

Getting Ready for the Real World: INTERVIEWING

Get to Know You – Making a Good Impression

Ask the Student	Ask the Mentor
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you do to make yourself feel confident? • What will be the hardest part of interviewing for a job? (examples: feeling shy, not knowing how long answers should be, deciding what to wear) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you do to make yourself feel confident? • What do you do to make a good impression? • Have you ever messed up an interview? Has anyone messed up an interview with you? What happened?

Making a Good Impression

When you receive a job interview, it means the employer thinks you are one of the best candidates for the position.

Based on your resume it looks like you can do the job. Now you've got to prove that you are the best candidate! Interviews also require preparation, and the more prepared you are, the better you'll do.



First Impressions: Handshake & Body Language

- Smile, be confident, and use a firm handshake
 - Shake for an appropriate amount of time (2 times and quit)
- Sit up straight
- Make eye contact and pay attention



Interview Questions

- Be confident, be honest, and be yourself!
- Don't try to impress the interviewer with words you don't usually use—if used incorrectly, you could hurt your chances.
- Be yourself. You could work for that company for a long time and you want to find an environment that is good for you.
- Pay attention and ask questions.
- The interviewer will ask if you have any questions at the end of the interview. See page 4 for tips.
- Be detailed in your response to interview questions.

Interview Questions: Using a STAR to Sell My Skills

Sometimes it can be hard to figure out how much to say about yourself. Using a **STAR** makes it easy.

Think about a **Skill** or a characteristic that you want the employer to know.

For example, a Certified Nursing Assistant might say *I am a very caring person.*

Try to remember a **Task** that you did that shows you have this skill or characteristic.

When I worked at a nursing home, I was responsible for checking on my patients several times a day.

Figure out an **Action** that you took.

There was a woman named Mrs. Smith who never talked to anyone and seemed very sad. I would always stop by her room to ask how she was feeling and if she'd had a good day.

The final part is the **Result** – how everything turned out.

Mrs. Smith started smiling and seemed happy to see me. She showed me pictures of her grandchildren. Her family thanked me being there for her.

When you use a **STAR**, the employer will remember you. It sets you apart from the other people who are interviewing for the same position.

NOW YOU TRY

Skill (something I want the employer to know): _____

Task (something I was assigned in a previous job): _____

Action (something I did that shows I have this skill): _____

Result (how it turned out): _____

Reference: CareerCollaborative.org

Common Interview Questions

1. Tell me about yourself.

This question seems simple, but you must practice. Don't give your complete work (or personal) history. Instead give a pitch—one that's short and that shows exactly why you're the right fit for the job.

2. How did you hear about the position?

Show your passion for and connection to the company. If you discovered the company through an event or article, share that. If you found the listing through a job board, share what, specifically, caught your eye about the role.

3. What do you know about the company?

Any candidate can read a company's "About" page. When interviewers ask this, they want to know if you care about their mission. Start with one line that shows you understand the company's goals, but then make it personal. Say, "I'm drawn to this mission because..." or "I believe in this approach because..." and share an example or two.

4. Why do you want this job?

Companies want to hire people who are excited about the job, so plan a great answer about why you want the position. Share a few points that make the role a great fit for you, then share why you love the company.

5. Why should we hire you?

Create an answer that covers three things: you can deliver great results; you'll fit in with the team and culture; and you'd be a better hire than any of the other candidates.

6. What are your greatest strengths?

Be accurate (share true strengths, not those you think the interviewer wants to hear), relevant (strengths that are targeted to this particular position), and specific (for example, instead of "people skills," say "persuasive communication" or "relationship building"). Then share an example of how you've demonstrated these traits.

7. What are your weaknesses?

Besides finding major red flags, the interviewer is checking your self-awareness and honesty. So, "I can't meet a deadline to save my life" is not an option—but neither is "Nothing! I'm perfect!" Thinking of something that you struggle with but that you're working to improve. Include examples of how you overcome your weaknesses.

8. Tell me about a challenge or conflict you've faced, and how you dealt with it.

Your interviewer wants to know how you will respond to conflict. Anyone can seem nice and pleasant in a job interview, but what will happen if you don't get along with someone or if other problems arise?

9. Where do you see yourself in five years? – or – What's your dream job?

Be honest and specific about your goals, but consider this: A hiring manager wants to know a) if you've set realistic expectations for your career, b) if you have ambition, and c) if the position fits with your goals and growth.

10. What are you looking for in a job?

Hint: Ideally, the same things that this position has to offer. Be specific.

11. How do you deal with pressure or stress?

Choose an answer that shows that you can meet a stressful situation in a productive, positive manner. Share what you do to reduce stress. Then share an example of a stressful situation you worked through.

12. What do you like to do outside of work?

Interviewers ask personal questions to see if candidates will fit in with the culture and to give them a chance to share their personality. Share some personal interests or details that are work appropriate (for example: "I love blogs about fashion" or "I love to draw" and not "I've been dealing with my sister's drama").

Write your answers and practice saying them to friends and family. The more you practice, the better you will get!

Adapted from: themuse.com/advice/

Questions to Ask During Job Interviews

Interview the company just as you are being interviewed to determine if it is the best fit for you. Do not ask questions if the answer is obvious or if they are answered on the website. Pick questions that are appropriate for the job you want. Remember: the questions you ask tell the employer a lot about *you!*

I want the employer to think I am:	Good questions to ask:
Eager to do a great job	What are the most important skills for this position? Who can I ask for feedback?
A team player	Will I work on my own or with others? What do people like about working here?
Ambitious	What kind of training do you provide? Are employees given opportunities to grow?

Always ask! Thank you for talking with me. May I have your card?

Looking Sharp

The day before your interview

- Check your outfit. Is it clean? Are all the buttons firmly attached? Tags removed?
- If you have new clothes, new shoes, or a new bag, try them on. Can you walk and sit comfortably?

Getting ready

- Be clean. Shower and brush your teeth.
- Use deodorant – lots!
- Leave very early. You will get sweaty if you rush.

Be prepared. Take a few small items.

- Breath mints or a breath freshener, not gum.
- Toothbrush and floss.
- Scotch tape (if you have a pet).
- If your hands sweat easily, take baby powder or a baggie with corn starch.
- If it's rainy: Take an umbrella or wear a raincoat. Put your papers in a plastic bag. Throw the bag out when you arrive.

Arrive like an professional.

- Before you walk in
 - Turn off your phone.
 - Check your teeth and hair.
 - Smile at yourself in the mirror. You are going to get the job!
- Greet the receptionist: "Hello. I'm [your name]. I'm here to see [Ms. / Mr. Interviewer's name]."

Job Search Checklist

Preparing for my job search: I should have:

- A new resume
- A strong cover letter
- A printed reference page
- A professional message on my answering machine and a professional e-mail address
- A working cellphone or land line on which I can be reached

When I schedule an interview I must get:

- The address and directions
- The name (spelled correctly) and phone number of the person with whom I will be meeting

Papers I will prepare the night before my interview to take with me

- A copy of the job posting
- A copy of the resume and cover letter I sent
- Address and directions
- Name and phone number of the person with whom I am meeting
- My reference list
- Questions for the employer

To prepare for the interview, I will:

- Think about the job (Why is the employer interested in hiring me? What can I do for the employer?)
- Get a good night's sleep
- Eat so I am not hungry during the interview
- Do a practice trip before the appointment
- If at all possible, I will never cancel an interview even if I am sick or it is raining or snowing

On the day of the interview, I will:

- Dress for success
- Arrive 15 minutes early
- Turn off my cell phone before I enter the building

During the interview I will:

- Be friendly and let my personality show!
- Listen to the questions. If I don't understand one, I will ask the person to rephrase it
- Take notes
- Not chew gum! Not eat candy or food!
- Not discuss personal information or personal issues
- Not answer questions I haven't been asked

The most important things I will say during the interview:

- I want this job
- I can do this job. Here's why...
- I want to work for this company!



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Action Plan

My goal is to _____.

These are the actions I will take between now and the next mentoring session:

Goal	Action	Date Completed
<i>Examples:</i> Find a summer job	Apply for two jobs every week Network (ask people I know about their employers)	Ongoing Ongoing