

Albert Phillips Jr.



The Black Teen's Guide to
Navigating Employment

Y'ALL HIRING? DISCUSSION AND ACTIVITY GUIDE

Written by Albert Phillips Jr.
Designed by Studio Mell

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

ALBERT PHILLIPS JR.



Albert Phillips Jr. was born and raised in Baltimore, Maryland and received primary education in Baltimore City Public Schools. He earned an Associate of Arts in General Studies from Baltimore City Community College, a Bachelor of Science in Print Journalism from Morgan State University, and a Master of Science in Education from Johns Hopkins University.

Upon graduating from Morgan State in 2013, Albert shifted his primary career passion from writing for numerous local and national publications to the development of inner-city youth. He served various roles working directly with Baltimore City youth while employed by the YMCA, Big Brothers Big Sisters, and the Choice Program. In 2015, he earned a state and national award for exemplary community service throughout Baltimore City.

In 2016, Albert transitioned into education to work within the same school system that taught him. He worked as a paraprofessional, teacher, and administrator in Baltimore City Public Schools for about four years.

Currently, Albert works as a Work-Based Learning Specialist with Baltimore City Public Schools, helping students gain access to work-based learning opportunities, including career exploration, professional development, and career preparation.

Albert is also the founder and CEO of Free Black Mind Educational Group, a social enterprise startup that provides digital and print resources designed to empower and educate Black youth. His first self-published book, *Y'all Hiring? The Black Teen's Guide to Navigating Employment* was released in October 2020.

Albert is a man of the people and is devoted to helping to drastically change the lives of youth living in communities devastated by racism and white supremacy.



PURPOSE OF THE GUIDE

The *Y'all Hiring* Discussion and Activity guide is a resource for job coaches, mentors, teachers and others interested in using *Y'all Hiring?* in schools, after school programs, coaching sessions, or in other ways.

There are three overall objectives to this resource:

1. To help teenagers deeply engage and process the text along with its impact on them
2. To invoke transformative dialogue amongst young people, their peers, and adults who serve and support them
3. To serve as a supplement to schools and programs who use *Y'all Hiring?* within their curriculum or programming

ABOUT THE BOOK

Y'ALL HIRING? IS A PRACTICAL, CULTURALLY-RELEVANT GUIDE FOR BLACK YOUTH SEEKING TO OBTAIN, MAINTAIN, AND EXIT A JOB IN A THOUGHTFUL MANNER. THIS BOOK PROVIDES A MUCH-NEEDED FRAMEWORK THAT REMINDS YOU OF YOUR GREATNESS WHILE PREPARING YOU FOR THE WORLD OF WORK.

Filled with actionable steps and real-world analysis, this book offers useful advice on:

- ✓ Understanding and challenging workplace discrimination
- ✓ Maintaining your cultural integrity regardless of where you work
- ✓ Strategically exiting your job and planning the next phase of your journey
- ✓ Improving your résumé to reflect your best self
- ✓ Managing inevitable workplace stress
- ✓ Becoming the young professional you are destined to be



PRE-READING ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY 1

Interview three trusted, supportive adults about employment.

Ask them:

1. What are the benefits of being employed?
2. What are some challenges of being employed?
3. What advice do you have for me as I work to better understand and navigate the job terrain?

Place a large sheet of poster paper on a wall and use post-it notes to capture responses from adults. Create a section on the paper for each question and post the notes in the appropriate areas. Lastly, reflect on the information you gathered and consider how it can benefit you.

ACTIVITY 2

In the preface of the book, the author quotes Dr. Neely Fuller when he writes,

“If you do not understand white supremacy/racism, everything you do understand will only confuse you.”

Reflect on the quote. What do you think it means, and how do you believe it impacts you and others?

ACTIVITY 3

Discuss as a group or in pairs. When you look at the cover of the book, what do you see and what does it mean to you?

PART 1: PRE-EMPLOYMENT

PRE-READING

- Before getting a job, what actions should you take? Do you think all teens should take the same actions, or should the actions vary in some way?
- If you had a job, what were actions you took before getting hired? If you have never had a job, what will you do before getting one?

DISCUSSION

- The first chapter of the book begins by outlining hiring discrimination and how it impacts various people. In your own words, describe what hiring discrimination is and why you think the author chose to begin this section with this particular chapter.
- On pages 21 and 22, the author compares and contrasts two resumes. What similarities and differences are mentioned? Provide text evidence in your response.
- An email address is an essential part of digital communication. Based upon what you learned in this chapter, would you consider your email address professional? Why or why not?
- In chapter 4, the author talks about social media presence and how it can impact employment. What lessons did you learn from this chapter, and how might these lessons inform your social media activity?
- Chapter 5 is arguably the most controversial chapter in the book. Instead of simply informing the reader of what to wear, the author provides a critical critique of American-professional dress standards. Why do you think the author decided to take this non-traditional approach? What are your reflections on what the author shared?
- You have just finished reading chapter 6 of the book, and a younger sibling comes to you for assistance with completing an online job application. What advice would you provide?
- On page 35, Albert writes, "You should use your intuition to understand the moment and embrace it." Describe your thoughts on the quote and how it connects to an interview.

WRITE

Create a visual representation that summarizes what part one of the book was about. Next, write a paragraph describing your visual representation for someone who is unfamiliar with the book.

PART 2: MAINTAINING AND MAKING THE MOST OF EMPLOYMENT

PRE-READING

- Reread the title of this section. Hypothesize what you believe this section of the book will be about and how it may connect to your employment journey.
- What does being Black mean to you? Are there benefits or detriments associated with being a Black teen?

DISCUSSION

- On page 40, Albert lists numerous ways discrimination can manifest in the workplace. Reflect on which one you see as most prevalent in your community.
- Chapter 9 describes the functions of a human resource department. Use evidence from the text to describe why employees should care about HR.
- In chapter 10, Albert reflects on his experience working in retail and being evaluated based upon his performance. How can work performance harm or benefit an employee? Provide evidence from the text to support your response.
- On page 52, Albert writes "Don't just listen; share your experiences as well." Why do you think the author states it is important for you to provide your perspectives in the workplace? What would happen if you never spoke your mind at work?
- Chapter 12 focuses on skills, knowledge, experiences, and credentials you can gain in the workplace. Interview a seasoned professional in your community and ask them to share examples or stories of "leveling up" while working.

WRITE

Write a letter or poem describing five key learnings you obtained from this section of the book. Use information from the text to inform what you write.

PART 3: EXIT YOUR JOB LIKE A BOSS

PRE-READING

- On Jay-Z's "Encore" he raps, "Grand openin', grand closin'" in the first verse of the track. Reflect on the quote. What does it mean to you, and how might it connect with the third section of *Y'all Hiring*?
- James Baker, former Secretary of State, once said, "Proper preparation prevents poor performance." How does that quote fit into the overall meaning of the book? What does it mean for you outside of just employment?

DISCUSSION

- On page 67, what does the author mean when he says the now is "an unsafe place to solely exist in"? What happens if people only think about the current time?
- At your current school, job, or program, who are some people you should exchange contact information with? Create a plan to approach one of them within the next 48 hours to converse and exchange numbers, emails, or social media handles.
- In chapter 8, Albert details getting a job he undervalued and quitting the job just two days in. What lessons did he learn from the experience? What would you have done if you were in his situation?
- In the conclusion of the book, the author argues that the American job market is "unbalanced" in its current form. What evidence does he use to support his argument?

WRITE

- Do you have any regrets about ways you may have ended a job, internship, or extracurricular experience? If so, write a letter about what you learned and how you plan to perform better moving forward.
- Create a digital flyer describing how teens should transition from one opportunity to the next, and include the potential benefits of these procedures. Next, share it on social media to see what others think about it.

POST-READING ACTIVITIES

REVIEW

Review the Resource Guide starting on page 79.

Pick one book or website from the list and begin research to learn more about how it can help you in your professional journey.

CREATE

Create a playlist on your favorite streaming platform using the songs and poems listed on page 81.

Next, listen to the playlist a few times. Then, write a reflection about why you think the author chose to include these songs and poems in the book.

EXAMINE

There are various icons, including a lightbulb, check box, and arrows, on the front cover and throughout the book.

What do they mean, and why did the author include them as key elements within the book?

COMMON CORE STANDARDS

College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards For Reading

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.1](#)

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.2](#)

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.6](#)

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.8](#)

College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards For Writing

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.1](#)

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.4](#)

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.10](#)

College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards For Speaking and Listening

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.1](#)

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.2](#)

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.4](#)

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.5](#)

College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards For Language

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.L.1](#)