

Interviews 101

Interviews are your chance to sell your skills and abilities.

They also give you a chance to find out if the job and company are right for you. Follow the tips here to ace your interviews.

Review common interview questions.

Practice answering them with someone else or in front of a mirror. Come prepared with stories that relate to the skills that the employer wants, while emphasizing your:

- Strengths
- Willingness to work and flexibility
- Leadership skills
- Ability and willingness to learn new things
- Contributions to the organizations in which you have worked or volunteered
- Creativity in solving problems and working with people

Figure out in advance how well you qualify for the job. For each requirement listed in the job posting, write down your qualifications and accomplishments. This can show you if you lack a particular skill. Plan how you will address this in the interview so you can convince the interviewer that you can learn the skill.

Make a list of questions that you would like to ask during the interview. At the end of the interview, the Interviewer will ask, "do you have any questions for us?".

Pick questions that will demonstrate your interest in the job and the company. This might include commenting on the news you learned from the company website and then asking a question related to it. Also ask questions about the job you will be expected to perform, like:

- What are the day-to-day responsibilities of this job?
- How will my responsibilities and performance be measured? By whom?
- Could you explain your organizational structure?
- What computer equipment and software do you use?
- What is the organization's plan for the next five years?

Be prepared. Remember to bring important items to the interview

- Extra copies of your resume and a list of references
- Portfolio of work samples

On the day of the interview, remember to:

- Plan your schedule so you arrive 10 to 15 minutes early.
- Go by yourself.
- Look professional. Dress in a manner appropriate to the job. We suggest not using jeans, t-shirts, sweatpants, or any clothing considered casual.
- Turn off your cell phone.
- Bring your sense of humor and SMILE!

Display confidence during the interview, but let the interviewer start the dialogue. Send a positive message with your body language.

- Shake hands firmly, but only if a hand is offered to you first.
- Maintain eye contact.
- Listen carefully. Welcome, all questions, even the difficult ones, with a smile.
- Give honest, direct answers.
- Develop answers in your head before you respond. If you don't understand a question, ask for it to be repeated or clarified. You don't have to rush, but you don't want to appear indecisive.

End the interview with a good impression. A positive end to the interview is another way to ensure your success.

- Be courteous and allow the interview to end on time.
- Restate any strengths and experiences that you might not have emphasized earlier.
- Mention a particular accomplishment or activity that fits the job.
- If you want the job, say so!
- Find out if there will be additional interviews.
- Ask when the employer plans to make a decision.
- Indicate a time when you may contact the employer to learn of the decision.

Don't forget to send a thank-you note or letter after the interview.

U.S. Department of Labor. 2022. "Career One Stop: Your Source for Career Exploration, Training and Jobs." <https://www.careeronestop.org/JobSearch/Interview/interview-tips.aspx>.