

How to Succeed in Your Job Interview



Ten Most Frequently Asked Interview Questions

Now, let us look at some tips for answering the top ten interview questions. Your own responses will be different from the examples given here. But if you study these examples, you can learn how to answer each of these questions effectively. Then you'll be ready to do better than 90% of the job seekers you are competing with.

Question 1: Why not tell me about yourself?

The interviewer does not want to know your life history! Instead, he or she wants you tell how your background relates to doing the job. Here is a sample response:

“By the time I graduated from high school, I knew I wanted to work in a business setting. I had taken typing and other business classes and had done well in them. And the jobs I've had while going to high school have taught me how many small businesses are run. In one of these job, I was given complete responsibility for the night operations of a wholesale grocery business that grossed over two million dollars a year. I learned there how to supervise others and solve problems under pressure. Recently, I decided to take some computer classes to update my abilities.”

This answer gives a very brief personal history and then gets right into the skills and experience this job seeker had. A different job would require you to stress different skills. Your personal history is different, but you can still follow the three basic steps to answering a problem question.

How would you answer this question in an interview? Write our own answer to the question: _____



Question 2: why should I hire you?

This is the most important question of all! If *you* don't have a good reason, why should *anyone* hire you? It is not often stated this clearly, but this is the question behind many interview questions.

The best answer is to show how you can solve a problem for them, help the business make more money, or provide something else of value that they need. Think about the most valuable thing you can do for an organization. That is probably what you should include in your answer.

Here is an example from a person with recent training but little work experience:

“I have over two years of technical training in this field and know about all the latest equipment and methods. That means I can get right to work and be productive almost right away. I am also willing to

work hard to learn new things. During the entire time I went to school, I worked a full-time job to help earn the tuition. I learned to work hard and concentrate on what was important. I expect to do the same thing here. Since I won't be going to school now, I plan on putting in extra time after regular work hours to learn anything this job need."

Now think about the job you want. What strengths can you bring to that job? Then answer the question:

Question 3: What are your major strengths?

This is a direct question with little hidden meaning. Answer it by emphasizing the skills you defined.

Here is one from a person who had little prior works experience:

"I think one of them is that you can depend on me. I work very hard to meet deadlines and don't need a lot of supervision in doing it. If I don't know what to do, I don't mind asking either. In high school I got a solid B-plus average even though I was very involved in sports. I always got my assignments in on time and somehow found the time to do extra credit work, too."

How would you answer this question?



Question 4: What are your major weaknesses?

Most job seekers do not handle this question well. If you tell what you do poorly, you may not get the job. If you say you have no weaknesses, the interviewer won't believe you. Ask yourself what the interviewer really wants to know that you are aware of your weaknesses. And that you have learned to overcome them so that they don't affect your work.

Using the three-step process, the second step would result in a response like this:

“I do have some weaknesses. For example, in previous jobs I would get annoyed with co-workers who didn’t work as hard as I did. I sometimes said so to them and several times refused to do their work when they asked me to.”

But the response should not end there. The third step would result in a statement like this:

“But I have learned to deal with this better. I still know hard, but I let the supervisor deal with another worker’s problems. And I’ve also gained some skills as a supervisor myself. I’ve learned to motivate others to do more because they want to, not because I want them to.”

Did you notice that this weakness isn’t such a weakness at all? Many of our strengths began in failure. We learned from them and got better.

List some weakness of this type that you could use in your own answer.

Now, pick one of these and use it to answer the question.

Question 5: What sort of pay do you expect to receive?

Knowing how to answer this question could be worth a lot of money to you! In chapter 10 you learned that one of the interview phases is negotiating salary. This question deals with the same issue. In the chapter, you learned this important rule in salary negotiation:

Salary Negotiation Rule 1: *Never discuss salary until you are offered the job.*

It may be helpful to review why this is so before you continue. Here are a few paragraphs from that chapter to refresh your memory:

Whatever you say, you will probably lose. Suppose the employer was willing to pay \$15,000 per year (or \$7.00 per hour or whatever). If you say you will take \$13,500, guess what you will be paid. That may have been the most expensive ten seconds of your life!

There are other ways you can lose. The employer may decide not to hire you at all. He or she may think they really need a person who is worth \$15,000 –, which leaves you out. If you were clever, you may have asked for \$16,500 and hoped you would get it. You could lose here, too. Many employers would assume you’d be unhappy with the salary they had in mind. Even if you would have been happy to have it.

Good advice. However, you did not really learn how to answer the salary question. For this question, you need to remember the following three rules:

Salary Negotiation Rule 2: *Know the probable salary range.*

Before the interview, you need to know what similar jobs in similar types of organizations pay. This will give you an idea of what the position is likely to pay. To find out, ask others in similar jobs. The library is a good source of salary information. Ask the research librarian. You can also call your local state Employment Service's statistical office. They are required to keep information for each area.

Salary Negotiation Rule 3: *Bracket your salary range.*

If you think the employers pay between \$14,000 and \$16,000/ year, state your own range as "mid to upper teens." That covers the amount the employer probably had in mind and gives you room to get more. You have bracketed the amount you are willing to accept to include their probable range and a bit more. Here is how it would look.

<i>If They Pay:</i>	<i>You Say:</i>
\$5/ hour	5 to 7 dollars per hour
\$13,000/ year	low to mid teens
\$16,500/ year	mid to upper teens
\$18,500/ year	Upper teens to low twenties
\$27, 500/ year	Upper twenties to low thirties

Salary Negotiation Rule 4: *Never say no to a job offer before it is made or until 24 hours have passed.*

Remember, the objective of an interview is to get a job offer. Many job seekers are screened out early in the interview by discussing salary. If you give the impression that, the job does not pay what you hoped, or if it pays more, you could be screened out. The best approach is to avoid discussing salary until you are being offered and call back the next day. You can always turn it down then.

You may also say that if the salary were higher you would take the position. Perhaps you could be given more responsibility to justify a higher wage. On the other hand, you could negotiate an increase after a certain period.

Do not negotiate like this unless you are willing to give up the offer. However, you just might be able to get a counter offer that would accept.

Question 6: How does your previous experience relate to the jobs we have here?

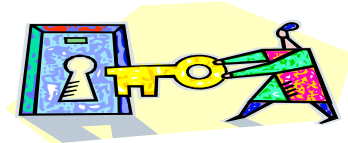
This one requires a direct response. This question is saying, “Can you prove you have experience and skills to do the job?” In some cases, other people with better credentials than yours will want the job you are after. You should mention this, and then explain why you are a better choice.

Here is an example of how one person handled this situation:

“As you know, I have over five years experience in a variety of jobs. While this job is in a different industry, it requires my same skills in managing people and meeting the public. In fact, my daily contact with large numbers of people in previous jobs had taught me how to handle things under pressure. I feel very able to deal with pressure and to get the job done.”

This person had a job as a server. She had to learn to handle people under pressure in such a job. By presenting the skills she used, her answer tells us she could use the same skills in other jobs.

Be sure to mention any specific skills or training you have that will help you do the job. Include your greatest job-related strengths in your own answer to this question:



Question 7: What are your plans for the future?

This question is really asking whether you are likely to remain on the job. An employer has many concerns, depending on your situation.

The question also asks:

- ❖ Will you be happy with the salary? (If not, you may leave.)
 - ❖ Will you leave to raise a family or relocate because of your spouse’s job transfer?
 - ❖ Do you have a history of leaving jobs after a short stay? (If so, it seems you will do this again)
 - ❖ Are you overqualified (and likely to be unhappy in this job)?
-

There may be other concerns, too. You may wish to practice answering this question again. If so, try to put yourself in an employer’s place. Then answer the real question. Try to bring up anything in your own life situation that some employers might be concerned about.

A safe answer is to state that your plans are to find steady, long-term employment where you can develop your skills.

Question 8: What will your former employers (teachers or other references) say about you?

The interviewer really wants to know about your adaptive skills and whether you are dependable. Are you easy to get along with and are you reliable?

Many employers will check your references, so if you are less than honest about problems in previous jobs, you could get caught! If everyone you ever worked for thinks you are great, answering this question will be easy, but almost everyone has had some type of problem. If the interviewer is likely to find out about your problem by checking with previous employers, honesty could be the best policy. Tell it like it is, and accept responsibility for being part of the problem.

Many interviewers have been fired sometime in their careers. It's no sin and often has little to do with being a good worker. If you learned something from the experience, say so.

In a way, this question is similar to asking you for your major weakness. The right answer to this question is similar to answering it. The right answer to this question can get you the job-even if you have to reveal some negative information. Here is an example:

"If you check with my two previous employers, they will both tell you that am a good worker and that I do things right. But you may find out that one of them is not too enthusiastic about me. I really can't explain why we did not get along. I tried to do my best, but she passed me over for merit raises twice.

She will tell you that I got the work done, but she may also tell you that I was not willing to socialize with the other workers after hours. I had a new baby and I was working full time. I was very reliable, but it was true that I did not go out two or three times a week with the others. I left on my own and got my next job with a boss who will say wonderful things about me. But I thought you might want know."

If you do expect a problem from previous employer, try to find out exactly what he or she will say. If possible, talk it over so you know exactly what they will say when giving a reference. Ask them to write you a letter of reference. Usually they will not be negative in a letter and your new employer may accept the letter and not call.

If you still know that this employer will give you a negative reference, think of someone else you worked with closely in the same organization and ask that person to give you a reference instead.

Write your own response to this question:

Question 9: Why are you looking for this sort of position and why here?

Employers know that you will do better in the job you really want. Employers want to make sure you know what you want. They also, want to tell them what you like about the job. And what you like about doing this job in their organization. The closer you come to wanting what they have, the better.

The best answer for this is the absolute truth. You need a clear idea of the type of job you want. You also need to know the type of organization and people you want to work with. You gathered all of this information earlier in this book. And if you are interviewing for a job you want, in a place where you think you would enjoy working, answering this question should be easy.

Take another look at your reasons for wanting this type of job. Select you top two reasons. Be sure to include these in your answer. Since you don't yet have a particular employer to respond to, use your imagination to decide what the company you're interviewing with is like. Then tell them what you like about their organization.

Question 10: Why don't you tell me about your personal situation?

Very few interviewers will ask this question so directly, but they do want to know. They will try to find out in casual conversation. While you may feel that this is none of their business, they probably won't hire you unless they feel comfortable about your responses.

If you follow the three-step process, you would first ask yourself what are they really asking? It is clear enough that they are concerned about whether you can be counted on to do the job. They will look for signs that you are unstable or unreliable.

The question behind the question the asked question is usually one of these:

The Question	An Employer's Real Concern
Are you single?	Will you stay?
Are you married?	Will you devote the necessary time?
Do you have marital or family trouble?	Missed work, poor performance, poor interpersonal skills?

Do you handle money and personal responsibilities poorly?	Theft of property? Irresponsible job-related decisions?
Do you have a stable home?	Socio-economic bias, renters less stable than owners.
How do you use your leisure time?	Drinking, socially unacceptable behavior?
Do you have young children?	Days off and child-care problems?

They need to know you can be depended on to do the job, and if you don't tell them, who will?

Here are samples statements covering typical "problems" employers may be concerned over. Some are not fair or accurate assumptions. As a job seeker, though you need to deal with what is real. Once you have the job, you can show them what is true for you.

Too old: "I am a very stable worker requiring very little training. I have been dependable all my life, and I am at the point in my career where I don't plan on changing jobs. I still have ten years of working until I plan on retiring, which is probably longer than the average young person stays in a position these days."

Too young: "I don't have any bad work habits to break, so I can be quickly trained to do things the way you want. I plan on working hard to get established. I'll also work for less money than a more experienced worker."

Prison (or arrest) record: "You need to know that I have spent time in jail. I learned my lesson and paid my debt to society for a mistake I have not repeated. While there, I studied hard and earned a certificate in this trade. I was in the top one-third of my class."

Physical limitations: "Thank you for the job offer. Before I accept, you should know that I have a minor physical limitation, but it will not affect my performance on the job."

Unemployed: "I've been between jobs now for three months. During that time, I've carefully researched what I want to do and now I'm certain. Let me explain..."

Overweight: "You may have noticed that I am a tad overweight. Some people think that overweight people are slow, won't work hard, or will be absent frequently. But let me tell you about myself..."

Gender: "Not many women (or men) are interested in these kinds of position, so let me tell you why I am..."

Race: The best approach here is to assume there is no problem with your race. There often is not and if there is, there should not be. Present your skills, rest your case, send a thank you note, and go on to set up the next interview. This advice is the same for all job-seekers!

Physical disability: Don't be defensive or clinical. If your disability is obvious, you bring it up in a matter of fact way. People will want to know your disability will not be a problem, so explain why it won't be. Then emphasize why you can do the job better than the average job-seeker. If your disability is not obvious, and will not interfere with your ability to perform the job, then don't mention it.

How to Use the STAR Technique to Ace Your Job Interview



Use the STAR technique to provide complete responses to interview questions.

The STAR acronym represents Situation, Task, Action and Result, an interview technique that can help you ace a job interview because it ensures that you provide solid answers to a recruiter's interview questions. Recruiters and hiring managers favor the STAR technique because it provides a better explanation of your past performance, how you handle workplace challenges and whether you're able to articulate your experiences. Global recruiting firm Michael Page International indicates that candidates who use the STAR technique are more successful job seekers than candidates who don't use it. The company states: "We have recorded improvements in excess of 50 percent in the success rate of candidates using this technique at interview, over those who don't."

Instructions

◦ 1

Restate the interviewer's question to demonstrate you understand the question. However, you needn't repeat it verbatim as if you're in a spelling bee. Take a brief pause and then rephrase the question. This gives you a moment to think about how to begin your response.

◦ 2

Describe a situation or work-related challenge where you were responsible for the outcome. If you're interviewing for a supervisory position, use an example that involves employee performance or workplace conflict. Provide as much detail as possible without giving away personal information about co-workers or confidential information about your employer. Tell the interviewer that you're not using co-workers' actual names -- that shows you respect confidentiality.

◦

◦ 3

Explain the tasks required to address the situation. Tasks are responsibilities listed in your job description or they could be achievements for which you are

ultimately responsible that aren't listed on your job description. For example, tell the interviewer, "When we implemented a new **software** application, I noticed that employee performance dropped. I needed to help employees improve their performance so our department could keep up with business demand." In this instance, tell the interviewer that your task was to boost employee proficiency with the new software.

○ 4

Define the actions you took to resolve the situation, including why you chose one type of action over another. If you decided to go with one-on-one software training for employees instead of classroom or online training, explain why. Give details about your actions, such as how you measured **computer** knowledge before training, specific training needs for individual employees and how you determined whether the training was effective.

○ 5

Summarize the outcome -- the results from your actions. Give details, such as how soon you saw improvement in employees' computer skills and how you rated their computer skills. Also, describe what you learned from the experience and if you used the same method to handle other workplace issues. If you used a different plan of action for a similar situation, explain why and whether that plan of action had the same results.

○ 6

Use numbers to describe your results. Instead of saying, "I saw noticeable improvement in employee performance," say, "After all of the employees in my department completed training, our **customer service** ratings were in the top 5 percent of the company." An interview answer that contains concrete data -- such as numeric measurements -- is an effective way to show you understand what it takes to make a difference for your employer

“ILLEGAL QUESTIONS”

Some people argue that some of the questions on topics in the previous section are illegal to ask. Some of the questions, if they were asked as presented, would be in poor taste, but this is a free country and anyone can ask anything. It is what an interviewer does with the information that can be a problem. Hiring or not hiring people based on certain criteria is illegal.

As a job seeker, what is important is whether or not you want the job. You don't have to answer any question if you don't want to, but you should understand by now that the question was probably intended to find out if you will be a good employee. If you want the job, try to cooperate by answering the underlying question. If you don't like the interviewer or the way he or she asked the question, you can always say so. Just don't get defensive or

Fortunately, most employers are just like you. They will be sensitive to your feelings and will treat you as an adult. It is your responsibility to convince them you will be a good employee. Don't leave their impressions to chance. Tell them why they should hire YOU!

“Do You Have Any Questions?”

This is one of the last questions you will likely be asked. It is a signal that the interview is coming to a close, and is a test of whether you are seriously interested in the position.

You will do well by having one or two questions ready in mind. These questions should not be aggressive- don't ask about salary and benefits (deal with these issues only after you are offered the job), but ask questions which show concern for the position and the company.

The following list may serve as guide, but you may have your own questions related to the position:

“What do you consider the most important responsibility of this position?”

“Is there a training program?”

“Who would be my immediate supervisor?”

“How would my performance be evaluated?”

“What hours will I work if I am hired?”

“Will there be a chance to work overtime in this position?”

“May I see the area where I would be working?”

“Who is your company's biggest competitor?”

“If I am hired and perform well, what are the chances of promotion?”

“Is this a newly created position?”

Always ask at least one question.

More Questions

Here is a list of 50 interview questions. It came from a survey of 92 companies who conduct student interviews. Look for questions you would have trouble answering. You need answers to these:

Common Interview Questions

1. What school activities were you involved in? Why? Which did you enjoy the most?
2. How do you spend your spare time? What are your hobbies?
3. Why do you think you might like to work for our company?
4. What jobs have you held? How were they obtained and why did you leave?
5. What courses did you like best? Least? Why?
6. Why did you choose your particular field of work?
7. What percentage of your school expense did you earn? How?
8. What do you know about our company?
9. Do you feel that you have received good general training?
10. What qualifications do you have that make you feel that you will be successful in your field?
11. What are your ideas on salary?
12. If you were starting school all over again, what courses would you take?
13. Can you forget your education and start from scratch?
14. How much money do you hope to earn at age 25? 30? 40?
15. Why did you decide to go to the school you attended?
16. What was your rank in your graduation class in high school? Other schools?
17. Do you think that extracurricular activities were worth the time devoted to them? Why?
18. What personal characteristics are necessary for success in you chosen field?
19. Why do you think you would like this particular type of job?
20. Are you looking for a permanent or temporary job?
21. Are you primarily interested in making money or do you feel that service to your fellow human beings is a satisfactory accomplishment?
22. Do you prefer working with others or by yourself?
23. Can you take instructions without feeling upset?
24. Tell me a story!
25. What have you learned from some of the jobs you have held?
26. Can you get recommendations from previous employers?
27. What interests you about our product or service?
28. What was your record in the military service?
29. What do you know about opportunities in the field in which you are trained?
30. How long do you expect to work?
31. Have you ever had any difficulty getting along with fellow students and faculty? Fellow workers?
32. Which of your school years was most difficult?
33. Do you like routine work?
34. Do you like regular work?
35. What is your major weakness?

36. Define cooperation.

All these responses could be expanded, but they should give you an idea of approaches you can take.

Other “Problem” Questions

Most people feel that employers will hold one particular thing against them. It may be something obvious like age (being “too old” or “too young”), or something not obvious, like not having a degree. Most employers do hold one or another unfair bias.

However, employers are also people. They generally try to be fair, and as employers, they are very interested in getting a good worker.

Your job is to make it easy for an interviewer to find out you can do the job. The problem is that many interviewers may assume you have a problem. They may not ask you directly if their assumption is true for you, and you won’t have a chance to tell them that, in your case, the “rule” is not true.

For example, if you are more than a little overweight, some employers may feel you will be sick a lot, or be slow to work. The interviewer will probably not bring it up. However, he or she may not hire you either, unless somehow, you convince him that you are healthy, reliable, and quick.

You can bring up your weight or not. It is up to you. However, it would be wise, if you do not bring it up directly, to emphasize that you do not fit any stereotype.

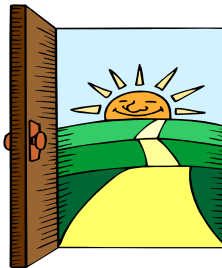
Plus One More

What is the one question you are most afraid an employer will ask? Write it here.

The question: _____

The answer you might give: _____

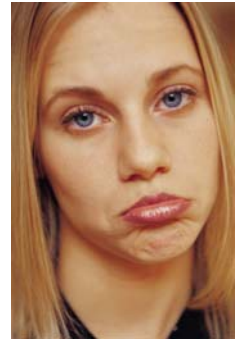
There you have it. You are now better prepared for a job interview than most other job seekers are. If you do well, you will be considered for jobs over people with better credentials. The more interviews you have, the better chance more job offers.





YOUR “BODY LANGUAGE” CAN WORK FOR YOU

Did you ever wonder, when you are growing up, how your mother or father almost always knew you were not telling the truth? Most likely, it was your “body language” that gave you away – your tone of voice, the expression on your face, what you did with your hands, eyes, or body posture.



You can use your body language to create a favorable impression in the interview. The interviewer assumes that the way you handle yourself in the interview will be how you handle the job. Therefore, your goal is to convince the interviewer that you are interested, alert, enthused about the job, and eager to work. Here’s how you do it:

- ❖ *Sit up straight and lean slightly forward in your seat.* Like the TV watcher caught up in an interesting program, this shows the interviewer that you are interested and alert.
- ❖ *Smile.* An occasional smile indicates you are cheerful, friendly and can be cooperative.
- ❖ *Make frequent eye contact.* Every time you look directly at someone, it is like telling them “I’m right here with you. I understand what you are saying. I am confident.”
- ❖ *Pay attention to your voice level.* Keep your voice loud enough so that you can be easily heard. A strong voice indicates confidence. On the other hand, you don’t want to speak so loudly the interviewer feels attacked by sound. Use a tape recorder if you are not sure how you sound when practicing.
- ❖ *Face the interviewer squarely.* Whenever you turn your body away, the interviewer may see this as saying “I’m turned off... I’m not paying attention.”
- ❖ *Nod your head occasionally during the interview.* This indicates “I understand/ agree”
- ❖ *Get rid of nervous habits.* Smoking, gum chewing, looking at the clock, tapping your fingers, shuffling your feet, constantly looking around the room – these are signs that you’re not paying attention, not interested in the job or the interviewer.

NOTE:

When you practice your interview questions and answers, ask whoever is playing the part of the interviewer or at third person to pay attention to those body cues and tell you which one you need to improve.

BODY LANGUAGE CUES I NEED TO IMPROVE



WHAT SHALL I WEAR TO THE INTERVIEW?

You are competing with other people for available jobs, so it is important to do as many things right as you can, such as...

CLOTHES:

- Clean and pressed
- Free of spots, stains, and odors
- Conservative in color and with small patterns
- Appropriate to the job for which you are applying (keep in mind your surroundings.)

For an Office Job

Men: wear a suit, or slacks and sport coat, a dress shirt, and a conservative tie.

Women: wear a suit or skirt and dress with a jacket, or a business –like dress.

For a job outside, in a plant, or service department:

- Slacks and shirt with collar, (pants fitting on the waist and not hanging low)
- No hats indoors

SHOES:

- Clean and polished
- Conservative in style
- No knots in laces

JEWELRY:

- Limited in quantity (only one or two rings per hand)
- Conservative (avoid large flashy items, dangle earrings)
- Quiet (clinking bracelets are a distraction)
- Appropriate (evening jewelry is not proper)
- Men should not wear earrings
- Remove any facial piercings and tongue rings

MAKEUP:

- Limited in quantity (try for a natural look)
- Clear or pale nail polish, nails a conservative length

YOU:

- Freshly bathed and showered
- Teeth brushed
- Clean hands with clean and trimmed fingernails
- Clean hair, not hanging in your face or over your eyes
- Tattoos covered

Note: *Your goal is to look like someone who can do the job and who fits the image of the business. Anything too unusual may give the impression that you “wouldn’t fit in.”* You may not like or agree with these suggestions. They may not fit your “style.” However, these are the things interviewers will be looking for and judge.

Ten Key Considerations for Effective Interviewing

According to Richard Lathrop, these are the ten most important factors that employers consider when evaluating an interviewee.

1. Appropriate clothing
2. Good grooming
3. A firm handshake
4. The appearance of controlled energy
5. Pertinent humor and a readiness to smile
6. A genuine interest in the employer's operations and alert attention when the interviewer speaks
7. Pride in past performance
8. An understanding of the employer's needs and a desire to serve them
9. The display of sound ideas
10. Ability to take control when employers fall down on the interviewing job

Follow-Up

After the interview, it is important for you to follow-up with your contacts. Perseverance pays off.

- Review what happened in your interview. What could you have done to make it better? What else could you have emphasized?
- Send a typed thank you letter to the employer or an email.
- Call the following week to see how the selection process is coming along. If you can go in person, do so.
- If you are not offered the job, leave the door opened for future contact. Another job may open up. Ask for other suggestions and alternatives.
- Keep in contact with the employer.

Interview Checklist

Preparation

- Know your skills and abilities – what you have to offer.
- Know your career goal(s).
- Research the company and/or business through annual reports, brochures, newsletters, etc.
- Write a resume if you have not already.
- Know about your field of interest – openings, salary ranges, and possible jobs. (Refer to Occupational Outlook handbook).

Filling Out the Application

- Bring your master application form and resume
- Know your social security number.
- Take a pen with you.
- Read instructions carefully.
- Use your correct name, not a nickname.

- Answer every question that applies to you or use N/A if not applicable.
- Have available the correct names and address of three people that you can use as personal references. These might include teachers, counselor, past supervisors, professional contacts.
- Employers expect you to state the kind of work that you are interested in; therefore, state clearly your particular interest. Do not write the word “anything” in answer to this question.
- If there is blank for “Salary desired” give a salary range – \$10,000 - \$13,000.
- Check the application fully upon completion for possible errors.

For the Big Day

- Dress appropriately.
- Arrange for transportation necessary to get you to the interview on time.
- Arrive ten minutes early for the interview.
- Know the interviewer’s name.
- Do not take friends, parents or children with you to the interview.
- Be prepared to state your qualifications briefly and intelligently.

The Interview Itself

- Introduce yourself, shake hands, and state the purpose of your visit.
- Gum chewing or smoking shows your nervousness.
- Be a good listener; do not dominate the interview.
- Answer all questions briefly and intelligently.
- Ask questions about the job to show your interest – discuss career advancement.
- Be sincere and honest.
- Salary questions are tricky! Know your range. Keep fringe benefits in mind.
- Leave family or personal problems at home.
- Refrain from being critical of employers or co-workers.
- Once the interview is over thank the person for his/her time and consideration.
- Arrange to call the employer at a convenient time for the interview results

Afterwards (PHEW!)

- Make each interview a learning experience.
- How could you improve your next interview?
- What points could you stress more strongly?
- Practice makes perfect.
- Send a thank you letter.



Will managers expect me to ask questions?

Absolutely! Managers want to hear intelligent, well-thought-out questions. The questions you ask will show the managers that you are looking out for your own happiness and job security. This implies that you plan to stay with the job for the long run.

Below, you will find a list of questions that you might ask the managers during your interviews. Add whatever questions you think are important. Another thing - people who are “super prepared” for interviews often write their questions on a sheet of paper. When asked if they have any questions, these people pull out their sheet of questions; these people pull out their sheet of questions and ask them, one by one, to the manager.

Are there any questions I should not ask?

Never, never, never, ask any questions about salary, vacations, paid holidays or sick days. You are looking for a job, not a vacation. Wait for the managers to bring up the issue of wages. When they ask what salary you expect, then ask what the standard salary for your qualifications is. Force the interviewer 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 to increase.

QUESTIONS TO ASK

1. If hired, would I be filling a newly created position, or replacing someone?
2. Was my predecessor promoted?
3. Would you describe a typical workday and the things I would be doing?
4. Which duties are most important for this job? Least important?
5. How would I be trained or introduced to the job?
6. How long should it take me to get my feet on the ground and become productive?
7. How is the job important to the company?
8. What are the department goals this year?
9. How many people work in your department? In the company?
10. Who are the people I'd be working with and what do they do?
11. Can someone in this job be promoted? If so, to what position?
12. How would I get feedback on my job performance, if hired?
13. If hired, would I report directly to you or someone else?
14. Has the company had a layoff in the last three years? If so, how long was the layoff and was everyone recalled?
15. Does another company own this company?
16. In what major markets does this company (or parent company) compete?
17. Could you give me a brief tour? I would enjoy seeing where your people work.
18. What could I say or do to convince you to offer me this job?

THE WORST JOB INTERVIEW MISTAKES

1. Arriving late for the interview
2. Arriving much too early for the interview
3. Dressing inappropriately
4. Dressing in a rush
5. Smoking right before the interview
6. Drinking during the interview
7. Chewing gum during the interview
8. Not doing research on the company
9. Bringing a friend or relative with you
10. Forgetting address rehearsal
11. Not knowing your own strengths and weaknesses
12. Admitting a bad point about yourself
13. Asking too many questions
14. Inquiring about benefits.
15. Not asking enough questions
16. Revealing your price tag
17. Crying racism or discrimination
18. Bad-mouthing former boss or company
19. Name dropping, talking about others
20. Acting tired and worn out
21. Handshake failure – not giving a confident handshake
22. Constantly checking the time
23. Acting overconfident
24. Losing your cool

The following was taken from a survey of the interviewers of the Georgia Department of Labor's Dalton Field Service office. Most of the employees surveyed interviewed at least 75% of the time during our 40-hour workweek. Combined we have over 230 years of service.

THINGS THAT IMPRESS THE INTERVIEWER:

1. A good resume presented on resume paper
2. Good eye contact
3. Fully understanding the importance of applications and following the instructions
4. Asking well thought of questions
5. Proper hygiene, and being well groomed
6. Good closing statement... "Thank you for your time."
7. Being appropriately dressed for an interview
8. Having a positive attitude, minding manners, being nice
9. If they have to wait, not being outdone; patience
10. Friendliness
11. Paying attention

12. Listening to all the interviewer has to say and/or asks
13. Sticking to the main focus of the conversation; keeping in mind job-related statements unless the interviewer shifts the conversation to another subject
14. Bringing proper identification – social security card, birth certificate, drivers license, voter's registration, "green card" etc.
15. Willingness to learn
16. Having an interest in what the company does
17. Having a pleasant attitude
18. Honesty and sincerity
19. Good work history; attendance
20. Good oral and written communication skills
21. Open for suggestions
22. Possessing basic reading /writing skills
23. Organizational skills
24. Smiling
25. Having specific goals
26. Preparation made for types of jobs sought; i.e. education, training
27. Some familiarity of local labor market
28. High school diploma or G.E.D.'s
29. Sense of humor
30. Determination and perseverance
31. Following directions
32. Knowing dates of employment
33. Knowing employer's addresses, phone numbers, and who to contact of references are needed
34. Good references from former employers
35. Leaving children at home
36. Flexibility
37. Written thank you notes
38. Employer loyalty
39. Punctuality
40. People that know their talents and can be properly verbalize them.
41. Networking
42. Simple jewelry

THINGS THAT TURN THE INTERVIEWER OFF:

1. Bad-mouthing last employer
2. No personality
3. Not shaving
4. Heavy cologne
5. Flashy jewelry
6. Shirts unbuttoned to the navel (No more than two button should be unbuttoned).
7. Tank tops and/ or shorts
8. Body odor; being dirty; filthy fingernails

9. Talking too much, being a nervous motor mouth, interrupting the interviewer
10. Being pushy or over-aggressive
11. Coming in every day to “check on an application”
12. Handwriting not legible
13. Child care problems
14. Not being available for open shifts
15. Not being able to start work immediately
16. Not reading application thoroughly before starting to write
17. Talking too loudly
18. Facial piercings that hurt to look at
19. Impatience
20. Eating or drinking in interview.
21. Flirting with interviewer
22. Hand-written resumes
23. Abbreviations
24. Job hopper
25. “See resume.” If I wanted to see your resume, I would not have asked you fill out an application!
26. Applicant obviously doubting interviewer’s word “You mean to tell me you have no positions open?”
27. Unrealistic salary expectations
28. Greasy hair
29. Men with long hair.
30. Looking at everything but the interviewer.



Handling Objections:

Be prepared to overcome objections employers may but often the employer will not state openly. You should address them even if the employer does not ask specific questions.

OBJECTION: Employees with young children are unreliable.

RESPONSE: You may be concerned that I have small children. I have a primary childcare provider and three backups.

OBJECTION: Employees without a car are unreliable.

RESPONSE: You may be concerned that I do not have a car. I have found a bus schedule that will get me to work 15 minutes before starting time. I also have arranged for two backups.

OBJECTION: Young people are irresponsible.

RESPONSE: I am the oldest of five children and have taken care of my younger brothers and sisters for the past 10 years; I help with the youth group at my church; I have helped care for my grandmother since she became ill.

OBJECTION: People on welfare are lazy and don't want to work.

RESPONSE: Give examples of things you have been doing.

Examples: church or children's activities, caring for family members, self-employment. Do not give an impression of inactivity.

OBJECTION: Older employees are more likely to have a health problems, less agile, more difficult to supervise.

RESPONSE: Provide examples of your activities that show you as an active person, mention a favorable doctor's report, give examples of when you have worked with and taken orders from younger people.

OBJECTION: No High School Diploma or GED

RESPONSE: I am enrolled in GED classes right now, or am planning to enroll soon.

- Dress and appearance are critical in selling participants who have limited job marketability. They can help overcome any negative stereotypes employers might have. Participants should be very conservatively dressed for the job interview. This would mean a shirt and tie for men and a skirt and blouse or dress for women. Clothing jewelry, hairstyles, makeup, nails should be neutral and blend into the background.
- Applicants often bring "baggage" that makes them hard to employ. If you have any of these, know how to address these issues on the application and in the interview.

Examples:

Drug/ Alcohol Abuse: On my last job, I had some problems with alcohol. Since that time, I have been going to AA and have been sober six months.

Felony Conviction: I made a terrible mistake but I have made changes in m life now. While I was in prison, I got my GED. I have also enrolled in the community college.

No Work History: Although I have not worked in a paid job, I have volunteered at my children's school. I am active in my churchwomen's group. I also enrolled in a job preparation class and learned what it takes to be a good employee.

Past Firings: I made some mistakes with my last supervisor. Since that time, I have learned better communication skills.

Mental Health problems: I have had some mental health problems, but I got help for them. I will be at work every day on time and do a good job for you.

The Call-back Closing

Seldom will you be offered the position immediately at interview. An employer will usually need time to consider you, check your references, and to finish interviewing other applicants.

Usually, an interview will conclude with the employer saying, “I’ll be contacting you soon to let you know my decision.” This should be your cue to set the scene so that you can contact the employer again. You might say, “I have several interviews scheduled, but I am very interested in this position. Rather than missing your call, may I call you?” The employer will appreciate this expression of your interest. In addition, your call back closing suggests that you should be hired soon – before another employer offers you a job. Ask for the date and time to call back. Write this data down after you leave.

This kind of call-back closing is simple, yet powerful. In the last minute of the interview, you will be showing your interest and value. Then, when you call back as scheduled, you will show once more that you are reliable and punctual.

“Sorry we can’t use you just now.”

When you call back, you may learn that another applicant got the job. Do not be discouraged – the time and effort you put into any interview will not be wasted.

Your interview skills will improve each time you put them to the test. You will become aware of your weaknesses in your presentation and improve them as you gain more practice.

If possible, use this moment to restate your interest, ask about other available positions, or get some job leads to other companies. It is possible that the applicant selected will not work out, or that another position will open up soon, so continue to act like a professional. Thank the employer for their consideration.

Remember, the average job seeker has twelve interviews before receiving a job offer.

The Job Offer

The more interviews you have, the more likely it is that you will be offered a job. Most job seekers accept the first offer immediately; however, there are some things that you should consider. Look at the working conditions, benefits, shifts and duties. Now is the time to ask about salary and benefits if these have not been discussed.

If you are still not sure you want the position, it is acceptable to ask for a reasonable amount of time to think over the decision (twenty-four hours). Even if you decide not to take the position, be sure to call the employer back and decline. Never accept and fail to show up for work.

Be sure to allow time to work out a notice at your present job. In the future, you may need a reference from your former employer.