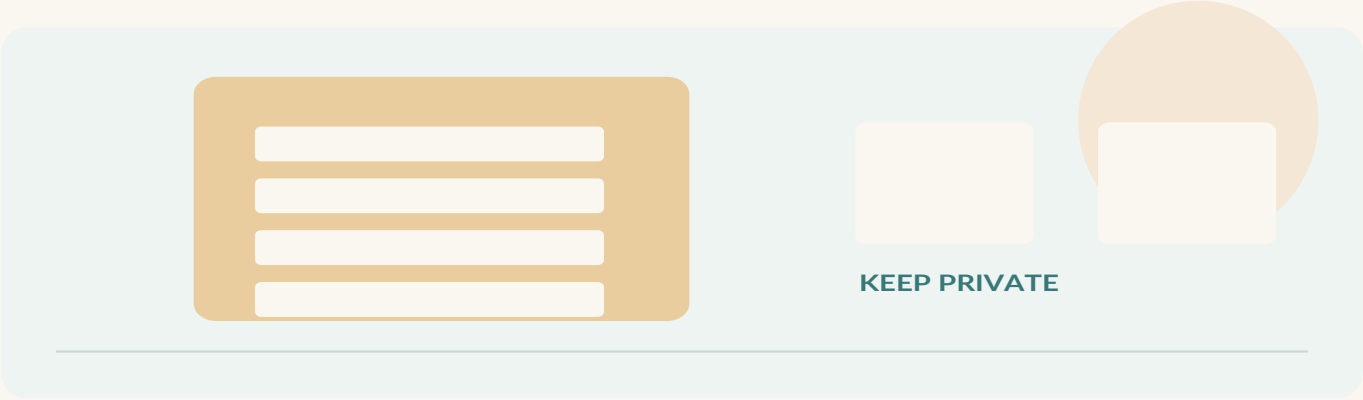
Your final line looks forward, but it should not turn a past activity into a fictional contract. *I could bring experience in careful handovers to a role with appropriate training* is a possibility. *I have already been selected as a team coordinator* is a claim about the present. Unless it really happened, keep it out of the five lines.

A useful bridge names **one relevant contribution and one honest boundary**. Perhaps you could help a small organization keep routine records clear, subject to its software and confidentiality rules. Perhaps you could help visitors find information, provided the organization explains its own policies. Perhaps you could prepare a visual checklist, with actual content and safety processes checked by the person responsible. Notice how the sentence leaves room for other people's decisions.

You may be thinking only about paid employment. In that case you can say *For a possible part-time support role, I would want to learn the current procedure before taking responsibility.* The sentence makes neither an offer nor an application. If you prefer a volunteer contribution, name it accurately as a possibility. If you have decided not to pursue either, write *This experience reminds me that I can organize complex tasks; I do not need to turn it into another job.* That is a legitimate fifth line in a private reflection, even if it would not be suitable for a job enquiry.

A bridge should be proportionate. Experience with a paper rota does not by itself establish proficiency in a particular scheduling platform. A history of explaining processes does not automatically confer an instructional qualification. Past retail work does not by itself authorize handling sensitive personal records. When training, licences, suitability checks, physical ability, or current technology are relevant, the organization and qualified authorities must determine requirements independently.

You are allowed to want a smaller role than you held before. You are also allowed to discover that the old work is not something you wish to repeat. The purpose of this line is to connect real experience to a **possible use**, not to obligate you to find one.



9. What must stay out of the five lines

A five-line description can be honest while still being private. It does not require the names of clients, household members, former coworkers, or vulnerable people. It does not require passwords, work records, confidential prices, medical details, social insurance numbers, immigration documents, reference contact information, or a former employer's internal schedule. If you are drafting with a digital writing tool, avoid pasting such details there too. An invented neutral example is usually enough for testing whether a sentence sounds clear.

Also leave out a claim about **qualifications you do not currently hold**. A particular licence may be required for a task where you live; this book cannot decide what counts, what has expired, or whether an exemption applies. Describe an old activity in the past tense and check present requirements independently before offering regulated work.

Avoid overexplaining a gap in your work history. Five lines are not a hearing about why you stopped working. You might have retired, taken a break, cared for relatives, faced financial pressure, or simply changed priorities. You do not owe strangers private reasons in this small writing exercise. If you eventually prepare a formal application, deal with the actual questions and rules appropriate to that process.

Some people have been warned that modest language will cause them to be overlooked. Perhaps a future employer will want more specificity. You can supply verified relevant detail when asked through a legitimate channel. That is different from starting with invented performance claims. If you choose to share these lines, first verify independently that the requester and opportunity are genuine; don't send identification or money merely to prove you have experience.

Finally, avoid making your former employer or colleagues the villains of the story. You may have good reasons to want different working conditions now. Save those boundaries for your own decision about future work. In five lines, describe what you did fairly without disclosing a confidential grievance or attributing unverified motives.

A helpful test is to circle every fact about somebody else. Does it belong to you to share? If not, remove or generalize it. The remaining words may be quieter, but they will often be clearer.

10. A short audit of your verbs

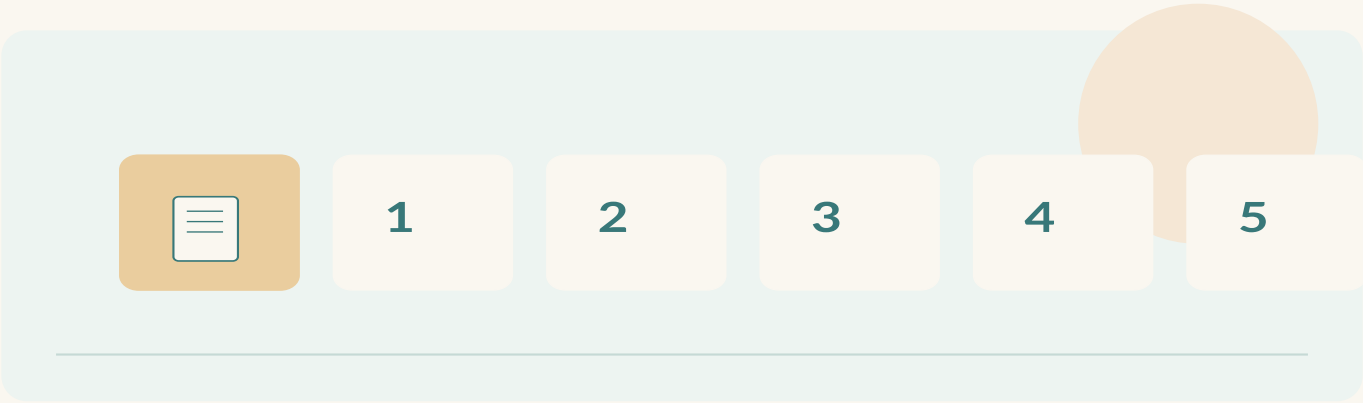
Some words have sharp edges. **Managed** may imply that you decided how people, money, or work were assigned. **Led** may imply you directed a team or a project. **Trained** may imply that you taught a process rather than merely showed someone where the instruction was. **Designed** may imply you created a method, not just used it. **Improved** may imply a comparison showing that something changed for the better. These words are not banned. They simply ask for evidence proportionate to the claim.

Here is a miniature revision exercise. *I managed the public desk* may become *I covered the public desk during assigned shifts and passed unusual questions to the supervisor*. *I trained an entire team* may become *I showed two new volunteers where to find the approved set-up instructions*, if that is what happened. *I improved efficiency* may become *I organized the supply labels into an order that I could check at closing time*. Each revision loses a little glitter and gains a recognizable action.

The important distinction is between **a task performed** and **an effect attributed**. You can know that you updated a register. You may not know whether that update caused fewer delays or higher revenue. You can know that you prepared labels. You may not know whether the shop sold more stock. You can know you showed a colleague where the printer paper was stored. That does not turn you into a professional trainer. If you genuinely performed larger responsibilities, describe them accurately; don't shrink yourself for politeness either.

Read each verb and ask three questions: Did I personally do this? Was I authorized to do it in that role? Could I explain what it looked like without showing private records? If you answer yes, keep it. If you are uncertain, change the verb to the action you do remember. Sometimes a missing detail is a reason to pause the draft, not to guess.

Age has little to do with this exercise. Someone changing work at thirty or seventy faces the same question: how can a stranger understand what I really did? Precise language is neither an apology for a long career nor a sales trick. It is a form of respect.



11. Make a first draft from one remembered afternoon

Take a blank page. For the next few minutes, do not attempt to write five polished lines. First remember a **single ordinary working scene**: an opening, a handover, a stock check, an event arrival, or a time you explained a routine. List fragments: *door opened; people asking directions; rota pinned up; messages recorded; supervisor called when needed*. These fragments are not yet a public account. They are private writing material.

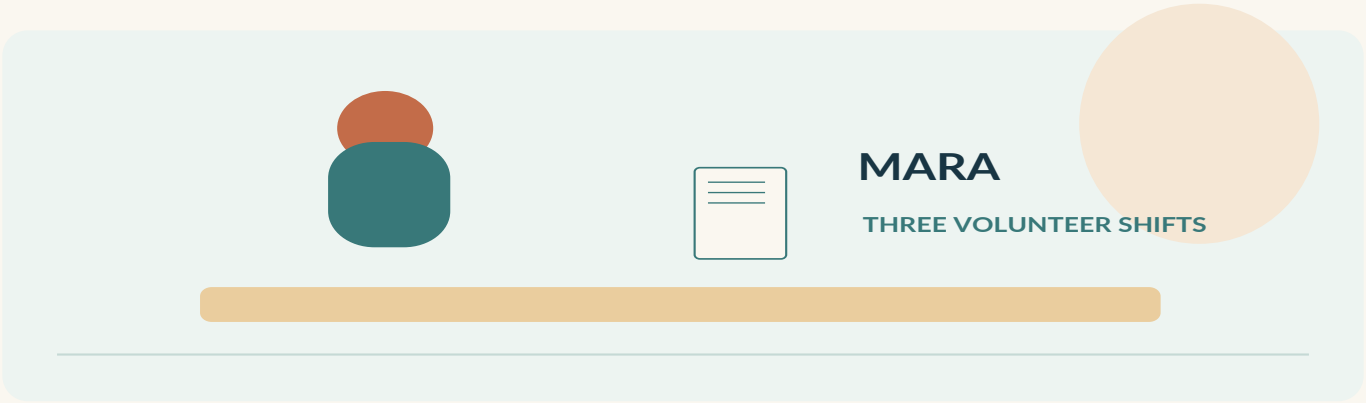
Now ask which fragments belong together. The venue and the rota might support a description of visitor assistance. The unfinished repair request belongs to a different story. Set it aside rather than cramming it into the same five lines. If the scene involves somebody else's personal information, do not copy it into the notes; substitute a general task label.

Try writing the five lines without consulting any online résumé templates. One sentence to locate the task. One to show its purpose. One to describe what you did. One to anchor your description in a fact you can justify. One to connect that fact to a possible contribution now. You can use everyday language, even if you spent your old working life surrounded by jargon. This is an explanation to a human, not a puzzle about corporate keywords.

A first draft might read: *I worked at the front desk; I helped people; I was organized; I worked there a long time; I could do something similar.* It is not wrong, but it is hard to see. Replace *helped people* with what you actually did. Replace *was organized* with the specific organizational action. Leave the duration vague if the dates are not certain. The result might be less polished and more useful.

Do not try to finish by inventing an award or estimate. Nor do you need to contact an employer to retrieve records for this little exercise. If verifying a detail would take significant time or money, you can choose a different detail you already know. The point is to create **one usable and honest explanation**, not to conduct a full investigation into the history of your workplace.

Below are three invented people whose five-line drafts take different paths. Their choices illustrate possible outcomes; they do not represent actual clients, real employers, or evidence that the method obtains work.



12. Mara: from an impressive label to a credible enquiry

Everything about Mara and her work is invented. She used to work in office support and more recently volunteered at a small arts venue. When a neighbor asked what she might like to do next, she called herself an *operations strategist*. She disliked the phrase as soon as she heard it. It sounded like a grander job than the one she could actually describe.

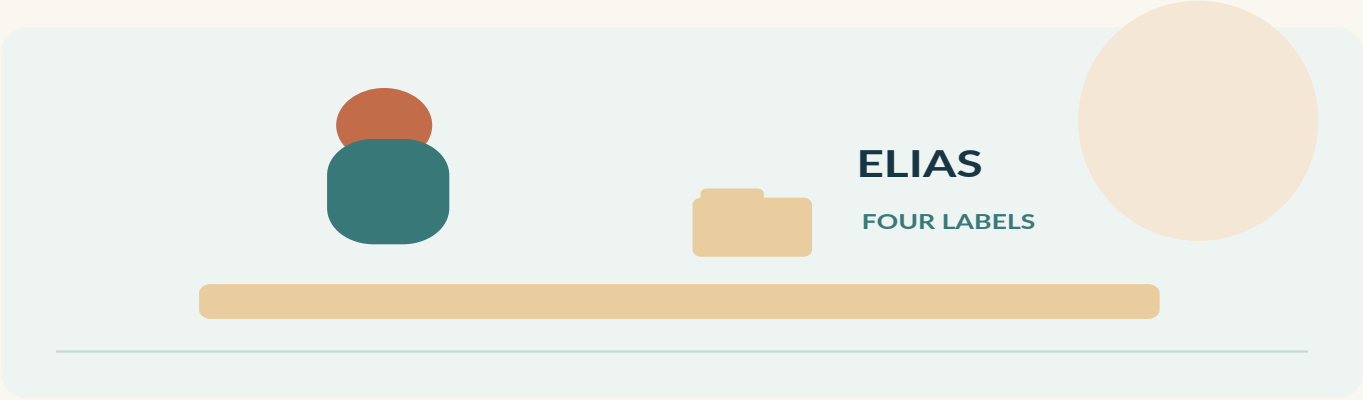
Mara remembered a bounded period: **three completed volunteer shifts**, each lasting **two hours**. In the fictional example, those shifts total **six completed volunteer hours**. She had checked which person was assigned to greet visitors, placed approved leaflets on the counter, directed routine questions, and left a short note for the next shift. She did not decide budgets, hire staff, maintain the venue's security system, or claim that visitor satisfaction improved. Those actions belonged to other people or were never measured.

Her revised five lines were:

1. I volunteered on the visitor desk at a small community arts venue.
2. The desk helped arrivals find activities and directed questions to the appropriate person.
3. I checked the published rota, greeted visitors, and wrote routine handover notes.
4. During the period I am describing, I completed three two-hour desk shifts, for six hours total.
5. I could contribute patient visitor assistance in a future appropriate setting, after learning its own procedures.

Mara noticed that the lines sounded ordinary. They were also defensible. She could account for the six hours within this fictional story and did not need a made-up efficiency statistic. She chose to send **one brief enquiry** to a hypothetical community organizer using a contact address she had obtained independently. The message asked whether any public enquiry duties might exist and offered a short description of her relevant experience. It did **not** become a job application, acceptance, interview, assignment, or employment in the story. No response is reported, and no wages are earned.

The completed act was writing five lines and sending one enquiry. Mara could now explain the work she had actually done without pretending her former title made her qualified for an undisclosed future role. That is a useful result even though no opening was verified.



13. Elias: when experience is real but an application is not wanted

Elias is another invented person. He spent part of his working life organizing technical supplies and later joined a community project that helped volunteers find craft equipment. He enjoyed the small satisfaction of making things easier to locate, but did not want to oversee another team or carry responsibility for safety checks. His first draft read *I led a materials management programme*. That sounded impressive until he asked what he personally did.

In the fictional account, Elias attended **two three-hour volunteer sessions**, a total of **six hours**. He wrote four straightforward shelf labels, matched loose items to an existing list, and reported uncertain items to the person responsible for the project. He was **not** the project's owner. He did not certify any equipment safe, lead volunteers, create the original list, or authorize the use of an item. The number four describes the labels he made in the fictional scene, not an efficiency gain.

His five lines became:

1. I volunteered on a small community equipment-sorting project.
2. The project needed items to be easy for authorized volunteers to find.
3. I checked items against an existing list, made four shelf labels, and flagged uncertainties.
4. I attended two three-hour sessions, six hours in total, and did not perform safety certification.
5. I might enjoy a limited labeling or organizing task, provided responsibility and training are clear.

When Elias read the sentences, he realized he liked the memory more than the idea of another structured commitment. He **did not submit** the five lines anywhere. He did not ask about a vacancy, offer professional services, or book volunteer shifts. He kept the description on paper as a private record of a useful contribution and then chose not to pursue new work at that moment.

That choice matters. A method for describing experience should not pressure its reader to monetize a hobby, take on unpaid obligations, or prove usefulness through public performance. Elias learned that he could tell the truth about the work without turning it into a project. The five lines served him even while they stayed in a drawer.

Elias's case also shows why accuracy is protective. He could safely describe the labeling work while leaving the project's internal records and any uncertain equipment details undisclosed. He lost nothing by omitting a title he had not earned.



14. June: the phrase that sounded too good

June and her shop are fictional. She worked for years in a small retail business, sometimes receiving deliveries, sometimes serving customers, sometimes helping with end-of-shift handovers. She wished to contribute a few hours to an organization where orderly records matter, though she had not identified a genuine vacancy. Her first draft contained a flourish: *I increased sales through superior inventory controls*. A moment later she could not say how much sales had changed—or even whether her actions caused a change at all.

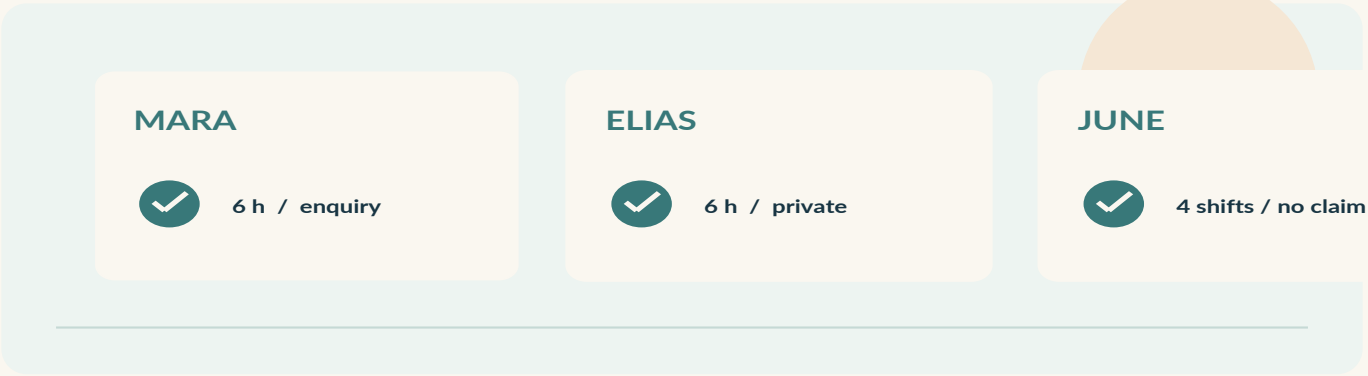
She did remember a routine clearly. At the end of assigned shifts, she checked incoming stock against a delivery note, marked discrepancies for the person authorized to resolve them, and helped pass the outstanding questions to the next colleague. She did not set selling prices, approve supplier payments, manage all stock, or hold responsibility for payroll. In this invented situation, she had worked **four ordinary shifts in one described week**. That count is a fictional attendance detail, not a measure of improved profitability.

June rewrote her five lines:

1. I worked in a small retail shop, including stock receiving and shift handovers.
2. The team needed delivery notes and unresolved stock questions to stay understandable.
3. I checked received items against notes and marked discrepancies for the responsible colleague.
4. In one illustrative week, I handled this task during four assigned shifts; I cannot claim a measured sales improvement.
5. That checking and handover experience may be useful in a clearly supervised support role.

June considered sending the draft to someone she knew. Then she noticed that line four's phrase *one illustrative week* might not sound right if she were describing a real personal record. In the fictional example she could specify a week, but a real person should replace it with only a date or frequency they actually remember. She kept the sentence as a **private practice version** and decided not to send it until she could describe the period in words she trusted.

Nothing was applied for, offered, booked, or paid in June's story. She corrected an overclaim before it could be shared. That is a complete and worthwhile outcome. She also discovered that the modest act of flagging discrepancies may be precisely the sort of careful work she wants to remember.



15. Three different results, all honest

The characters did not end in the same place. That is intentional. A five-line description is a writing tool, not a device that makes everyone apply for a job.

Mara — Completed **3 × 2 = 6 hours** of volunteer desk shifts; wrote five lines; sent one enquiry
Not established: No reply, application acceptance, job offer or pay was reported

Elias — Completed **2 × 3 = 6 hours** of volunteer sorting; wrote four labels; kept a private five-line note
Not established: Did not lead the project, certify equipment or seek another role

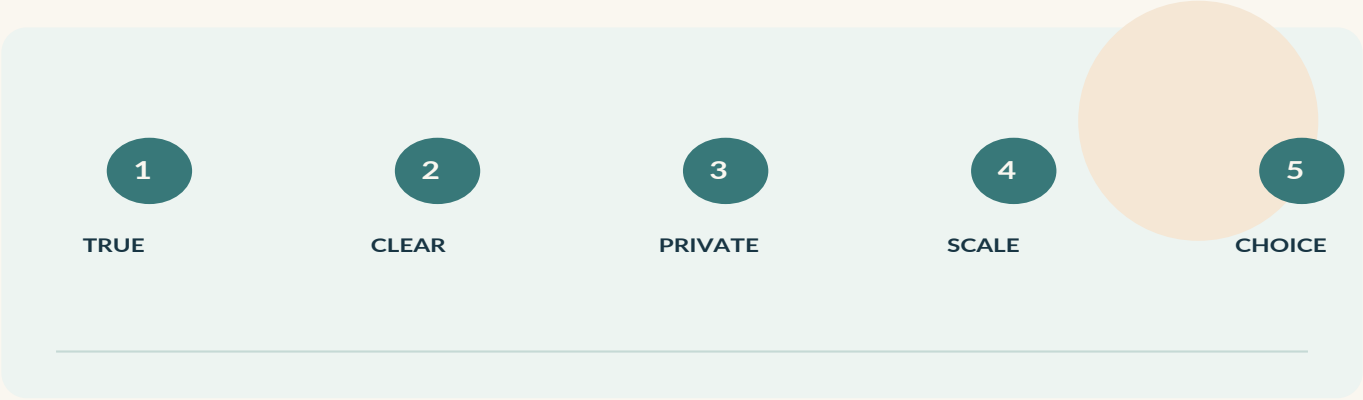
June — Worked **4 shifts** in an illustrative week; rejected an unsupported sales claim; kept a revised draft private
Not established: No verified sales increase, application, interview or hire

The sums **3 × 2 = 6** and **2 × 3 = 6** tell us only the time attended in the invented cases. They are not a measure of competence. June's four shifts do not describe how many hours she worked because that figure is not given. None of these characters earned new money from the five-line exercise. No unreported response is treated as acceptance.

This is also why the five-line method has more than one legitimate final step. Mara was comfortable with an enquiry. Elias wanted only a clearer memory of his contribution. June needed to remove one dubious phrase and might revisit the draft later. A reader might make a different choice altogether: ask a trusted person to check clarity, use the note when speaking with a genuine organization, or fold it away.

If you have to compare your own draft with these examples, compare the **honesty of its edges**, not its apparent impressiveness. Can you identify which facts are first-hand? Are time and money figures genuinely supported? Are you presenting volunteering, paid work, and private projects as distinct? Have you kept other people's information out of it? Is the possible next use stated as a possibility rather than an offer?

When those questions have good answers, you have something more durable than an inflated introduction: a small and credible account of what you have done.



16. Read your five lines aloud, one fact at a time

An elegant sentence can be inaccurate. A plain sentence can be honest but hard to follow. Before you consider sharing anything, try five quiet passes over your five-line draft.

First: truth. Underline every claim about duties, dates, numbers, authority, credentials, and outcomes. Could you explain it without guessing? If a statistic came from a vague memory or somebody else's success, remove it. If you lack proof of an improvement, describe the specific action instead.

Second: clarity. Ask someone unfamiliar with the former workplace—or imagine such a person—what they would picture. *I optimized cross-functional workflow* hides the task. *I kept an end-of-shift list of unresolved customer enquiries* gives the mind something concrete. You are free to preserve specialized terminology when it is accurate and relevant, but don't use it merely to sound important.

Third: privacy. Look for names, contact details, identifying anecdotes, clients' circumstances, private figures, and unapproved company information. This is particularly important when the original work involved sensitive personal records. If another person's story is doing most of the work in your introduction, return to your own actions and generalize the context.

Fourth: proportion. Does the final bridge claim more than the first four lines can support? One helpful shift does not establish mastery of an entire profession. Several years of experience may support substantial expertise, but not necessarily a current licence or knowledge of software introduced later. Be neither timid nor inflated; be specific about the experience and honest about what would need checking or learning next.

Fifth: choice. Do you actually want to send the description anywhere? Could sharing it create an obligation you do not want? Is the recipient legitimate and the requested information appropriate? If not, keep the five lines private. They can still help you recognize work you performed well. Sharing is always a separate decision from writing.

You may stop after one review. You do not need to produce four polished versions, commission a professional profile, or add a measurable result to every sentence. One small, truthful paragraph is the finished exercise.



17. Optional private card: draft the five lines

Use this only if writing helps. You may print it, fill it privately in a compatible final reader, copy the questions onto your own paper, or ignore it. It is not an online form and does not send information anywhere. **Do not enter confidential records, full names, identification numbers, account details, or private facts about another person.** You can describe a setting in general terms.

1. One activity I actually did (short task name):

Optional private note: choose one cluster rather than your whole career.

2. Line one — the general setting (no private organization details):

Optional private note: name the type of workplace or project and whether the role was paid, volunteer or personal.

3. Line two — what the task needed to accomplish:

Optional private note: describe the purpose without inventing gratitude or a result.

4. Line three — actions I personally performed:

Optional private note: use exact verbs such as checked, prepared, explained or recorded.

5. Line four — one detail I can fairly support:

Optional private note: a genuine action, frequency or count; use no number if you cannot verify one.

6. Line five — a possible appropriate use now:

Optional private note: mention any training or permission you would still need; no offer is assumed.

At this stage your lines are only a draft. A completed card is not a résumé, evidence of a licence, or an authorization to contact someone. You may fold it away. If any line depends on an unsupported achievement, revisit the verb and write what you did instead. No reader is required to share a completed card with this publisher or another person.

18. Optional private card: decide what to keep

This is a second, independent card. It does not ask you to repeat the previous card and does not ask for an actual employer's identifying information. Use it to check the boundary between accurate description and an assumption. It remains private unless you later decide otherwise. Leave any field blank if you prefer.

1. A sentence I can explain without guessing:

Optional private note: identify one line that feels grounded in your own action.

2. A word or result I may be overstating:

Optional private note: check managed, led, improved, trained or similar words against actual duties.

3. A detail that belongs to someone else and should be omitted:

Optional private note: write a generic category, never the private fact itself.

4. A date, count or qualification I should verify before sharing:

Optional private note: record only what requires checking, not confidential supporting documents.

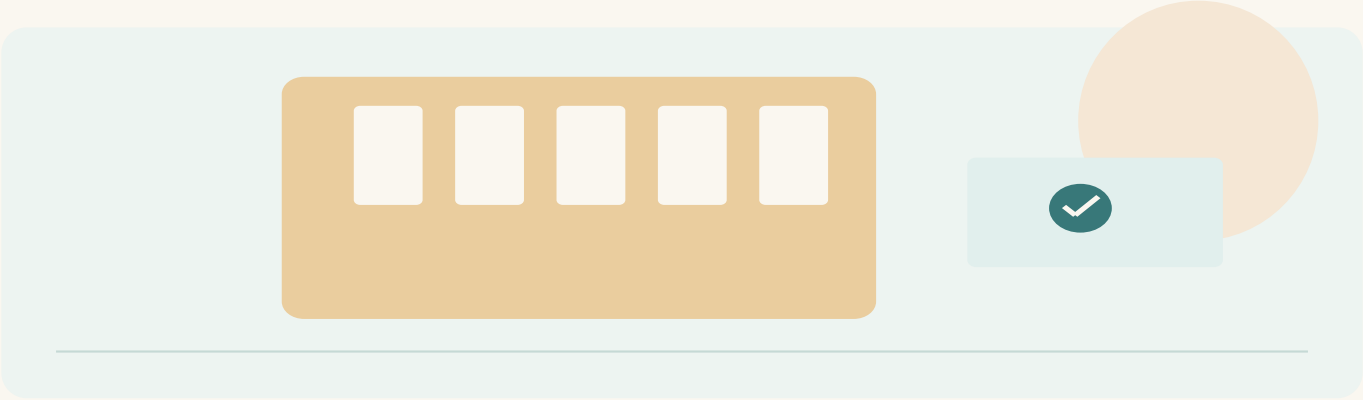
5. A question I could ask about a genuinely suitable task:

Optional private note: focus on role boundaries, supervision, training or responsibility.

6. My current choice — keep privately, ask for clarity, share selectively, or discard:

Optional private note: any choice is acceptable; writing does not obligate an application.

If you someday send the five lines, first independently confirm the legitimacy of the request. Don't send identification, payment, credentials, or copies of private records because someone promises an opportunity. If a recipient needs formal records or compliance checks, handle those through a verified, appropriate process, not through this worksheet.



19. Five truthful lines are enough for today

You may now have five sentences. Perhaps they are not elegant. Perhaps the first one still feels awkward. That does not mean the exercise has failed. It has succeeded when it lets you describe one genuine piece of experience more clearly than a job title alone would. If you made an exaggerated sentence smaller and more accurate, that is progress. If you caught a detail that belonged to a coworker, removing it is good judgment. If you discovered that you do not want another work commitment, the five lines have helped you learn that too.

The method is short because the task is deliberately limited. You did not build a complete CV, search for real vacancies, compare work offers, or calculate retirement income. Other questions require their own time and may require current official information or professional advice. You did not need to prove that employment makes retirement more meaningful, or that continued work is necessary to remain useful.

If you do share the lines, choose a trustworthy, independently verified recipient and keep the claims within what you can support. An employer may have additional requirements, and an old skill may need current training before it can be used safely. A well-written paragraph does not settle any of that. It simply gives both parties a more accurate starting point.

If you keep the lines to yourself, notice the ordinary verbs you found: checked, welcomed, organized, explained, recorded, followed up. It is possible that the most useful thing you have done is not the thing that used to appear in large letters on your badge.

Put the page away when it has served its purpose. Your previous work is real without being grandly named. Your next chapter does not have to begin with an application, or even with another job. It can begin with five honest lines and the freedom to decide what, if anything, to do with them.