

Job interview

A job interview can be a very stressful experience. This is only natural. Your palms may sweat, your mouth may be dry, your mind may be running. How do you respond to that first question?

You will more than likely have a better chance of success if you are prepared. There are three steps of preparation required for a job interview. For each stage you need to prepare:



Step 1

Before the interview:

- Dress, Time etc ,
- Research the company
- What type of interview



Step 2

During the interview:

- Questions to expect
- Questions to ask
- Do's and Don'ts



Step 3

After the interview

- Reflection
- Follow-up
- Dealing with rejection

Before the interview

Research!

Make sure your research the company before going to the interview. Learn something about the size of the company, what they do. How many people are in the company? Who owns the company. Where did it start etc.

How to dress?

It is important to dress correctly. This means dress conservatively – the way you think the company would want you to dress. Not too much make-up or jewelry. Beware of wearing things that could be considered inappropriate. For instance an ear ring on a guy may not be acceptable to some interviewers. Don't chew gum.

What to bring?

Bring a copy of the job advert or job description of the job for which you are applying. Bring a notebook or diary and a pen to take notes or to make a follow-up appointment. Bring a copy of your CV. Bring along a business card if you have.

When to arrive?

Aim to arrive at least 20 minutes before the interview. Do not be late! An employer will not be impressed if you arrive late. Always find out directions before you start your journey. Keep in mind the time of the interview – there may be traffic delays.

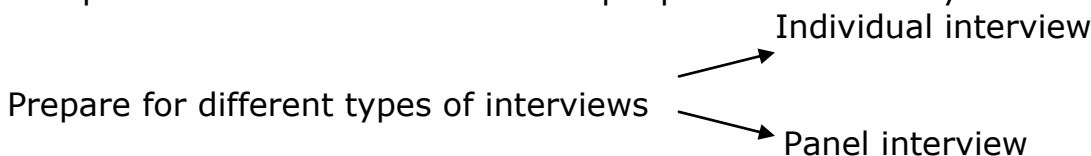
What to expect?

There are various interviews methods that are used. Some companies use structured interviews which follow a strict method and type of questioning. Others are completely unstructured and the questions will depend on the mood of the person asking the questions. Most interviews follow a semi-structured method where the interviewer will ask the same or similar questions to every person they interview, but will allow for changes.

Structured interview	Semi-structured interview	Unstructured interview
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In an individual interview – One person will interview you

In a panel interview - A number of people will interview you



During the interview

How to behave during the interview?

- ✓ Sit down only when the interviewer indicates you may sit.
- ✓ Present your CV to the interviewer if you have not already done so.
- ✓ Look at the interviewer and smile.
- ✓ Listen carefully.
- ✓ Nod in acknowledgement if the interviewer says something.
- ✓ Sit up straight.
- ✓ If you do not understand a question ask:
"Please can you repeat the question".

Possible questions you can expect

Introductory questions

Did you find us alright?
Would you like something to drink?

Knowledge of the position or organisation

Why do you want to work for us?
What position do you ultimately seek in this organisation?
What do you know about the organisation?
How would you describe your ideal job?
What jobs have you enjoyed most/ least?

Self-awareness

How would you describe yourself?
What is your philosophy on life?
What is your greatest strength?
What are your weaknesses?



Interests

What are your outside interests?
What do you do in your free time?
What are your hobbies?
How do think this job fits in with your interests?
What books do you read; music do you listen to; and sports do you play?

Values

What is your attitude towards working overtime?
What role does family play in your life?
What are some of the rewards you expect from a career?
How would you describe your ideal job?
Under what conditions do you work best?
Do you prefer working on your own or in a team?
Do you enjoy working for a superior or for yourself?

Education

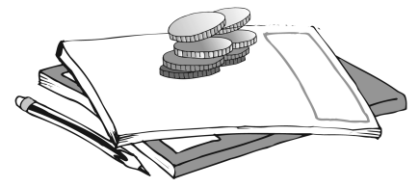
How did your studies prepare you for your career?
What were your best subjects, why?
What were your worst subjects, why?
Did you participate in other activities while studying?
Do you think your marks are a good reflection of your academic achievement?

Experience

What experience do you have?
What jobs have you held?
What have you learnt most from your previous job?
What jobs have you enjoyed most/ least?
Describe a difficult situation and how you dealt with that situation?
What is your reason for leaving your previous job?

Salary

What do you expect to earn 5 years from now?
What have you been earning up till now?
What would you like to earn? (Know your current expenses/costs)



Difficult situations

Tell me about a difficult decision which you had to make?
Tell me about a wrong decision that you made?
Has someone ever asked you to do something unreasonable? What was your response?

Interpersonal Skills

Tell me any difficulties you have experienced in getting along with team members or colleagues?
Do you find that you play a specific role in group or team situation?
How do you usually contribute to group decision-making?
Tell me about a disagreement you had with a team member or colleague and what the result was?
Tell me about a time you were working with group or in a team of difficult people? What was the outcome?

Administration Skills

Tell me about the last time that you had a disagreement with someone?
Tell me about a time you had to reprimand or punish someone who stepped out of line?
Tell me about a situation where you lost your cool with someone?

Management and Leadership

Tell me about a leadership role you have held?
Was there a time you inspired someone to do something they did not want to do?
When you are dealing with a subordinate how do you know how far you can push?
Tell me about an incident where you were most persuasive in getting others to see your point?
What do you believe is the best way of getting others to cooperate with you?

Career Motivation

What steps have you taken in making a career decision?
How did you/ would you go about deciding which University or College course you were going to follow?
Take me through the process of how you came to apply for this job?

After the interview

Debrief yourself

Ask yourself the following questions:
What did I do that was good?
What did I do that I should not have done?
What can I learn out of the situation?

Deal with rejection

Treat each experience in life as a learning point.
Speak to someone about your feelings.
Remember! "You may lose the battle but you can always win the war"



Send your CV out to someone else

Classroom Activity

Roll play: Choose an advert in the newspaper.
Split up into 2 groups.
Group 1 will be the interviewees (those being interviewed).
Group 2 will be the interviewers.
Each group is to prepare a list of 10 questions that they would like to ask the interviewee (Group 1).
Prepare the questions according to the information supplied by the advert.
Use the Interview Questions activity sheet as a guide.
Do this exercise again swapping groups.

Applicant	Check /10
Appearance	
Knowledge of the position/organization	
Eye contact?	
Ability to answer questions	
Substantiate the answer with examples	
Positive attitude	
Waffling / use of "um"/ "ah"/ hesitation	