

# Interviewing Guide

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## What is an interview?

An interview is a strategic conversation. Interviews are opportunities:

- ⇒ For employers to meet you, assess your personality, and see how you would fit into the organization.
- ⇒ For you to sell yourself to the employers
- ⇒ For you to learn about the position and to determine if you want to work for that company.

### Before the interview:

- ⇒ Be knowledgeable of your skills, interests, and values and how they fit the position you are seeking.
- ⇒ Research the company
- ⇒ Arrive 15 minutes early

### After the interview:

- ⇒ Debrief: Make notes as soon as possible so that you can reflect on your responses.
- ⇒ Ask for the interviewer's business card
- ⇒ Send a typed thank you letter immediately.

## 10 Keys to Successful Interviewing

1. Practice, practice, practice– Be prepared
2. Be concise-Limit your responses
3. Concrete information- Provide details of your experiences
4. Make a good impression– 5% of your messages are nonverbal
5. Discuss short stories– Be prepared to offer examples
6. Put yourself on their team.
7. Maintain a conversational flow.
8. Ask questions at the end of the interview.
9. Recognize your stress and nervousness.
10. Find opportunities to mention strengths.

## What are Employers Looking For?

- Written and verbal communication skills
- Interpersonal skills
- Work and internship experience
- Motivation and initiative
- Team player
- Computer skills
- Flexibility

### **Nonverbal Communication**

- Be pleasant to absolutely everyone
- Project enthusiasm and confidence
- Make eye contact
- Greet the interviewer
- Provide a firm handshake
- Sit upright and avoid fidgeting
- Remember to smile

### **What to bring**

- Extra Resume
- Portfolio with notepad and pen
- List of questions about the position
- Tissue or handkerchief

## **Researching the Organization**

It is a good idea to demonstrate knowledge of a company during an interview by asking questions and speaking intelligently about the profession.

- What is the size and structure of the organization?
- What type of training does the organization offer?
- What are the geographical locations of its plants, stores, or outlets?
- What are the career paths within the organization?
- What are the products and services?
- How well is the organization doing?
- Who are the clients?
- What is the organization known for?

Resources:

To obtain information about the employer, contact the company directly—ask for their website, brochures, etc.

A reference librarian can help with a literature search.

Research of the Work Wide Web:

▪[www.forbes.com](http://www.forbes.com) ▪[www.thomasregister.com](http://www.thomasregister.com) ▪[www.usnews.com](http://www.usnews.com)

## **Researching the Position**

- Request a form description of the position from Human Resources.
- View information on various job titles using the Occupational Outlook Handbook ([www.stats.bls.gov/ocohome.htm](http://www.stats.bls.gov/ocohome.htm)).
- Analyze the job description and find out how you would fit into the position.
- Evaluate your interest in the career field and be able to verbalize it.
- If the description is limited, research similar jobs at various companies.

## What to Wear?

Make the right first impression. Generally, when in doubt, go with formal rather than informational attire.

Your appearance should communicate that you are ready for a professional position—no matter what the profession is.

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### Do

- Go with a conservative business style
- Wear a suit—darker colors are preferred
- Wear polished conservative shoes
- Wear a clean and neat hairstyle
- Men-fresh haircut
- Women-hair off of our face
- Men-dark socks, not white
- Women-flesh toned hosiery
- Shower, shampoo, and shave
- Iron your clothes

### Do Not

- Wear excessive jewelry—tongue rings, etc.
- Wear perfume, cologne, or scents
- Wear excessive or flamboyant make-up
- Wear loud ties
- Wear flamboyant nail polish

## Panel Interviews

More than likely, several of your interviews will be conducted in front of more than one interviewer. A panel can be as small as 2 people or as large as 15 people.

- Remember, there will always be a range of personality types on the panel.
- Each person on the panel will ask at least one question.
- Look at everyone as you answer each question; all of their opinions count

### Questions Asked by Employers

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. Describe your ideal job?
3. Why did you leave your previous job?
4. What type of salary are you looking for?
5. Where do you see yourself in 5 years? 10 years?
6. Name 3 adjectives that best describe you and why?
7. Discuss a program that you organized or developed.
8. What is your greatest strength and weakness—why?
9. Give an example of a time you worked under pressure?
10. What type of presentations or workshops have you done?
11. What skills do you feel are necessary to work in this field?
12. Describe a multi-cultural environment you have worked in?
13. What type of computer programs do you use on a regular basis?
14. Do you prefer to work more in an individual or team environment?
15. Discuss a difficult situation with a supervisor, and how you handled it?

### Questions to Ask Employers

1. How did this position become available?
2. What are you looking for in a candidate?
3. What are your expectations for this position?
4. Is training involved for this position?
5. Are there growth opportunities available?
6. What motivates you to come back to work daily?

Step 1 Think about each question  
Step 2 Write out an answer to each question the way you would answer it during an interview  
Step 3 Practice each answer verbally to someone or in the mirror to organize and monitor for length

### Tell Me about Yourself—Oh No!! What do I Say?

Ideally the answer to this question should be approximately a 2 to 5 minute overview of your background tailored to match the company and position. Your goal is to practice this answer verbally until it becomes second nature.

#### Step 1-Begin with an upbeat statement

“I would like to focus on my previous and currently positions and how successful and rewarding they have been. My career began when...”

#### Step 2-Include some accomplishments

Try to use one or two power stories that focus on your results. “My current position has given me the opportunity to...”

#### Step 3- Why are you seeking this position?

“Currently I am looking for a position doing \_\_\_\_\_ because\_\_\_\_\_.”

#### Step 4- Use a closure statement to create a smooth ending

“Is there anything else you would like me to cover?”

### The Interview

#### Do

- Put yourself on their team
- Compliment their accomplishments
- Research their company
- Shake hands with each member interviewing you
- Talk about previous experience that relates to the position
- Discuss your skills and qualifications

#### Don't

- Bring food or gifts for the interviewer
- Wear heavy make-up or cologne
- Chew gum
- Play with pen, pencils or objects
- Talk excessively
- Talk bad about acquaintances
- Slouch

### Stay Positive

There are many opportunities waiting just for you. You don't need to beg or take the first offer if it is not what you want!

