

Preparing For An Interview

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- **Be prepared.**
You can prepare yourself for the interview by selecting appropriate attire, researching the company thoroughly, and preparing a list of questions. Bring a copy of your résumé and your list of references with you to the interview. Last but not least, practice answering sample interview questions to prepare yourself and gain confidence before the interview.
 - **Follow the interviewer's lead.**
Don't spend too much time on any one question, but make sure you have answered the entire question before going on to the next one. You might want to check with the interviewer to see if you answered the entire question or if he/she would like additional information.
 - **Emphasize the positive.**
You may be asked during the interview to give a list of your strengths and weaknesses. Remember to focus on the positive. When referring to weaknesses, recognize those things you feel you need to work on and quickly shift to actions you have taken to improve in this area. Specific examples can be helpful to illustrate your progress.
 - **Bring samples of your work.**
If you are in a field such as: graphic design, photography, studio art, education, or communication, where a sample of your work would be helpful, bring these items with you to the interview.
 - **Close with confidence.**
The beginning and ending of the interview can be the most crucial aspects of the interview. End your interview with confidence. Thank the interviewer for his/ her time and ask when you may expect to hear back from the employer. Ask for the job!
 - **Follow-up with a thank you note**
Take this opportunity to clarify a topic discussed in the interview and reaffirm your interest in the organization and position. Send a thank you note to everyone you interviewed with on the day of your interview.
- **Make a good first impression.**
The interview is your opportunity to market yourself. Once you get the interview, it is your job to create a good first impression by being prompt, being yourself, attending to your nonverbal behavior, maintaining eye contact throughout the interview, and by taking the first few minutes to develop rapport with your interviewer. You will want to appear poised, yet comfortable. If you do this, you'll be setting the stage for success!
 - **Emphasize your skills and accomplishments.**
Focus on your skills and accomplishments, including: college coursework, volunteer and co-curricular activities, and your computer and language skills. Previous internships and/or work experiences are important, as well as describing your transferable skills and how they fit in with the position for which you are applying. For example: communication, interpersonal, organizational, strong analytical, and problem solving skills, just to name a few.
 - **Provide the interviewer with examples of your skills.**
One popular form of interviewing is called Behavioral Interviewing. The interviewer will provide you with a scenario and ask how you would handle a certain situation. Preparing for these types of questions will provide a quick reference to previous relevant experiences.



You've sent out your résumé & cover letter and the employer has contacted you to schedule an interview. Here are some tips to ensure it is a success!

Preparing For A Behavioral Interview

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There's more than just a traditional interview. Here are some tips if you're having a behavioral interview, so that you'll be on track to get the job you really want!

- **How are behavioral interviews different from traditional interviews?**

Today, more than ever, every hiring decision is critical. Interviewers will ask questions based on the premise that the best way to predict future behavior is to determine past behavior. The interview will be a more structured process concentrating on areas important to the interviewer and company. The behavioral interviewer has been trained to objectively collect and evaluate information, and works from a profile of desired behaviors needed for success on the job. If you are an entry-level candidate with no previous related experience, the interviewer will look for behaviors in situations similar to those of the target position.

- **Examples of behavioral questions.**

"Tell me about a time when you were on a team, and one of the team members wasn't carrying his or her weight."

"Describe a major problem you have faced and how you dealt with it."

"Give an example of when you had to work on more than one project at a time, and explain how you handled getting things completed in a timely manner."

- **Follow-up questions will test for consistency.**

These questions will also determine if you exhibited the desired behavior in that situation:

"Can you give me an example?"

"What did you do or say?"

"What were you thinking?"

"What was your role?"

"What was the result?"

- **Putting it all together.**

A possible response for the question, *"Tell me about a time when you were on a team, and one of the members wasn't carrying his or her own weight,"* might go as follows:

"I had been assigned to a team to build a canoe. One of our team members wasn't showing up for our lab sessions or doing his assignments. I finally met with him in private, explained the frustration of the rest of the team, and asked if there was anything I could do. He told me he was preoccupied with another class which he wasn't passing, so I found someone to help him out. He not only was able to spend more time on our project, but he was also grateful to me for the help. We finished our project on time, and got a 'B' on it."

- **Don't forget the basics.**

The traditional interviewer may allow you to project what you might or should do in a given situation, whereas the behavioral interviewer is looking for past actions only. It is always important to put your best foot forward and make a good impression on the interviewer with appropriate attire, good grooming, a firm handshake, and eye contact. There is no substitute for promptness, courtesy, preparation, and enthusiasm.

Questions to Expect and Ask

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EXPECT...

- **Questions you should be prepared to answer during your interview:**

“So, tell me a little about yourself.”

Talk about your experience, qualifications, and accomplishments— not your childhood, family, or hobbies. Keep bringing everything back to the position for which you are applying.

“In what ways do you think you can make a contribution to the company?”

Tell your employer about the skills you have listed on your résumé. Name a skill, and tie it to the position. Tell them about your positive outlook and dedication to getting the job done!

“What do you consider to be your greatest strengths and weaknesses?”

Be honest, emphasize the strengths, and when mentioning a weakness, be ready to back it up with examples showing how you’re trying to improve in that area. Better yet, turn it into a positive.

“Why should I hire you?”

Let the interviewer know about your motivation, desire to be successful, and to help the company grow. Tell them how you can be an asset to the company!

“What motivates you to do a good job?”

Money is not a good answer. A good answer would be something like, “Having responsibilities and being acknowledged when the job is done right.”

“What do you consider to be your greatest accomplishment in college?”

Tell the truth, and try to link it to the job position.

“Do you have any questions for me?”

“Yes, thank you, I do have a few questions...”

ASK...

- **Questions to ask your potential employer:**

1. If hired, would I be filling a newly created position, or replacing someone?

2. Would you describe a typical work day and the activities I’d be doing?

3. How would I be trained or introduced to the job?

4. Can someone in this job be promoted? If so, to what position?

5. How would I get feedback on my job performance, if hired?

6. If hired, would I report directly to you, or to someone else?

7. What could I say or do to convince you to offer me this job?

8. What is the next step in the hiring process?

- **Never ask any questions about salary, vacations, holidays with pay, or sick days. Wait for the managers to bring up the issue of wages. When they ask what salary you expect, ask what the standard salary for your qualifications is. Force the managers to throw out the first figure. If the figure is what you want— grab it. If the figure is too low, explain your financial situation and try to negotiate an increase.**



The way you answer questions asked by the interviewer can have a great impact positively or negatively. With these sample questions, you’ll be ready to answer with confidence and ease!

Dress For Success!

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- A two piece suit in navy or another dark color.
- Have a tie in a simple pattern that matches the color of your suit.
- Button down dress shirt. (white or pastel)
- Polished dress shoes in a dark color.
- No earrings! If you normally wear one, take it out.
- Get a haircut. Short hair always fares best.
- Have clean, trimmed fingernails.
- Wear minimal cologne.
- Bring a portfolio with your résumés!



- A neutral colored suit in navy or another dark color with a skirt.
- Skirt length should be a little below the knee & never shorter than above the knee.
- Blouses should be cotton or silk. (white or light pastel color)
- Pantyhose should be flawless & a conservative color.
- Basic pumps with 1"-2" heel.
- Simple accessories. No visible body piercings besides earlobes.
- Have clean-looking fingernails.
- Make-up should be minimal & in conservative tones.
- Wear minimal perfume.
- Bring a portfolio with your résumés!

Remember: Thank Your Interviewer!

Don't wait to send a thank-you to your interviewer! Send one right away because they're **very** important! In a study of 150 senior executives from the nation's 1,000 largest companies, 88% of them consider a post-interview thank-you note as influential as evaluating the candidates themselves!

Your Name
Title
Address
Date

Dear Mr./Ms. (Last Name):

Thank you so much for meeting with me on (Date) to discuss the (position title) you have available. I appreciated the opportunity to learn more about (company's name) and to discuss how my qualifications can meet your needs.

I would like the opportunity to become part of your team. I feel strongly that I can be an asset to (company's name). I can assure you if considered for (position title), I would be a very reliable employee. I look forward to hearing from you regarding your decision.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Signature