

How to prepare for an interview?



Consider how this quote by H. Jackson Brown Jr and made famous by author, Maya Angelou, relates to an interview: "People may not remember what you did, or what you said, but they will always remember how you made them feel."

BEFORE AN INTERVIEW:

- Confirm arrangements with the organization about what time, where, and with whom you will be interviewing. Have a plan for how you'll get to your interview.
- Complete any pre-interview paperwork or online forms that they send you.
- Research the organization and the specific position before the interview by reading their website, reading online reviews or articles, or talking to people you know who know this organization.
- Practice responding to mock interview questions, examples below, with someone or in front of a mirror.
- Prepare a few questions to ask your interviewer. You'll want to make them specific to the organization!

DURING AN INTERVIEW:

- Wear clean, professional clothes without words or logos.
- Have extra copies of your resume (printed on plain, nice paper) in a folder so they won't get wrinkled. Also have a list of references prepared to hand out at the interview if requested.
- Enthusiasm is always appreciated but don't go over the top. If you are sincerely excited about the position, enthusiasm should come naturally. If you are not at all excited, this may not be the job for you.
- Look the interviewer in the eye. Be relaxed but attentive. Have a confident posture. Avoid slouching in your chair, leaning on the interviewer's desk, chewing gum, or fidgeting with jewelry, your cell phone, or your hair.

AFTER AN INTERVIEW:

- Follow up with an email or hand-written note thanking the interviewer for the opportunity and asking any additional questions you have after the interview. This step demonstrates that you are continuing to think about the position and allows you to re-affirm what you could bring to the position and the organization as a whole.
- Continue to check your email for updates from the interviewer.

Mock Interview Questions

Demonstrate leadership experience

- What is one strength you would bring to this position? Please give a recent example of when you displayed it.
- What is something that you do not currently see as a strength that you are excited to develop and work on?
- Share a time when you worked effectively with others to accomplish a goal.
- How do you think others would describe your style of leadership?

Show how you resolve conflict

- You will be working on a team with people from many different backgrounds, describe a time you have helped bring together people who had different perspectives on an issue.
- Describe a time when you had to change or adapt your actions in order to respond to the needs of another person (i.e. a customer, coworker, or supervisor).
- What is a challenge you have faced in a previous job, or at school, and how did you overcome it?
- How do you handle stress and deadlines?

Reveal what you take pride in and prioritize

- What do you hope to achieve in this position?
- Tell me about your proudest moment working on a project. Why does it make you proud?
- What are your goals for the next 5 years? What motivates you to pursue these goals?
- Give an example of an important goal you previously set for yourself and how you have made progress on it.

How to prepare for networking?



REVIEW VOCABULARY FOR NETWORKING & INTERVIEWS

- **Mock Interview:**
A conversation where you practice answering questions that resemble a real interview as closely as possible in order to train for future interviews.
- **Informational Interview:**
A meeting where you seek advice from an employer about their career path, their organization or industry, and the culture of a potential future workplace. These meetings can help open the door to interviewing for a position with that employer or an employer in the same field.
- **Elevator Pitch:**
A brief, approximately 1 min, speech used to elevate a potential employer's or customer's knowledge of you as a candidate, of your organization, or of a product you're selling.
- **Networking:**
Intentionally interacting with other people to exchange information and develop contacts that may be beneficial for your career interests – this can be casual conversations with family, family and friends, and school and community members.
- **Social Capital:**
The relational network of contacts you have with other people who live or work within a specific society, which will help you succeed in that social environment.
- **Job Shadowing:**
An opportunity for you to observe or shadow someone doing a job that is of interest to you / that you want to learn about beyond online research or conversation.
- **Internship:**
A position (sometimes paid/sometimes unpaid) that allows you to train to work within an organization or field by gaining experience and necessary qualifications.
- **Service Work Program:**
A program (sometimes paid/sometimes unpaid) that allows you to gain experience in a field for a contracted period of time *such as AmeriCorps, Peace Corps, or World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms (WWOOF).

CREATE YOUR OWN ELEVATOR PITCH

An elevator pitch is a brief story, approximately one minute long or the length of an imaginary elevator ride, used to convey your strengths and credentials to spark interest in you as a candidate. Public speaking is challenging and it is natural to be nervous when sharing about your experiences, so practicing this skill helps you network more easily.

- Share your **story** – In one sentence, answer “Who are you and what do you do?”
- Share a **success** – In two sentences, answer “What makes you unique? How have you overcome an obstacle?”
- Share a **goal** – In one sentence, answer “What do you hope to do next?”