

Job Interview Tips: How to Make a Good Impression

Hey, congratulations! You have a job interview scheduled. Now is the time to prepare.

Here is an overview of how to succeed in an interview along with detailed discussion points on each point.

In the days before your job interview, set aside time for the following:

1. Start by researching the company and your interviewers. Understanding key information about the company you interview with can help you enter your interview with confidence. Using the company's website, social media, and press releases provide a solid understanding of the company's goals and how your background makes you a good fit.

2. Practice your answers to common interview questions. Prepare your answer to the common question: "Tell me about yourself, and why are you interested in this position with our company?" The idea is to quickly communicate who you are and what value you bring to the company and the position.

You should come prepared to discuss your salary expectations. If you're unsure what salary is appropriate to ask for, allow a salary point be proposed, and feel free to negotiate from there.

3. Reread the job description. Print it out and underline specific skills the employer is looking for. Think about examples from your experience that align with these requirements.

4. Use the STAR method in answering questions. Prepare to be asked about times in the past when you used a specific skill and use the STAR method to relate your example with a clear Situation, Task, Action, and Result.

5. Recruit a friend to practice answering questions. Practicing your answers out loud is an excellent way to prepare. Say them to yourself or ask a friend to help run through questions and answers.

6. Prepare a list of references. Your interviewers may require you submit a list of references before or after your interview. Having a reference list prepared ahead of time helps you quickly complete this step to move forward in the hiring process.

7. Be prepared with examples of your work. If possible, prepare and take a portfolio. During the interview, you will likely be asked about specific work you've completed in relation to the position. After reviewing the job description, think of work you've done in past jobs, clubs or volunteer positions that show you have experience and success doing the work they require.

8. Prepare smart questions for your interviewers. Interviews are conversations, discussions. Employers expect you to ask questions: they want to know you're thinking seriously about what it would be like to work there. Here are some questions you may consider asking your interviewers:

- Why is this position open?
- Can you explain some of the day-to-day responsibilities this job entails?

- How would you describe the characteristics of someone who would succeed in this role?
- If I were in this position, how would my performance be measured? How often?
- What departments does this team work with regularly?
- How do these departments typically collaborate?
- What does that process look like?
- What are the challenges you're currently facing in your role?

9. Plan carefully what to wear to your interview the night before. If you're speaking to a recruiter before the interview, you can ask them about the dress code in the workplace and choose your outfit accordingly. If you don't have someone to ask, research the company to learn what's appropriate. If still in doubt, Sunday best is always appropriate.

10. Bring copies of your resume, a notebook, and pen and turn off your mobile phone. Take at least five copies of your printed resume on clean paper in case there is a panel of interviewers. Bring a pen and a notebook and prepare to take notes, but not on your smartphone or another electronic device. Write information down so you can refer to these details in your follow-up thank-you notes. Maintain eye contact as much as possible. Do not interrupt. Do not try to be funny or unduly personal with the interviewer(s).

11. Plan your schedule so that you arrive 10–15 minutes early. Map out your route to the interview location so you arrive on time. Consider doing a practice run. If you're taking public transportation, identify a backup plan if there are delays or closures.

12. Make a great first impression. Don't forget the little things: brush your teeth, have a breath mint handy, shine your shoes, make sure your nails are clean and tidy, and check your clothes for holes, stains, pet hair and loose threads. Shake hands with a strong hand shake and look the person in the eye. Display confident body language and a smile throughout.

13. Treat everyone you encounter with respect. This includes people in the parking lot, security personnel, and front desk staff. Treat everyone you don't know as though they're the hiring manager, your potential employer may ask for their feedback.

14. Practice good manners and body language. Practice confident, accessible body language from the moment you enter the building. Sit or stand tall with your chin up and shoulders back. Before the interview, take a deep breath and exhale slowly to manage feelings of anxiety and encourage self-confidence. The interviewer should extend their hand first to initiate a handshake. Stand, look the person in the eye and smile. A good handshake should be firm but not crush the other person's fingers.

15. Impress them with your authenticity and positivity. Being genuine during interview conversations can help employers relate to you. Showing positivity with a smile and upbeat body language can help keep the interview focused and constructive.

16. Respond truthfully to the questions asked. While it may seem tempting to embellish on your skills and accomplishments, DON'T, interviewers find honesty respectful and honorable. Focus on your key strengths and why your background makes you qualified for the position.

17. Tie your answers back to your skills and accomplishments. With any question you answer, it is important you tie your background to the job by providing examples of solutions

and results you've achieved. Use every opportunity to address the job requirements listed in the job description.

18. Keep your answers clear, concise, and focused. Your time with each interviewer is limited so be mindful of being direct, thorough, and completely honest. Practicing your answers beforehand can help keep you focused.

19. Do not speak negatively about your previous employers or co-workers. Companies want to hire problem solvers who overcome tough situations. If you're discouraged about your current job, focus on talking about what you've gained from that experience and what you want to do next. Interviewers will often ask why you are leaving your current situation. Answer honestly but do not denigrate your current situation.

20. Ask about next steps. After your interview, it is appropriate to ask either your interviewer, hiring manager, or recruiter what happens next. This will likely be a follow-up email with results from your interview including requests for additional requirements like an assignment, reference list, or another interview.

21. Send a personalized thank you letter after the interview. Ask for the business card of each person you speak with during the interview process so you can follow up individually with a separate thank you email. If you interviewed in the morning, send your follow-up emails the same day. If you interviewed in the afternoon, the next morning is fine. Make certain each email is distinct from the others, using the notes you took during the conversations.