



Interview tips

Before the Interview

1. Assess Yourself

Self-assessment involves becoming aware of and being able to articulate the following information about yourself:

- Interests
- Relevant experiences
- Strengths and weaknesses
- Skills
- Values
- Accomplishments
- Short- and long-term career goals and plans to achieve them
- Work style and work environment preferences
- Geographic considerations

Know your strengths and weaknesses before you walk in the door. Never expect an employer to tell you where you might fit in an organization—you should already know.

2. Read Employer Literature

You should have some knowledge of company policies, employment opportunities, products, and services. Look for a chance in the interview to communicate what you know about the organization and position.

3. Verify the Particulars

Find out the exact time and place of the interview. Arrive at least five minutes early. There is no excuse for being late, ever! Learn the interviewer's name and its proper pronunciation, as well as his or her title.

During the Interview

4. Sell Yourself

Don't just answer the question. Illustrate your personal qualities and strongest abilities with examples from your past. Try to address any underlying questions you think the employer might have about your suitability for the job.

5. Dwell on the Positive

Should the recruiter ask about past failures or shortcomings, try to explain circumstances rather than give excuses or blame others. You'll create a better impression by being honest and candid.

6. Non-verbal Communication

Watch what you're doing while you're talking. Nervous hands and feet can distract the interviewer's attention. By sitting up straight you will appear poised and confident throughout the interview. The way you dress will communicate a particular message, too. Think conservative.

7. Ask Questions – When Indicated

Ask meaningful questions at the appropriate time in the interview. Find out, for instance, what the job responsibilities are, how training is provided, what advancement opportunities are available, how much travel is involved, what other individuals or departments you would work with most, how job performance is measured, etc.

After the Interview

8. Follow-up

Provide whatever credentials, references, or transcripts are requested by the prospective employer as soon as possible. Be sure to write down the name, title, and address of the recruiter. You may want to consider a brief, typed letter of appreciation for the interview opportunity.

Interview skills

Know yourself. Know the Position. Know the Organization. You can answer ANY interview question if you know these three things.

Know Yourself. Inventory your skills, experience, strengths and weaknesses. Review the job description, your résumé, and cover letter. Remind yourself of your professional history and how it relates to the job you are seeking. This will help you if the interviewer throws you a curve-ball question about your past work history.

Know the Position. Understanding the position and the responsibilities and duties will help you prepare for possible questions from the employer.

Get to know the Company/Organization BEFORE the interview. Don't wait until the night before your interview to start preparing. Every organization has a different culture. Try to find out all you can before you walk in the door. Learn everything there is to know about the organization and the position. Try to talk to people who work there. Study the organization's website, annual report, staff list/structure, and most importantly, the job description. Follow the organization on social media and familiarize yourself with other aspects of the company, so you can mention in the interview that you know they just had their annual fundraiser and hope it went well!

Research questions to answer:

- What does the organization do?
- What clients does it serve?
- Who works there?
- Who might be interviewing you?
- What skills are needed for the position?

Practice for the "Tell me About Yourself" Question. This is your chance to tell the interviewer about your background and experience. Think of this presentation as a 60-second "sound bite"—a brief description of your career objectives and the strengths you can offer a potential employer. It is a verbal version of your well-thought out résumé. Time-tested approach to organize your information:

- **Step one is background.** Summarize your work history and education. Emphasize strengths and successes. Relate them in chronological order, and you will appear well organized. Refer frequently to your resume for specifics to support the information. If you decide to include personal information, link it to the job you are seeking. For example, a description of volunteer work in a service club could help define you as a team player.
- **Step two is your present and most recent position.** Mention a couple of responsibilities you are interested in taking on in the job under discussion. If you are not working, talk about the energy you are putting into your job search.
- **Step three is contributions you can make to this company.** Recount the high points of information already provided as supporting evidence of your abilities. Point out that your contributions can help lift the company's department to the next level. Don't get too detailed. Give them a few tips of the icebergs instead. Let them ask you to reveal more – they will ask you to talk most about which areas interest them most.

Interview skills (continued)...

Prepare Questions to ask the employer. It is important for you to ask questions – not just any questions, but those relating to the job, the company and the industry. What information do you need to decide whether to work at this company? Depending on who is interviewing you, your questions should vary. To be on the safe side, it is best to concentrate on the questions about the job's responsibilities and how you fit the position until you get the actual offer. When you begin to think of the interview as a two-way process, you will see it is important for you to find out as much as possible about the company. Questions will give you the opportunity to find out if this is a good place for you to work before you say "YES."

Sample Questions for You to Ask an Interviewer

1. What do you like best about working here? What are the best aspects of the job? The worst?
2. Can you tell me what a typical day is like for someone in this position?
3. How often, and by whom will I be supervised? What types of supervision are available? Is case consultation available?
4. What type of training is provided to new employees?
5. Are there opportunities for professional development within and beyond the agency itself?
6. What can I count on from the agency to assist me in my professional development?
7. With what other staff members will the person in this position work [for example, marketing department director]?
8. What are the opportunities for advancement?
9. What type of work/clients are you currently working on?
10. Is the staff on call, and how is that handled?
11. What are the agency's service delivery strengths and weaknesses?
12. How many social workers do you employ? What is the average length of time social workers have worked for this agency?
13. What is the typical career path of social workers within this field/agency?
14. To what extent will I have the opportunity to network with other agencies, or other professionals in the field?
15. How would you describe the organizational culture?
16. Exactly what type of person are you looking for to fill this position?
17. How soon do you plan to fill the position?

Be prepared for Behavioral Interview Questions. Most of the questions you will be asked, especially behavioral questions, can be answered using the PAR stories formula. Have a variety of PAR stories ready prior to the interview.

In a PAR story, you will describe:

- Problem that existed
- Actions you took to address the problem
- Results you achieved solving the problem

Behavioral interviews

BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEWING: ASSESSING PAST ACTION

Employers use behavioral interview questions to assess your past and future performance. An interviewer will ask you to provide an example of a time you demonstrated a particular skill required of the position. Likewise, an employer may ask how you handled or faced a specific situation or assignment. For example, an employer might ask an applicant to describe a time he or she had to work with a difficult client. Interviewers use behavioral interview questions to determine whether you will be a good fit for the position. Your past performance serves as a strong indicator of future performance. By asking you to elaborate upon your prior professional experiences, employers can assess whether you possess the requisite skills for the position.

SAMPLE QUESTIONS

- Describe a major problem you have faced and how you dealt with it.
- Give an example of when you had to work with your hands to accomplish a task or project.
- Give an example of a time when you had to make a quick decision. What were the results?

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS

Test for consistency and determine if you exhibited the desired behavior in that situation:

- Can you give me an example?
- What did you do?
- What did you say?
- What were you thinking?
- How did you feel?
- What was your role?

PREPARING FOR BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Behavioral interview questions provide an opportunity to connect your current skills and knowledge with the core competencies of the position. A core competency is a skill or personal attribute an individual must possess for successful performance. A position's job posting will list core competencies under required skills or qualifications. Sample core competencies include:

Leadership
Flexibility
Motivation
Commitment
Initiative

Teamwork
Responsibility
Decision making
Communication
Trustworthiness

Problem solving
Organization
Resilience
Attention to details
Precision

To prepare for behavioral interview questions, review the job posting in advance of the interview and identify the position's core competencies. For each core competency, identify a time you exhibited the required skill during a prior work experience, internship, clinical experience, or extracurricular activity, just to name a few examples. You should have at least two anecdotes for every core competency listed on the job posting. Completing this exercise in advance will enable you to present your best examples during the interview.

Behavioral interviews (continued)...

ANSWERING BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

When presented with a behavioral question during an interview, frame your responses using the STAR method, which consists of the following:

Situation or Task: Provide context for the interviewer. Provide a brief overview of your position. Explain the problem or issue you faced while completing a specific project. You should seek to humanize the situation for the employer by providing relevant details.

Action: Describe the steps you completed or skills you used to address the problem or issue. Use this opportunity to highlight strengths and skills you could bring to the position.

Result: Summarize the result or lessons learned while addressing the issue. Keep your answers specific, focused, and succinct. You should seek to engage the interviewer and demonstrate why you are the best candidate for the position using concrete examples.

"Tell me about a time you failed."

Situation	What initially happened?	My first semester in college I earned a grade that I was disappointed with in my History class.
Task	What task or goal did you set out to accomplish given the situation?	I am very committed to excellence and set a goal for myself to earn an A on the next exam. My understanding of the material was even more important than my grades, so I resolved to comprehend the information.
Action	What did you do to achieve the task?	I began to review my notes on a daily basis and used the timelines or charts to organize the information. I met with the professor to communicate my commitment to his class and identify if he had any additional suggestions. I created flashcards for myself and formed a study group the week before the exam. We each identified possible exam questions and then pooled them together to create a practice test.
Result	What ultimately happened as the result of your behavior? Provide specific details to demonstrate your success.	I earned an A on my next exam and in the class. More importantly, I learned how to teach myself, manage my time, and be persistent. The experience also cultivated a sense of empathy for students who are failing and about to give up. Since that time, I have been satisfied with my academic achievement and, have made the Dean's list every semester.

Questions Asked by employers in interviews

Personal

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. What are your hobbies?
3. Describe your ideal job.
4. What can you offer us?
5. What do you consider to be your greatest strengths?
6. Can you name some weaknesses?
7. Define success. Failure.
8. Have you ever had any failures? What did you learn from them?
9. Who are your role models? Why?
10. What motivates you most in a job?
11. Have you had difficulty getting along with a former professor/supervisor/co-worker and how did you handle it?
12. Have you ever spoken before a group of people? How large?
13. Why should we hire you rather than another candidate?
14. What do you know about our organization (product or services)?
15. Where do you want to be in five years? Ten years?
16. Do you plan to return to school for further education?
17. What are the most important rewards you expect in your career?
18. Why did you choose the career for which you are preparing?
19. How would you describe yourself?
20. What two or three accomplishments have given you the most satisfaction?
21. Why did you decide to seek a position with this company?
22. Define cooperation.
23. What major problem have you encountered, and how did you deal with it?
24. What have you done that shows initiative?
25. What qualifications do you have that will make you successful?
26. How do you handle rejection?
27. Have you done the best work you are capable of doing?

Education

28. Why did you choose your major?
29. Why did you choose to attend your college or university?
30. In which campus activities did you participate?
31. Which classes in your major did you like best? Least? Why?
32. Which elective classes did you like best? Least? Why?
33. If you were to start over, what would you change about your education?
34. Do your grades accurately reflect your ability? Why or why not?
35. Were you financially responsible for any portion of your college education?
36. Describe your most rewarding college experience.
37. How has your college experience prepared you for this career?

Experience

38. Did you work while going to school? In what positions?
39. What did you learn from these work experiences?
40. What did you enjoy most about your last employment? Least?
41. Have you ever quit a job? Why?
42. Give an example of a situation in which you provided a solution to an employer.
43. Give an example of a time in which you worked under deadline pressure.
44. Have you ever done any volunteer work? What kind?
45. How do you think a former professor/supervisor/coworker would describe your work?
46. What have you learned from the jobs you have held?
47. What is the most difficult situation you have faced?

Compatibility or "Fit"

48. What qualities should a successful manager possess?
49. Describe the relationship that should exist between a supervisor and those reporting to him or her.
50. What two or three qualities are most important to you in a job?
51. What criteria are you using to evaluate the company for which you hope to work?
52. Are you able to take instructions or criticism without feeling upset or hurt?
53. Would you be willing to take a drug test as a condition of employment?
54. Do you prefer working with others or alone?
55. What kind of people do you find it difficult to work with?
56. If you were hiring a graduate for this position, what qualities would you seek?

Career Goals

57. Do you prefer to work under supervision or on your own?
58. What kind of boss do you prefer?
59. Do you prefer large or small organizations? Why?
60. What other types of positions are you considering?
61. How do you feel about working in a structured environment?
62. Are you able to work on several assignments at once?
63. How do you feel about working overtime or flextime?
64. How do you feel about traveling or relocating?
65. What are your long range career objectives?
66. Would you be willing to consider geographical locations other than your preference area?
67. What do you hope to be earning 2-5 years from now?

DRESS **FOR** SUCCESS

WEAR IT PROFESSIONALLY

- SOLID BLACK, NAVY, OR DARK GRAY SUIT THAT FITS
- WHITE OR LIGHT COLOR DRESS SHIRT
- SOLID OR SIMPLE COLOR TIE
- BLACK OR BROWN SHOES
- BLACK CLASSIC SOCKS
- MATCH BELT TO SHOE
- NO FLASHY JEWELRY
- LIGHT COLOGNE



DRESS **FOR** SUCCESS

WEAR IT PROFESSIONALLY

- AVOID TRENDS
- CLEAN PRESSED SUIT
- SUIT OR DRESS THAT FITS
- CONSERVATIVE OR CLASSIC COLORED SUIT OR DRESS
- NO EXCESSIVE JEWELRY
- 1 3/4" HEELS OR LOWER
- POLISHED DARK SHOES
- LIGHT MAKEUP
- LIGHT NAIL POLISH
- HAIR NEAT AND TIDY
- LIGHT PERFUME OR COLOGNE





Thank You Letters

Components of a Thank You Letter

Your Address
City, State, ZIP
Date

Name and title of interviewer
Address
City, State, ZIP

Dear Mr./Ms. Last Name:

Thank you for the interview on (date) at (location or university). I am very interested in the (position, kind of work) and hope that the interest is mutual.

I am enthusiastic about the prospect of joining your organization. (Describe what about the organization is sparking your interest.) My (name your background, skills, or educational emphasis) would enable me to make the transition to a position in your firm with relative ease.

OPTIONAL PARAGRAPH:

Enclosed is (anything which would strengthen your candidacy for the position). (Tell why you are enclosing this item and how it relates.)

If you have any questions, please call me at (area code/phone number). I look forward to the opportunity to discuss further (name opportunities) at (name of employer).

Sincerely,

Enclosure(s) (Include if applicable)

Example Thank You Letter

3701 Old Mill Road
Decatur, GA 30214
April 6, 20XX

Ms. Yuni Kim
Executive Vice President
Worldwide Automation & Control, Inc.
1127 Nelson Drive
Chicago, IL 60602

Dear Ms. Kim:

Thank you for taking the time to interview me at Georgia Tech on April 5. I enjoyed talking with you and learning more about the mechanical design position with Worldwide.

As you recall from our interview, I have had experience as an intern with Honeywell IAC. I have also taken advanced classes in material engineering at Georgia Tech. I greatly enjoy this career field and wish to apply my interest and knowledge to Worldwide Automation & Control.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to interview with you. I look forward to speaking with you again soon.

Sincerely,

James Davis

James Davis

Enclosure(s) (Include if applicable)

