AI and the job search: What you need to know – resource guide

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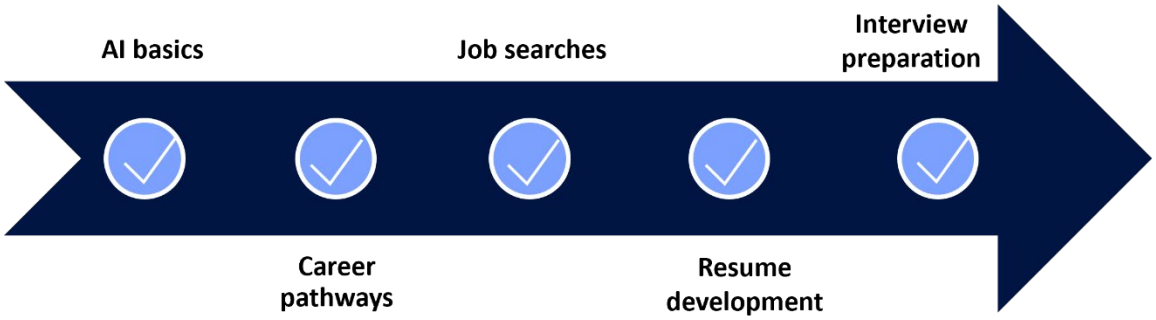
Overview

Description

This **AI and the job search: What you need to know** guide serves as a resource to help learners develop the skills and confidence needed to use AI effectively throughout the job search process. This guide is ideal for individuals looking to strengthen their professional skills and advance their careers.

Follow this learning map as you explore the resources in this guide.



Introduction

This resource guide includes exercises and resources for the following:

- Using AI responsibly
- Choosing a career path
- Finding the job you want
- Crafting a strong resume
- Preparing for interviews

Bonus content:

- Building professional connections
- Building negotiation skills

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AI basics

Using AI responsibly

Artificial intelligence (AI) has become a powerful tool in modern job searching, offering capabilities that streamline and enhance the process. AI excels at tasks such as drafting resumes, tailoring content to specific roles, brainstorming career paths and analyzing job descriptions for keyword alignment. These functions save time and reduce manual effort, allowing job seekers to focus on strategic decisions.

As you think about your job search, write down your responses to the following questions on a piece of paper or a device, or see the note below for how to add text to this document:

Which parts of your job search are easy? Which parts are frustrating?

How do you already use AI, and how might it fit your career goals?

If you had a personal career coach available 24/7, what kinds of questions would you ask?

Note: Throughout this resource guide, there will be several journaling activities. Keep a document with all of your answers so that you can refer back to it as you continue your job search.

If you would like to record your answers directly into this guide, use the **comment** feature if you are viewing the document in **Adobe® Reader®** or the **type text** feature if you are viewing in a web browser.

To use the **comment / type text** features, simply click the button on the toolbar and then stamp the text box onto your page to type.

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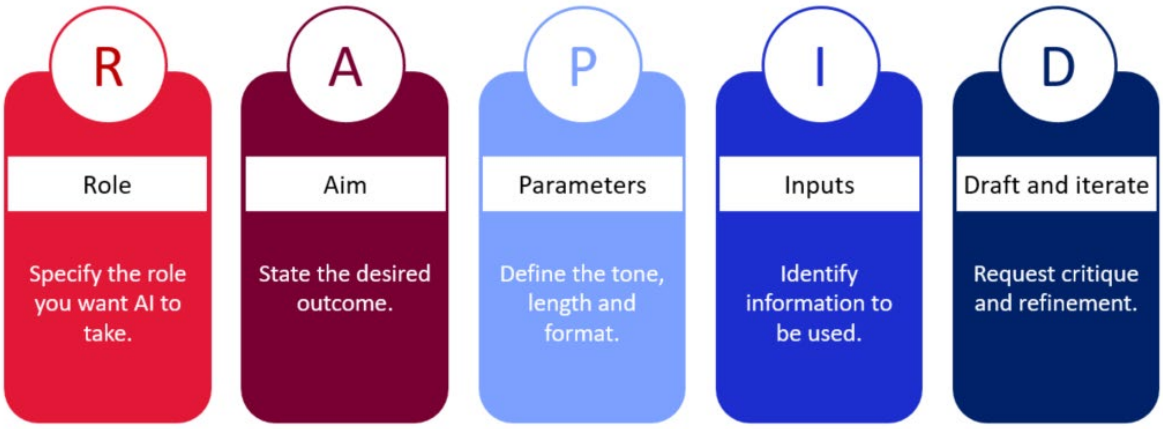
A structured approach to using AI responsibly

AI can act as your personal career coach by getting you on the right career path and taking some of the frustration out of your job search. However, it is critical that **the human is in the lead** when it comes to AI. AI can produce biased or inaccurate results. RAPID is a structured approach that ensures clarity and consistency across AI platforms.

Note: Bank of America does not endorse, control or warrant any third-party AI product or service.



Use these prompts to guide AI and ensure you are getting accurate and acceptable results:

- ❒ Role: Act as a [role: recruiter, resume coach, career strategist].
- ❒ Aim: My aim is to [outcome: tailor my resume, map career paths, prep for an interview].
- ❒ Parameters: Keep it [tone], [length] and [format].
- ❒ Inputs: Here are my inputs: [skills, resume, job post, constraints].
- ❒ Draft and iterate: After the initial message, provide feedback to improve, shorten, expand or tailor the response.

Use critical thinking to ensure AI-generated responses are accurate and reflect your own voice.

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Staying responsible and ethical while using AI

Do
Do be truthful about the information you provide to AI. **Do** watch for biased language in AI-generated responses; keep your authentic voice. **Do** verify AI results with reputable sources. **Do** review and follow the AI providers terms and usage policies before use. **Do** follow each employer's rules concerning AI-assisted applications and AI use during the job application process.

Don't
Don't exaggerate about your knowledge, experience and skills. **Don't** share personally identifying information such as your Social Security number, full address, date of birth or proprietary information with AI. **Don't** provide AI with materials that may be confidential, such as actual interview questions, assessment content or other hiring materials.

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Career pathways

Choosing a career path

Transferable skills are abilities that can be transferred from one job or experience to another. What skills have you gained from your current job, hobbies or life experiences? AI can help bridge these existing skills into future opportunities.

My skills Make a list of all your skills. You never know what job opportunities may be uniquely suited to you.	**My interests** What kinds of things interest you? Would you enjoy working with animals, meeting new people or traveling to various locations?
Use this prompt to help you determine your current skills: Based on my current role as [job title], identify skills I likely use in my work. Include technical skills, transferable skills, leadership skills, communication skills and problem-solving skills.	

Because we just learned the RAPID framework, the example prompt explicitly labels each element. This is intended to help you see how the framework works in practice. When creating your own prompts, you do not need to label each RAPID element. Simply include the relevant information in a way that feels natural.

ROLE: Act as a career strategist.

AIM: Based on my skills [list] and interests [list], suggest three realistic job paths for the next 3-6 months.

PARAMETERS: Consider my constraints [remote/location/salary]. For each, provide responsibilities, transferable skills, top five skills to build and a 30-day development plan. Format as a table.

INPUTS: My skills [list], interests [list] and constraints [list].

DRAFT AND ITERATE (optional follow-up):

- Which of these paths offers the fastest transition?

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- Revise the recommendations assuming I have only five hours per week available for development.
- Narrow the options to roles that are fully remote.
- Create a more detailed 60-day action plan for the strongest match.

Role **Aim** **Parameters** **Inputs** **Draft and Iterate**

Remember, you'll want to follow this framework every time you enter a prompt.

Use these prompts to help map career paths, assess your skills and showcase your strengths:

- ❒ Act as a career strategist. Based on my skills [list], interests [list] and constraints [remote/location/salary], suggest three realistic job paths for the next 3–6 months. For each, list responsibilities, transferable skills, top five skills to build and a 30-day plan using mostly free resources. Format as a table.
- ❒ Compare the role of [target job] with my current skills [list]. Identify gaps, recommend beginner-friendly resources and propose two practice projects or credentials per gap, with a four-week time plan.
- ❒ Propose three small portfolio projects to demonstrate [top three skills] for [target role]. Each project should be completable in two or three weekends with publicly available data or tools and include what to deliver, how to measure success and how to write it up on LinkedIn.

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Job searches

Finding the job you want

After exploring career options, the next step is identifying roles that interest you.

Simplifying your search with AI

AI can streamline the job search process by generating effective keyword strategies and identifying high-fit postings. You can even set up weekly alerts, track application statuses and schedule follow-ups.

Role **Aim** **Parameters** **Inputs** **Draft and Iterate**

Remember, you'll want to follow this framework every time you enter a prompt.

Use these prompts to accelerate your job search strategy:

- ❒ Create a job search plan for [target title] in [city/remote]: search terms and keyword variations to use, recommended filters, and a weekly routine for alerts and application tracking.
- ❒ Analyze this job post [paste]. Summarize must-haves vs. nice-to-haves, assess my fit based on these skills [paste], list potential red flags or missing info and suggest three clarifying questions for a recruiter.

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Resume development

Crafting a strong resume

Your resume is your first opportunity to showcase your wins. Optimize your resume using AI. AI can help you organize and present your skills in a way that will resonate with recruiters, hiring managers and applicant tracking systems (ATS). Job postings often receive hundreds — or even thousands — of applications, so it's important to stand out. A tailored resume helps you stand out by emphasizing the skills, experiences and accomplishments most relevant to the position.

If you have little or no work experience

If you have little or no work experience yet:

- ❒ Focus on your education.
- ❒ Describe your skills and behavior.
- ❒ Showcase volunteer work or academic projects. Highlight extracurricular activities such as parent-teacher association, charity or nonprofit experience.
- ❒ Include any work that shows responsibility, such as gig or contract work, caregiving, freelance projects, internships or part-time jobs.

Use the STAR method to highlight your skills

Ask AI to rewrite your bullet points using the STAR method. The STAR method helps highlight the impact you've made.

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Role **Aim** **Parameters** **Inputs** **Draft and Iterate**

Remember, you'll want to follow this framework every time you enter a prompt.

Use these prompts to help tailor your resume and profile summary:

- ❒ You are a resume coach and ATS expert. Using this job description [paste] and my resume [paste], rewrite my top three or four bullets to match must-have skills using concise STAR, strong action verbs and quantified results. Ask me one question at a time to help me quantify my impact — do not invent numbers.
- ❒ Draft a three- or four-sentence professional summary aligned to this role [paste JD], emphasizing my transferable skills and projects from my resume [paste]. Keep it authentic and straightforward.

Resume resources

Here is a website that can help you with your job search: Jobscan to Optimize your Resume.

When in doubt, check out Indeed.com. They have a robust resume help section, in addition to their many other career resources.

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Resume building activity

If you don't already have a resume to provide to your AI tool, build one here. List your relevant career information so AI knows your work history when optimizing your resume. Use the comments / text tools to fill in the boxes.

Resume information
Profile/objective
What are three words you would use to describe yourself that match the characteristics needed for the job you're applying for (for example, self-motivated, energetic, team player)?
Skills
What are the top four job skills you possess (technical skills like knowing how to use **Adobe Photoshop®**, or soft skills like communication)?
Education
What educational details do you want to highlight (for example, extracurriculars, skills or awards)?
Experience
Job 1 description and skills acquired
Job 2 description and skills acquired
Job 3 description and skills acquired
Volunteer experience description and skills acquired

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Interview preparation

Interviewing with confidence

A **screening** interview is generally what happens first when you meet with a member of Human Resources or even a third-party recruiter to answer some preliminary questions. Screening interviews determine who is qualified to move on to the **next round of interviews with the hiring manager**. This next round of interviews asks more specific questions related to the position and is conducted by someone well-versed in the field.

Interviews can take place in a variety of settings and formats:

- Interviews can take place in person, over the phone or by video conference.
- Interviews may be one-on-one with a hiring manager, or they may be panel interviews involving multiple interviewers.
- Less formal interviews sometimes happen at career fairs where companies hold events to bring in multiple candidates, and several recruiters are on-site to screen candidates.

Preparing for the interview

All the steps in your learning journey have been preparing you to interview for a potential position. You can ensure your interview goes as well as possible by preparing in advance, and AI can help by generating likely questions based on the job description. AI can also help you prepare your answers using STAR stories. STAR stories follow the same flow described in the Resume Development section. This method gives you a clear and easy-to-follow way to answer questions that will let your interviewer know you have the skills and experience to perform the job well.

If you'd like to see additional examples of STAR stories, our Grow Your Career course provides a deeper dive into the STAR method and how to apply it effectively.

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Behavioral interview questions

Using the STAR method, write down your responses to the following questions:

Describe a time when you worked effectively under pressure.

Give an example of a goal you reached and how you achieved it.

Talk about a time when you helped improve something.

Describe a time when you made a mistake. How did you handle it? What did you learn?

Describe a time when you disagreed with a teacher or classmate. How did you handle it?

Talk about a time when you had to assume a leadership role for a group or team.

Role **Aim** **Parameters** **Inputs** **Draft and Iterate**

Remember, you'll want to follow this framework every time you enter a prompt.

Use these prompts to prepare for your interview:

- ❒ Act as a hiring manager for [role]. Using this job description [paste], ask me five behavioral and five role-specific questions one at a time. After each answer, score me 1–5 on clarity/relevance/impact. Wait for my reply before asking the next question.
- ❒ For this role/company [paste], generate eight thoughtful questions that reveal expectations, success metrics, team culture and growth. Label which are best for a recruiter vs. a hiring manager vs. a peer.

Interview resources

Interview and Negotiate | CareerOneStop
Interviewing | Indeed.com

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Bonus: Networking

Making valuable connections

Networking can help you achieve a variety of goals, such as learning about an industry or role, obtaining an introduction to a recruiter or securing a referral within a company. Many job openings are filled through referrals or professional connections before they are widely advertised.

By attending events, engaging on professional networking platforms, and building relationships with colleagues, mentors and industry contacts, you can expand your visibility and uncover opportunities that may never be publicly posted.

Building a strong network

Building a strong professional network takes time and consistent effort. Focus on creating genuine relationships rather than simply collecting contacts.

Role **Aim** **Parameters** **Inputs** **Draft and Iterate**

Remember, you'll want to follow this framework every time you enter a prompt.

Use these prompts to accelerate your networking:

- ❒ Draft concise outreach messages to [alumni/professional connections] for [target role]. Keep them to 5–7 sentences, personalize them using [shared school/interest] and include a specific, easy next step (15-minute chat or referral, if appropriate). Provide one formal and two friendly versions.
- ❒ I am meeting with [alumni/recruiter]. I am hoping to gain information about [role] and [company]. Provide me with five or six questions to ask during a meeting.

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Bonus: Post-offer best practices

BONUS

Building negotiation skills

Now that you know the power of AI in job searching, you can continue to leverage these tools to streamline your other tasks, save time and reduce manual effort. AI can help you draft emails, summarize articles and meetings, create presentations, organize information, generate ideas, improve writing and simplify recurring tasks. Use AI as a collaborative assistant as you prepare for pay-related discussions.

Keep in mind: Compensation practices vary by employer, role and career level. Some positions, particularly entry-level or high-volume hiring roles, may have standardized compensation with limited or no flexibility for negotiation. AI can help you prepare for compensation conversations, and better understand your offer, but it cannot determine or guarantee the compensation available for a specific role.

Role **Aim** **Parameters** **Inputs** **Draft and Iterate**

Remember, you'll want to follow this framework every time you enter a prompt.

Use these prompts as you prepare for pay-related discussions:

- ❒ I received an offer for [role, base, bonus, benefits]. Help me understand how compensation is typically structured for similar roles and experience levels. What factors might influence pay, and what questions could I ask the recruiter to better understand the offer? Given market data for [location] and my experience [summary], help me craft a respectful counter for [base/TC]. Provide a phone script and two email versions, plus fallback levers (sign-on, PTO, title, start date, training budget).
- ❒ I'm interviewing for a [role] position and expect the recruiter may ask about my salary expectations. Create three professional responses for 1) when I'm asked for my salary expectations, 2) when the compensation range meets my expectations, or 3) when the compensation is lower than expected.

  Include guidance on when it may be appropriate to discuss compensation further and when compensation is typically set for the role. Include respectful questions I can ask to better understand the offer, career growth opportunities, bonus eligibility, training programs, and other benefits if compensation is not flexible.

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