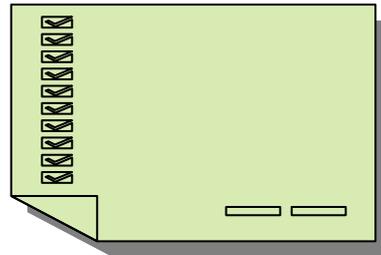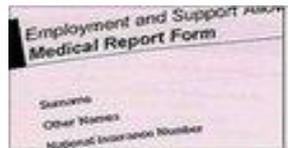# Skillswise

Filling in forms

We fill in forms for a wide range of purposes. As with all types of writing, we need to **consider the purpose of the form as well as who will read it**. We may word process a form or complete it by hand. We may also complete and send forms online. Some forms, such as accident-report forms, require you to organise and report on factual information. Others, such as job-application forms, require you to market or 'sell yourself' in addition to giving factual information about your experience and skills.

Online forms

Some online forms can give you **access to information** on a database. This can save you time when you're making travel plans, or when searching for job vacancies. You can also **use online forms to make a purchase**, such as booking a flight. Many companies or organisations will want you to register with their website and they'll ask you to complete a registration form. In this case you will need to fill in your email address, as well as a user name and password in order to protect your personal details.

If you're **sending payment with a form**, you have to **be especially careful** filling in the form, ensuring that all the details are correct. You may decide to send a cheque, credit card details, or complete a direct debit form or bank transfer. If you're filling in your financial details online, you need to be sure that you are using a secure site. A secure site will have **https** in the address bar and there will usually be a padlock symbol 🔒 on the screen. Many forms include a question asking you if you want to be sent further information or if you'd like to be informed of other similar products or services. If you don't want your personal details to be passed on to other companies, check this section of the form carefully. If you're completing a form online, you may have to 'un-tick' a box. **Companies have a duty to protect your personal details under the Data Protection Act.**

Checking through the form

It's important to **read a form carefully before filling it in**. Are there different sections in the form? Do you have to answer different types of questions in different sections of the form? Do all sections apply to you? On some forms, such as online registration forms, you don't have to answer all the questions. Questions that require an answer often have an asterisk next to them so these are the only ones you need to complete.

Before signing a form, make sure you understand what you're committing yourself to. If you complete a form online, you can fill in the form and send it immediately. You won't need to sign an online form, but it's important to **check the form very carefully before pressing the 'send' button** to make sure that all the information is correct. It's also a very good idea to **print and save a copy of the form** so you have a record of what you've completed and sent. This may also be helpful for the next time you need to complete a similar form.