

Before the Job Interview



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Resources for
Students



- **The position:** whether an opening exists, duties and responsibilities, salary

You can ask friends, family, and teachers to help find this information. A good way to learn more is to visit the company's website. Try looking under "About Us" or "Our Values" or "Mission" hubs located either at the top or bottom of a website.

Introduction

A job interview is a stressful experience for anyone applying for a job. There are several things you can do before the interview to help you relax and feel more confident.

Research the company

The first step to a good interview is to know a little about the company. You want to have a general understanding of what the company offers, its vision and values. Consider the following:

- **The organization:** size, number of employees, major products and services, reputation and values
- **The interviewer:** level and area of responsibility, management style

Plan your transportation

The best way to make a good first impression – don't be late for the interview!

Find out exactly where the interview will take place, not just the address of the building, but if you must take a certain elevator or if the office is on a specific floor. You want to feel confident about finding the location where the interview will take place once you have arrived.

Check you have the right information on bus routes, driving routes and road conditions. Do you know where to park? Is parking free? How long will it take you to get there?

Try to arrive 10–15 minutes before you are scheduled to meet with the employer. If you are really early, find a quiet space to relax and catch your breath.

Before the Job Interview

Plan what to wear

Your interviewer is looking for someone who looks like they would fit in with the company. Clothing can make a big impression. If clothes are wrinkled, dirty, sloppy-fitting, employers will notice this level of care when presenting yourself. Some employers have uniforms where pants fit at the waist and shirts are tucked-in. Imagine yourself in the job and try to meet the level of appropriate dress. Other tips include:

- Make sure you appear well groomed (hair, nails, teeth, body odour, etc.)
- Be conservative and presentable (no graphics with slurs or provocative slogans, hoodies, etc.)
- Wear a minimum of jewelry, make-up and cologne/perfume.

Practice what you are going to say

It's a good idea to draft written answers to potential interview questions to make your answers sound well thought out and developed.

Think of the things that make you stand out as an employee. Rehearse your answers either to yourself in the mirror or with a friend or family member.

Be sure to read the resource:

“10 Common Interview Questions”
to get some ideas of how to prepare your thoughts.

Prepare a list of questions for the interviewer

Most interviewers will offer a chance for you to ask questions. Having 3–4 questions prepared in advance shows a level of interest beyond just hoping to get the job.

If the interviewer happens to answer the questions earlier in the interview, you can mention they have done a thorough job explaining things and your questions have been answered.

Some possible questions could include:

- What is the typical work week?
Is overtime expected?
- How does one advance in this job?
- Is there anything I can clarify for you about my skills?
- Do you have a policy for helping new members of the team get on board?
- Would you like a list of references?
- If I am offered a job, how soon would you like me to start?

Do **NOT** ask questions such as:

- What does this company do?
(Do your research ahead of time!)
- Can I take these days off?
- Can I change my schedule if I get the job?
- So, did I get the job?

Before the Job Interview

Review your résumé and references

Make sure your resume is up to date and your references are aware they may be contacted by a potential employer. Let references know what type of job you are applying for so they can be prepared.

What to take with you

Make sure your resume is up to date and your references are aware they may be contacted by a potential employer. Let references know what type of job you are applying for so they can be prepared.

Take a file folder or some type of protective envelope that contains:

- Extra copies of your résumé and reference sheet
- Copies of any certificates/diplomas
- Company address, phone number and name(s) of interviewer(s)

- Company information you have researched
- Paper and pen for taking any notes
- 3–4 relevant questions you have prepared for the employer

Do **NOT** take any unnecessary items including food, drinks or other people.

Try to relax

Remember, everyone feels a little nervous in a job interview. By preparing as much as you can in advance, you can tell yourself, “I am ready for this interview!” and “I can do this!” A little positive self-talk can go a long way to ease the nerves and get you set to make a great impression.

Take a few quiet breaths and go for it!

