

Interview Preparation & Tips

Are you looking for a part time job, or just finished school and heading out to the world of employment? Interviews can vary depending on the organisation and who is running the interview. They can be formal or informal; they generally include an introduction, questions and a wrap up. Here are some tips to nailing your first job interview.

PREPARATION

Confirm the Interview Details and Be On Time

Plan your travel and take into account traffic or check public transport timetables. Arrive at least 10 minutes before your appointment time. Make sure you know your interviewers name so you can ask for them on arrival. If you are no longer able to attend the interview, ring the person you were scheduled to meet with and let them know in advance – you might be able to re-schedule.

Be Your (Best) Self and Dress for Success

It's important to try and be yourself in an interview – but always aim to be your *best* self. Your most respectable and polite self. That means wearing appropriate attire, smiling, sitting up straight, and making eye contact.

Think of it this way: look to present the 'you' you'd bring to a nice dinner with your grandparents, as opposed to the 'you' you'd be if you were playing X-box at a mate's house. Choose neat and tidy casual clothes or business attire. Keep makeup and jewellery to a minimum – and go easy on the perfume or aftershave . If you are still at school and don't have professional clothes, you can wear your school uniform. If you're not sure what to wear ask a family member or teacher. This is your opportunity to make a great first impression on your potential employer. You need to look as if you take care of your appearance so a casual t-shirt and jeans are not a good idea.

Do Your Research

Showing that you have an understanding of the company you want to join – and that you've taken the time to research them and the role – can put you head and shoulders above other candidates being interviewed. All you need to do is a little smart searching online – do they have a website or social media pages?

Make sure you read through the position description so that you understand what the role is about and give thought to what interests you about working for the organisation.

You Have More Experience Than You Think

You may be interviewing for your first full-time role out of school, but that doesn't mean you don't already have a wealth of experience to draw from when talking about what makes you a great fit for the job.

Think about any part-time jobs, volunteering opportunities or responsibilities you've had, such as babysitting, mowing lawns, captaining a sports team, delivering newspapers, or tutoring other kids at your school. All these things can demonstrate numerous skills such as punctuality and reliability and being a team-player, so be sure to mention it!

You Attitude is Greater Than Any Lack of Experience

Your interviewers already know that you're a student or a school leaver, so set aside any worries you have about a lack of professional experience. Instead, focus on showcasing your fantastic attitude, which is often far more valuable.

Employers are looking for enthusiasm and a willingness to learn when it comes to choosing the right person for the role, so show that you have those two attributes in spades. You could talk about what excites you about their brand or products, what motivates you about the role, and what you look forward to learning as you become a successful member of their team.

Leave a Lasting Impression

We often hear of the importance of making a good first impression, but it's just as important to *leave* a good impression before you walk out the door. This moment is like signing your name at the end of a cover letter, and is the final thing your potential employer will remember about you.

To leave a great impression, stand up at the conclusion of the interview, thank your interviewers very much for their time, look them in the eyes and tell them you look forward to hearing from them, and shake their hands before you leave.

WHAT TO EXPECT AT THE INTERVIEW

Introduction

- The interviewers will tell you more about the role and the organisation
- They may ask you questions about yourself so that they can get to know you including:
 - Tell us about yourself?
 - Why are you interested in this traineeship with the organisation?
 - What do you know about the organisation?
- This is a great opportunity to show your interest in the role and the organisation

Questions

- The interviewers may ask you questions about your experience and personal attributes such as:
 - What work experience do you have (if any)?
 - What are your key achievements?
 - What are you good at? What are your strengths?
 - What could you improve on?
 - What are some challenges you have faced and overcome?
 - What do you want to do in the future?
- Try to think of some good examples to the above questions before attending the interview.
- This is a great opportunity to show your interest in the role and the organisation. It might feel a bit weird to promote yourself and talk about what you are good at, but this is what the interviewers need to know!
- You need to show that you have the skills, abilities and attitude to do the job.

Wrap Up

- The interviewer may ask you if you have anything else you would like to add or say.
- This is your chance to ask the interviewers any questions and show further interest in the role. Asking questions can show you are enthusiastic about the job. Example questions could include:
 - What is the team like?
 - Why do you like working with the organisation?
 - What support and training will I have?
- Remember to thank them for the opportunity to have an interview.

INTERVIEW BASICS



Do

- Smile
- Wear clothes that make you feel confident
- Arrive at least ten minutes early
- Express yourself clearly
- Be a good listener
- Show confidence and enthusiasm
- Give examples of what you can do
- Ask questions
- Be natural and be yourself
- Turn off your mobile phone
- Thank them for the opportunity



Don't

- Be unprepared
- Exaggerate your experience or lie
- Answer questions with yes or no
- Make negative comments
- Use bad language and slang
- Talk about money
- Be late

10 MOST-ASKED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

(according to SEEK Employment Facilitator)

1. Based on your understanding of this role, which of your skills do you believe will be most valuable to our organisation?

Why employers ask this question?

Employers want to get a sense of how well you understand the role and its day-to-day requirements. They also want to find out whether your skills match the job description and what you can do for the organisation overall.

What's a good response to this question?

If you can link your skills to what the company or organisation does and its business goals and objectives, you're on the right track. Aim to give practical examples of your past experiences and where your skills can add value. The more you understand about the role and have researched the organisation, considering its stakeholders, customers, business strategy, goals and objectives, the more you'll be able to talk about how you can contribute.

2. What's your understanding of the role and why are you interested?

Why employers ask this question?

This question helps recruiters gain a genuine understanding of which aspects of the role you are most interested in, in order to assess if you're well suited to the role.

What's a good response to this question?

Recruiters are seeking an interpretation of the role in your own words, not a regurgitation of the job ad. The best answers are those that clearly demonstrate which aspects of the role you will be able to do well and how this will add value to the organisation and help achieve organisational goals.

3. Why are you interested in working at this organisation?

Why employers ask this question?

Have you done your homework? This question shows how much research you have done, demonstrating motivation for the job and providing recruiters with an insight into your own values to ensure they align with the hiring organisation.

What's a good response to this question?

If you can build a connection with the organisation's people, strategy and values and your own values and aspirations, you will show the potential employer why you're an ideal fit.

4. At times you will be asked to do many things at once. How do you prioritise your tasks?

Why employers ask this question?

This question aims to reveal your time management and decision-making skills. Employers want to understand how you prioritise things and the way you engage with people during that process.

What's a good response to this question?

A good way to answer this question is to give an example of how you prioritised things in a previous role.

5. What parts of your current role do you really love?

Why employers ask this question?

This shows the recruiter what is most important to you and how and why you gain satisfaction from different aspects of your career. The response helps guide the interviewer on how you can make a difference and what gives you the most energy, for example, people management, processes or innovative thinking.

What's a good response to this question?

Good answers are less about tasks and more about showing your passion, what you are most proud of, and how you have made an impact in your current role.

6. What parts of your current role frustrate you?

Why employers ask this question?

Employers accept that there will be elements of every job that may be frustrating so it's important to be honest when answering this question. By asking this question they are wanting to find out if you're compatible with the role you're applying for.

What's a good response to this question?

Rather than just venting things you find frustrating about your current role, try to frame your response in a positive light by talking about how you manage your frustration. Also, remember to think about the job description – for example, you don't want to say you find dealing with difficult customers frustrating if the role is customer-facing.

7. Give me an example of a time when you made a mistake or didn't deliver on expectations, what happened? What did you learn?

Why employers ask this question?

Most businesses accept that people make mistakes. What is more important is that you learn from them. Employers are trying to establish what processes you use to analyse problems and how you go about solving them.

What's a good response to this question?

The key here is to focus on the take outs from your mistakes. It's a good idea to give an example of a past mistake – what were the circumstances? What was your decision-making process and how did you move forward from the mistake?

8. What is the one professional and/or technical skill you would most like to develop?

Why employers ask this question?

Employers want to find out if you have an appetite for self-development and improvement.

What's a good response to this question?

An answer that shows a desire to improve behaviour and continuously learn and grow is important. Always offer a reason for why you want to develop a particular skill. For example, you might say you're interested in developing your photoshop skills in order to enhance your marketing ability.

9. Talk us through your professional and technical skill-set.

Why employers ask this question?

This question aims to understand your full skillset to do the job. Articulating technical skillsets is a straightforward science, however talking about professional or 'softer' skills such as communication and leadership are often more difficult, so it's important to come equipped with examples of these skills in action.

What's a good response to this question?

Authentic answers work best – this is not a laundry list of generic traits. Substantiating traits with real examples is important. This question is a great opportunity to share your technical know-how by demonstrating how you used a particular technical skill in a past job and how this skill will be relevant to the job you're applying for.

10. You disagree with the way your manager and supervisor says to handle a problem. What would you do?

Why employers ask this question?

Employers want to find out how you handle confrontation. Are you someone who is argumentative or do you stay silent? Or perhaps you are someone who calmly states your case and offers alternatives in a constructive way, accepting that not everyone will agree with your point of view.

What's a good response to this question?

This type of behavioural question is best answered using an example. E.g. this was a time when I didn't agree with my boss. This is how I handled it, this was the outcome and this is what I learned.