Student Resources

**Preparing for an Interview**

Before an interview, it is very important to learn about the organization. Some employers will ask you what you know about their business at the interview!!! Having a general knowledge about an organization will also help you to think of questions to ask at the interview. So, as you are researching, if you think of something you would like to know about the job or the organization, write it down on a list and refer back to that list before your appointment.

**Basic facts to discover**

* Name of company, directors, owners etc.
* Size of company, amount of employees, number of branches.
* Services provided.
* Who are their customers, clients, etc.?

You need be very knowledgeable about the career and position for which you are applying. If you are not familiar with the career or position you are applying for, research them in advance to make a good impression during your interview.

It is important to get past the starting line **(the first 2 minutes!!!)**........... First impressions

* Make sure you arrive for the interview at least 15 minutes early.
* Turn off your cell phone.
* Introduce yourself and shake hands when you arrive.
* Speak clearly; don’t use slang or bad English.
* Address the interviewers by their names.
* Your appearance is important, make sure you have neat, clean and conservative clothes. Clean and brushed hair. Clean and suitable shoes. Minimal make-up and jewelry.
* Brush your teeth, use deodorant and clean your fingernails. Girls, if your nails are painted, make sure the polish is fresh and a conservative color– no chipped polish.
* Be organized, have your portfolio neat and tidy. Include your questions for the employer in the back of your portfolio together with extra copies of your résumé.

*Body language*

* Maintain eye contact and smile.
* Occasionally nod your head in response to the interviewer.
* Answer questions briefly and positively. Don’t: Cross your arms, slouch in the chair, or pick at your fingernails.

**What to take to an interview**

Your portfolio containing your résumé, qualifications, references, certificates, etc.

* A copy of your job application, résumé and cover letter.
* Pen and paper.
* List of questions you have about the job.

**Interview format**

Usually an interview will follow these guidelines:

1. The interviewer will ask you some questions –see sample questions.

2. You will be given an opportunity to ask questions.

Closing the interview

Thank the interviewer(s) for their time.

**Possible Interview Questions**

Personal

* Tell me about yourself.
* What made you apply for this job?
* In what clubs or organizations are you a member?
* What have you learned from your hobbies, interests and outside activities?
* What qualifications do you have for this job?

Cooperation

• How do you feel about working with others and as part of a team? • Do you follow instructions easily?
• When required, would you be willing to work overtime?
• How do you work under pressure?

Self confidence

• What do you consider to be your greatest strengths, weaknesses, or faults? • How do you think a teacher who knows you well would describe you?
• Why do you think you are suitable for this position?
• Why should we consider you for this job instead of other applicants?

Motivation/initiative

• How did you prepare for this interview?
• What is important to you in a job?
• Why would you like this job?
• If you didn’t understand an instruction, what would you do? • What motivates you to put forth your greatest effort?

• Describe your most rewarding experience in school.
• Do you have plans to continue your education in some way? What are they? • Where would you like to be in 5 years?
• What are your long-range and short-range goals and objectives?
• When and why did you establish your goals, and how are you preparing yourself to achieve them?

Other

• Would you like to ask any questions?

**Possible Soft Skill Interview Questions**

Communication Skills

* Have you ever had to get a point across to different types of people? What approach did you take?
* Give me an example of how you would explain a complicated procedure to someone who was new to the situation.
* Have you ever given instructions to someone, and then learned he/she did it wrong? Why do you think that happened?
* Can you give me an example of a time you had to pitch a proposal to a group? How did you do? Why do you think things went that way?

Interpersonal Skills

* Tell me about the teacher you ever had. What made him/her so great?
* Tell me about a partner that you found it the hardest to work with. What made him/her so difficult to work with?
* Tell me in what areas you believe you could improve on?
* How would you motivate your group to do their best work?

Decision-Making Skills

* What was the toughest decision you had to make in the last year? What made it so difficult?
* Describe a work-related problem you had to face recently. What procedures did you use to deal with it?
* Are there any occasions when you feel you make up your mind too quickly? Too slowly?
* Have you ever delayed a decision so you would have more time to think? Give me an example.

Written Communication

* What are some of the most important documents you have written? What kinds of problems did you have writing them? What kind of reception did they receive?
* What is the most difficult writing assignment you have undertaken recently? Why was it so challenging? How did you handle it?
* Recall an important report you had to prepare. How did you go about planning and organizing it?
* To what kind of audience do you address most of your written work? What level of language do you use?

**Possible Questions to the Interviewer** (For Mock Interview only – job specific questions would be asked during a REAL interview.)

* What do you see as the pros and cons of this type of work?
* What are the qualifications and educational requirements for this type of work?
* What factors would make one fail or succeed in this type of work?
* What are the current challenges faced by this industry?
* What do you see as the nature of the job market in this field?
* What kinds of experience would you suggest that someone pursue to make them more marketable in this field?
* Can you recommend any websites related to your field or industry?
* Can you recommend any area employment agencies, newspapers, etc. that post job openings for your career field or industry?
* Can you recommend any professional journals, conferences/workshops, or professional associations that relate to your line of work?
* Are there specific employer directories, industry leaders, or employer research guides I could further explore for targeting potential networking contacts?
* Can you refer me to anyone else I might speak with to learn more about this occupation?

**Dress for Success! Attire, Grooming, and Respect**

The following attire, grooming and behavior are considered appropriate for interviews unless other standards are specified by employer:

* Clean, wrinkle-free dress slacks: Nothing saggy, baggy or torn hemmed at bottom. No holes.
* No jeans, shorts, capri pants, short skirts, sweats or warm-up type clothes.
* Shirts: Clean and wrinkle-free, with collar. No holes, tears, extreme patterns, writing or pictures on clothing; no midriff showing, no low-cut or see through shirts.
* Footwear: Wear clean, polished shoes. Men - Socks required. No sandals, flip flops or open-toe shoes.
* Jewelry: Nothing extreme (when in doubt, DON‟T); no lip, nose, eyebrow or tongue rings, no multiple necklaces, earrings or rings.
* Grooming: Hair must be clean with no extreme styles or colors. No tattoos or other marks visible.
* Must be clean shaven; nails must be clean, no extreme nail color or chipped nails and no extreme lip color.
* Remove hat during interview.
* Turn off cell phone.
* No gum chewing.