

THE JOB HUNTING Guide

Job Interviews



JOB INTERVIEWS

The purpose of the job interview is to give the employer the opportunity to meet and evaluate the applicant for a position in the organisation. It is a chance for the employer to ask questions. The questions an interviewer may ask will depend on the particular job and the type of person they are looking for.

Your chance of success will be much higher if you are prepared. There are three steps to follow when preparing for a job interview, as shown below:



STEP 1

Before the interview:

- find out about dress code and time of interview
- do research on the company
- find out what type of interview

STEP 2

During the Interview:

- what questions to expect
- what questions to ask
- the do's and don'ts.

STEP 3

After the interview:

- reflection
- follow up
- dealing with rejection.

Step 1: Before the interview

Research!

Read the job advert and read up on the position advertised. Make sure that you find out about the company before going to the interview. What size is the company and what do they do? How many people are in the company? Who owns the company? Where did it start?

How to dress?

It is important to dress correctly, that is, conservatively – the way that you think the company would want you to dress. Do not wear too much make-up or jewellery. Avoid wearing things that could be considered inappropriate, for instance, an earring on a man may not be acceptable to some interviewers. Do not chew gum!

What to bring?

Bring a copy of the job advertisement or job description of the post 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 a business card if you have one.

When to arrive?

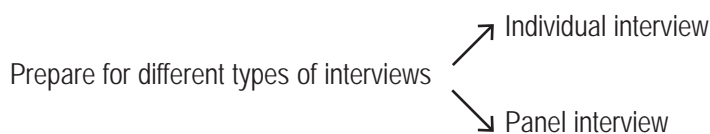
Aim to arrive at least 20 minutes before the interview. Do not be late! That immediately gives a bad impression. Always get directions before you start your journey. Allow for possible traffic delays.

What to expect?

There are various interview 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 allow for changes.

In an individual interview – One person will interview you

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



Step 2: During the interview

How to behave during the interview:

- sit down only when the interviewer indicates that 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 them to repeat it

Possible questions you can expect

- **Introductory questions:**
 - Did you find us alright?
 - Would you like something to drink?
- **Knowledge of the position or organization:**
 - Why do you want to work for us?
 - What position do you ultimately seek in this organisation?
 - What do you know about this organisation?
 - How would you describe your ideal job?
 - What other jobs have you enjoyed most / least?
- **Self-awareness:**
 - How would you describe yourself?
 - 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 would fit 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 as part of a team?
 - Do you prefer working for a superior or for yourself?
- **Education:**
 - How did your studies prepare you for your career?
 - What were your best subjects, and why?
 - What were your worst subjects, and 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 have you had in your work?
 - 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 that you experienced, and how you dealt with that situation
 - What is your reason for leaving your previous job?
- **Salary:**
 - What do you expect to earn five years from now?
 - What have you been earning up to now?
 - How much would you like to earn? (Know your current expenses / costs)
- **Difficult situations and decisions:**
 - What difficult decisions have you had to make?
 - What bad decisions have you made?
 - Have you ever been asked to do something unreasonable? What was your response?

- **Interpersonal skills:**
 - What difficulties, have you experienced in getting along with team members or colleagues?
 - Do you find that you usually play a specific role in a group or team situation?
 - How do you usually contribute to group decision-making?
 - Have you had a disagreement with a team member or colleague and, if so, what was the result?
 - Describe a time when you worked within a group of difficult people. What was the outcome?

- **Administration skills:**
 - What was the last time that you had a disagreement with someone and what was it about?
 - Have you ever had to reprimand or punish someone who stepped out of line?
 - Describe a situation in which you 'lost your cool' with someone.

- **Management and leadership:**
 - What leadership positions have you held?
 - Have you inspired someone to do something that they did not want to do?
 - When you are dealing with a subordinate, how do you know how far you can push?
 - Describe an incident where you were very 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 to take?
 - Take me through the process of how you came to apply for this job.

Step 3: After the Interview

- **Debrief yourself:**
 - Ask yourself the following questions:
 - What did I say that was good?
 - What did I say or do that I should not have done?
 - What can I learn from the situation?

- **Dealing with rejection:**
 - Treat each experience in life as part of a learning curve.
 - Speak to someone about your feelings.

Remember! "You may lose the battle but you can still win the war."

Activity 2: Evaluate the job advertised

Identify a job in a newspaper or on a job recruitment website!

Once you have decided on a job advert that you would like to apply for:

- Summarise the information you have on the job in the table below
- Where there is no information provided you may need to research similar jobs/positions to get this information. (you may need to do some research online)

Information provided about your job / position advertised	
What is the name of newspaper or job recruitment website where you found this job advertised?	
What is the title of the job/position?	
What qualifications are required? Visit www.gostudy.net for more information.	
What are the main duties/responsibilities? Visit www.gostudy.net for more information.	
Where will you be working (which country, region, town)?	
Describe the working environment (indoors, office, outdoors, travelling, etc.)	
Is experience a requirement for this position? If yes, what type of experience and how much is required)?	
What pay/remuneration can you expect for this type of position? Try to find a salary range for this position?	
Are there other benefits which you can expect to have in this position?	
What are the opportunities for advancement?	
What is the closing date (if advertised)?	

Activity 3: Conduct a Job Interview (simulated)

How to do your interview

Find a job advertisement in a newspaper or on a job recruitment website. Identify a job that you think you would like to do. Note: it does not need to be job you are qualified to do (this is just for practice). The job you choose should provide some information on the position and personal characteristics required. Prepare to be interviewed for this job you have identified! Once you have prepared:

In pairs:

1. Find a partner to do the interview with
2. Swop your job advert with your partner
3. Read your partners job advert and prepare a list of about 5 questions to ask your partner (don't tell your partner the questions)
4. Interview your partner (5 minutes)
5. Then swop round and your partner will interview you (5 minutes)
6. Give your partner feedback on how they performed in the interview using the rubric (below) as a guide.

NB: Your feedback should be **positive!** Start your feedback with a positive comment then provide comment on where you think the candidate can improve.



TAKE NOTE!

Beware of applying for jobs where there is little information about the position. Make sure that you understand what work you would have to do in the position and what the job requirements are. Beware of companies that do not reveal their identities. This shows that they may have something to hide.

Make sure that what you are required to do is reasonable and that the company offering the position is not a 'fly-by-night' organization that aims to exploit your inexperience.

Follow-up

Find out what you need to do next

Where can you submit your CV?

Is there a website where you can obtain more information?

Be prepared to accept rejection - most telephone interviews do not lead to the next round in the job application process.



TELEPHONE INTERVIEWS

The first discussion over the telephone is often the most important interview because it is the first contact that an applicant has with an employer or employment agency. Very often the advertisement is placed in the newspaper by a personnel agent or employment agency. A personnel agent is the person that the employer uses to screen candidates over the telephone. If you are successful in the telephone interview, you may then be asked to attend an interview face-to-face.



You should:

- learn how to respond to advertisements on the telephone
- practise your telephone skills by replying to some advertisements in the newspaper
- listen carefully to the questions asked and answer appropriately
- select your words carefully, and speak clearly and concisely on the telephone.

Telephone interview check list ✓

Applicant	✓
Greet them politely. Don't say "Hello", rather say, "Good morning" or "Good afternoon" "This is Frank speaking". Be polite by asking whether it is a good time to call.	
State clearly which position you are applying for.	
Find out to whom you are speaking. Ask them to spell their name if necessary.	
Have a pen and paper ready to write down names, possible questions, dates and times, contact numbers, address, etc.	
Address the interviewer by name.	
Be ready to answer questions put by the interviewer. Respond to the interviewer's comments by saying things such as, "Yes, I understand".	
Speak clearly, and do not speak too fast.	
Think carefully before responding to questions.	
Finish the call with a summary of what has been decided and what is to be done next.	
Allow the interviewer to hang up first	

If you are responding to an advertisement:

- First decide what questions you are going to ask
- Write down the questions
- Have the advertisement in front of you when you call.

When leaving a message on a voice-mail or answering machine:

- Prepare a clear and concise message
- State the date and time you are calling
- Leave your name and clear contact details
- State the purpose of your call
- Say that you will call again.

Evaluation - Conduct a job interview (Rubric)

Instructions: Read the job description and prepare yourself to be interviewed by your partner. After being interviewed, change roles and interview your partner. Then evaluate your partner in terms of the following criteria (mark X on a scale of 1 to 5 for each criterion). Peer evaluation (to be completed by the learner's partner)

Criteria	1	2	3	4	5
First Impression: Greeting	Was not on time, and not appropriately dressed . Did not greet or enquire after the interviewer. eg. "Hi Howzit?"	Was punctual, neatly dressed. Responded to greeting with bare minimum, eg. "Hi/ Hello"	Was polite, punctual and neatly and appropriately dressed. Responded politely to greeting, eg. "Good morning/ afternoon, fine thanks, and you? "	Was polite, punctual, appropriately dressed. Responded politely and positively.	Was polite, punctual and well-dressed. Responded to greeting positively and reciprocated the greeting by enquiring as to the interviewer's well-being, eg. "Good morning, I am doing well. How are you? I'd like to thank you for granting me an interview.
Body language	Did not maintain eye contact. Awkward body posture. Fidgeting or inappropriate use of the hands or limbs. Disinterested response eg. flopping down, sitting, chewing gum etc.	Did maintain eye contact. Did sit upright. Did maintain control of hands and limbs. Showed appropriate enthusiasm and interest, eg. body posture straight.	Did maintain eye contact. Did sit upright. Did maintain control of hands and limbs. Showed appropriate enthusiasm and interest.	Good eye contact. Did sit upright yet relaxed. No inappropriate movements.	Good eye contact. Upright. Relaxed yet alert. eg. Body posture showed enthusiasm yet was relaxed at the same time.
Was the candidate prepared?	There is no evidence to suggest that he/she did any research on the company or the job requirements.	The candidate does not know the company's history well, but has researched the job requirements. No questions were asked.	The candidate has had some knowledge of the company and the industry and seems clear about the role advertised. Questions about the role were not well-formulated.	The candidate has had researched the company and demonstrates knowledge of the industry, as well as the role advertised. Could formulate questions for the interviewer at the end of the interview.	The candidate has researched the company and demonstrated more than sufficient knowledge of the industry in which it specialises, as well as knowledge of the role advertised. The candidate was prepared with questions about the role/ company at the end of the interview.
Was the candidate audible / clear	The candidate mumbled. Not loud enough or said 'uhm' excessively	The candidate was audible but sometimes mumbled (or spoke too loudly or softly).	The candidate was clear and audible i.e. could hear what they were saying all of the time.	The candidate was loud enough and spoke with clarity. There was no strain. Interviewers could understand every word.	The candidate projected their voice without strain and spoke naturally and clearly so that every word could be understood.
Was the candidate articulate?	One word answers with no clarification	Short, non-descriptive answers which did not fully address the question.	Answers were sufficient, but some clarification was needed. Some questions were not fully addressed.	Answers were sufficient, very little clarification needed.	Answers were well-formulated and no clarification was needed.
Dress (not important for this practical)	The candidate is inappropriately dressed and groomed i.e. could be piercings, too much makeup, casual clothing, hair long, and untidy.	The candidate is adequate dressed and groomed but there is room for improvement i.e. hair, nails, dress a little casual or untidy, dirty. Overdressed?	Candidate is dressed appropriately and is tidy and neat i.e. clean clothes, hair, nails, shoes polished if necessary.	Dressed to fit the position, hair, nails, cloths clothes clean and neat. Not overdressed.	Dressed to fit the position and clothing well coordinated. i.e. the candidate makes an impression on the interviewer without being overdressed.