



# Job Interviews

## BEFORE THE INTERVIEW

- Research the company, both on the internet and, if possible, in person or by talking with others.
- Confirm your appointment.
- Know how to get there and how long it takes to get there.
- Arrive 15 minutes early.
- Be polite and friendly to everyone from the time you arrive until you leave.
- Be prepared to tell the employer why he / she should hire you.
- Dress for success: exude professionalism, confidence and a great first impression. The degree of formality should be just above the level of what would be worn to do the job you are applying for.
- Pay attention to detail: press your clothes, shine your shoes. Be sure you are well-groomed.
- Prepare 6-10 "talking points" on the biggest reasons the employer should hire you.
- Prepare questions that you want to ask the employer.
- Get a good "padfolio" and pen to take with you; stock the padfolio with a clean notepad, 2 copies of your resume and references, and the page containing your talking points and questions in bullet-point form.

## THE ACTUAL INTERVIEW

- Concentrate on making a good first impression: offer a warm smile and a firm handshake.
- Present an attitude of being powerful and pleasant, not casual and overly friendly.
- Sell yourself by selling the skills you will bring to the job and why you will be a great worker.
- Demonstrate your availability, friendliness, and dependability.
- If you don't understand a question, don't start answering it; ask for clarification.
- Don't be afraid to pause and organize your thoughts before answering questions.
- Be honest.
- Don't initiate discussion of wages and benefits until the job is offered to you.
- Use examples to support the information you provide to the employer during the interview. For details, see the S.T.A.R. section on the other side of this page.
- As your talking points are covered in your answers to questions, mark them off. When the employer asks, "Is there anything else you'd like us to know?", check your talking points list and mention anything that hasn't been marked off.
- When the employer asks "Do you have any questions for us?", refer to your list.

## AFTER THE INTERVIEW

- Write a thank you note and mail or e-mail it that day.
- Continue networking.

## THINGS TO REMEMBER

- Relax. You're having a conversation about a job, not being subjected to interrogation. And if you come across as uncomfortable, it can make the interviewer uncomfortable.
- If you are a mature person, emphasize your knowledge and experience.
- If you are a young person, emphasize your enthusiasm and willingness to learn.
- First impressions are important: employers hire people they like! If they like you, they will examine your skills. When they don't like you, your skills won't get you the job.
- If interviewing with a public sector employer (city, country, or state) expect a panel interview. Private employers may do this as well.

**For possible job interview questions,  
please see the other side of this page.**

### Career Services

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## THE “S.T.A.R.” TECHNIQUE FOR ANSWERING SOME INTERVIEW QUESTIONS:

This is good to keep in mind for questions asking how you handled a specific situation; these are phrased along the lines of, “**Tell us about a time** you had to prioritize multiple projects” or “**Give an example of a time** you had to deal with a difficult deadline to meet.”

- **Situation:** What was the situation? What was happening?
- **Task:** What was it you needed to do?
- **Action:** What did you do? How did you do it?
- **Result:** How did it turn out?

### EXAMPLE:

Question: *Tell us about a project you completed as part of a team.*

Answer: *“My class had a group assignment to create a presentation on business software. We had to have a PowerPoint presentation done in a week, with each of the team members outlining a specific software and how to use it. We identified the softwares to present and divided them up based on who was familiar with which programs. Each of us did the research and wrote the text for our slides, and a team member most familiar with PowerPoint created the presentation. We all took a copy of it and reviewed each other person’s part, suggesting changes, then gathered as a group and made those changes. It turned out very well and our group received an ‘A’ grade.”*

## QUESTIONS THAT COULD BE ASKED DURING THE INTERVIEW:

Remember, you want to present your answers in a way that convinces the employer that you are a talented, responsible individual they can trust to not only do the job, but be an asset to their organization.

- Tell me about yourself.
- What interests you most about working for this company?
- What interests you most about this job?
- What is your greatest strength? What is your greatest weakness?
- What were your major contributions to your last job?
- What did you like most about your last job? What did you like least?
- Why have you changed jobs so frequently?
- What would other people say about your work?
- May we contact your last employer?
- What are your short- and long-term goals?
- How has your attendance been in your jobs?
- Tell me about a time you had to deal with conflict.
- Tell me about a time you went above and beyond in getting a job done.
- Tell me about a time you made a mistake and had to tell your boss about it.
- What do you think makes a good employee?
- How long will it take you to make a contribution to our company?
- Can you delegate responsibility?
- Why should we hire you?
- What kind of salary do you need?

