

THE JOB INTERVIEW

Top interview tips

- An interview is a discussion between you and an employer to find out if you can do the job.
- However, there are certain rules and conventions to follow in interviews.
- Here's a checklist of the main do's and don'ts.

What to do:

- dress smartly, look bright and attentive, and speak clearly and confidently.

Don't forget that only 7% of the interviewer's opinion of you is formed by what you say - the rest is judged on how you look, act and sound .

- get your outfit ready the night before
- find out what kind of interview it will be so you can prepare

What to do:

- Examine your CV/application form, and think about what type of questions they will ask you
- prepare answers for the main questions - *for example, why do you want the job, what are your strengths and weaknesses, what are the main tasks in this job*
- make about three or four points in each answer
- quote real examples of when you've used certain skills - just saying you've got a skill isn't enough

What to do:

- take your time when answering the questions.
- Make sure you understand the question and take your time if you need to think
- sell yourself. No-one else is going to!
- Be positive about yourself and your experiences
- prepare some questions to ask at the end - use it as an opportunity to find out more about the role and the company. But don't ask about money just yet!

What to do:

- turn off your mobile! Treat the interviewers with respect and give them your undivided attention
- keep your answers focused on what you can do for the employer, not what they can do for you
- don't be late!
- don't swear or use slang words

What not to do:

- don't slouch in your seat or do anything else that makes you look disinterested
- don't smoke
- don't lie! The interviewer may see through you. Even if you get the job, your employer can dismiss you if they find out

What not to do:

- don't let your nerves show too much. Use breathing techniques and try to remember that it's not a life and death situation - there are plenty of jobs out there!
- don't be arrogant and assume you've got the job.
- don't discuss controversial topics such as religion, politics and gender relations

What not to do:

- don't read from notes or your CV.
- don't criticise former employers or colleagues. Interviewers may mark you down as a troublemaker and a gossip
- don't argue with the interviewer, no matter what. Remember to keep things positive!

Preparing yourself to answer questions

- Above all, preparation is the key to performing well in interviews.
- Research the role and organisation,
- and prepare evidence and examples of your skills and competencies.

Preparing yourself to answer questions

- Some questions come up time and time again in interviews. These are usually about you, your experience and the job itself. The most common interview questions are about:
 - Your skills
 - The employer
 - The job
 - Your ambitions
 - Your work history
 - Your motivation
 - The product or service
 - Team working
 - Your personality and interests
 - Unusual questions

Your skills

- *Typical questions an interviewer might ask:*
- What are your strengths and weaknesses?
- What can you do for us that other candidates can't?
- What would your colleagues and friends say your best qualities were?
- Why should we hire you?
- *What the interviewer really wants to know:*
They want to know if you can do the job.

Your skills

- Know your strengths, and mention ones that are relevant to the job you're being interviewed for.
- It's important to quote examples of when you used the skills;
- it's not enough to just say you have the skills.

Your skills

Typical strengths employers look for are:

1. Communication - the ability to get on with a wide range of people
2. Team working - the ability to be an effective team leader or team member
3. IT skills - most jobs these days need some IT skills
4. Good attitude - hard worker, honest, polite, co-operative
5. Problem solving - using your initiative to identify solutions
6. Enthusiasm - employers like someone positive
7. Quick learner - so you can take on new tasks
8. Determination - shows you are focused on achieving goals
9. Flexibility - doing a variety of tasks to achieve a common goal

Your skills

- If you're asked about weaknesses, don't list many - only mention one!
- Choose a minor flaw that isn't essential to the job.
- And turn it into a positive, such as how you've improved on the weakness.
- Or you could present it as an opportunity for development.

Your skills

- *Good answers:*
- Strengths: "I'm a good organiser, and I plan everything in detail. I showed this when I was given a new project, and I had to get it up and running from scratch."
- Weaknesses: "Sometimes I'm too enthusiastic when working on a new project. But I've learned to adjust to everyone else's pace, and not go charging ahead."

The employer

- *Typical questions:*
- Why do you want to work here?
- What do you know about our company?
- What can you do for us that someone else can't?
- *What the interviewer really wants to know: **Do you know what we do? Why have you chosen to apply to this company?***

About the job

- *Typical questions:*
- What will the main tasks and responsibilities be in this job?
- What do you think the main challenges will be?
- What would you do in the first day/week/month/year?
- *What the interviewer really wants to know: **Do you know what the job's all about?***

Your ambitions

- *Typical questions:*
- What are your goals?
- Where do you see yourself in five years time?
- *What the interviewer really wants to know:*
How ambitious are you?

Your work history

- *Typical questions:*
- Why did you leave your last job?
- Tell me about a typical day in your current/previous job
- What experience have you got from previous jobs?
- *What the interviewer really wants to know:*
What have you done in your previous jobs?

Your motivation

- *Typical questions:*
- What motivates you?
- Which tasks do you get the most satisfaction from?
- *What the interviewer really wants to know:*
What makes you tick?

About the product or service

- *Typical questions:*
- What do you know about our products/services?
- What do you think of our products/services?
- Can you think of any improvements to our products/services?
- *What the interviewer really wants to know:*
Are you keen enough to have looked at our products and services?

Team working

- *Typical questions:*
- What makes a good team?
- What makes a good team member?
- What makes a good team leader?
- *What the interviewer really wants to know:*
Can you operate effectively in a team?

Your personality and interests

- *Typical questions:*
- What was the last film you saw or the last book you read?
- How would you describe yourself?
- How would your friends describe you?
- *What the interviewer really wants to know:*
Are you a well-rounded individual?

Your personality and interests

- By asking personality questions, the employer wants to know how well you know yourself - how self-aware you are. Having self-awareness means you can look at yourself critically, which means you'll know what you're good at and where you could improve.

Your personality and interests

- When it comes to your interests, the employer wants to know you're an active citizen, who tries to get the most out of life.
- If you're to be driven and enthusiastic in work, you will probably also be like this in your personal life.