



Why are interviews important?

When it comes to landing a job, there is nothing more important than an interview. During an interview, a hiring manager assesses your skills, qualifications and experience in order for them to determine if you're the right fit for the job position. Like most things, no one is perfect the first time! It is completely okay to be a bit nervous- with a bit of practice, you can be sure to have a great interview that will leave the hiring manager thinking about you.

Our Top Interview Tips

For your interview, you should:

- **Research the company:** Most companies will have a website- do your homework! Look up their mission statement, their organization's goals, their values. Your knowledge of their company can be very impressive and show that you're serious about this position.
- **Be familiar with the job description:** Give it more than one read. For each requirement listed, try to sit and think beforehand of how you are able to meet that requirement.
- **Strengths Search:** Think honestly about your strengths and which ones you want to highlight to the hiring manager in relation to the job position.
- **Practice:** Like with anything, you will only get better with practice! Practice not just answering questions, but greeting your interviewer making eye contact & asking follow-up questions.

For your interview, you should NOT:

- **Be late:** Never be late for a job interview, punctuality is key! Aim to arrive 10 minutes before your interview is set to begin.
- **Behave unprofessionally:** Make sure your phone is turned on silent, that your headphones are put away and that you don't use profanity.
- **Dress Inappropriately:** Certain clothing items, such as ripped jeans, crop tops, baseball hats, tank tops, etc. should not be worn to a job interview. See more of our attire recommendations below.
- **Act withdrawn:** It's completely normal and okay to feel nervous before and at your interview! Just do your best to not let your nerves effect your demeanor.
- **Speak over the interviewer:** Being a good listener is as important as being a good speaker.

Virtual Interview Tips:

- **Appearance still matters:** make sure that along with what you're wearing, that your background is appropriate (you can use a virtual background if you like). Try to ensure you have good lighting. Keep your face centered in the screen.
- **Find a quiet place:** do your best to find a place free of distractions. Try to test your audio beforehand to make sure it is clear and working.
- **Stay sharp:** don't let an accidental interruption (such as accidentally speaking over your interviewer or vice versa) trip you up! It's totally understandable in a virtual call because of video delay.

Common Interview Questions



Question

How to Reply

"Tell me about yourself."

A common first interview question. Interviewers ask this to get a short & sweetened visual of your background & skills.

You want to show how your accomplishments & experience make you an ideal candidate for this job. Consider using these 3 points:

- **Past:** Tell the interviewer about a past experience that's relevant to the job you're applying for.
- **Present:** Talk a little bit about what you are currently up to, perhaps a big recent accomplishment (if you don't have a job at the moment, maybe something relating to school or an internship or volunteer opportunity).
- **Future:** Mention your future aspirations and goals, weaving in why you're interested in the position.

"What are your strengths & weaknesses?"

Often for this question, interviewers are trying to gauge how you react to a challenging question and assess to see how honest & self-aware you are.

Your strengths & weaknesses should reflect the requirements of the job you are applying for. For strengths, try to highlight the skills that are mentioned in the position's **job description**. For weaknesses, explain how you will improve on skills that you may currently lack but are eager to foster and grow.

- Your skills should be ones that you have achieved through past experiences (whether from school, a past professional experience etc.)
- When answering, try to use real-life examples to back up the skills that you mention.

"Why do you want to work here?"

This question assists the interviewer with ensuring that the person being interviewed believes in the company's mission & is enthusiastic about the opportunity.

When answering this question, it is better to give a specific vs. a generic response. You want your answer to stand out- show the interviewer what you have to offer and how you could make a positive impact in this role, while also weaving in something about the company that is unique to you.

So instead of answering this question with a response such as: "It's close to my house,"

You could say: "I want to work at the Wildlife Conservation Society because ever since coming to the Bronx Zoo every summer as a kid, it's been an important part of my life and I want to help other kids have great memories too."

What to Bring to An Interview:

- Hard copies of your resume (at least 5, one for your interviewer, one for yourself & three just in case- perhaps you have more than 1 interviewer present).
- A notepad & pen (to jot down notes, just in case)
- Bottle of water (just in case your throat gets dry)

Six Steps to Success

Step

What to do

1

Research

Research where you are applying! This knowledge can help you to stand out amongst other candidates & can give you a picture of what working there would look like.

2

Practice

Practicing not only helps you be ready to answer common interview questions, but it can also calm your nerves.

3

Attire

Pick an outfit that is professional and appropriate (see tips below) that also makes you feel good and is comfortable. If you can, try on your clothes ahead of time to make sure they fit & look presentable.

4

Shine

Answer the interviewer's questions with confidence and positivity. This is your time to shine and demonstrate how great you are. Try to tie your responses back to your skills & accomplishments.

5

Engage

Be sure to have questions prepared to ask your interviewer. Think through thoughtful questions about the company and the position, such as: *"What does a typical day look like for a person in this position?"*

6

Follow-up

After the interview, send a follow-up email. This will show to the interviewer that you are genuinely interested in the position. Express that you'd be happy to answer any additional questions and that you're looking forward to hearing from them soon.