



# How to Interview

## PREPARING FOR THE INTERVIEW

### 1. Choose Fields of Interest and Do Your Research

The Occupational Outlook Handbook — [bls.gov/ooh](http://bls.gov/ooh) — and O\*Net Online — [onetonline.org](http://onetonline.org) — are great sources of information about potential career fields.

Read through the company's website and search for news or blog articles for extra information.

### 2. Know Your Own Background Inside and Out

Review your resume - the employer might ask questions about any part of your experience. Prepare a few good stories to tell about your work or education: projects you've completed, any kind of leadership experience, classes you've enjoyed.

### 3. Refine Your Message

Review the position description and identify 3 strengths that you have that would be particularly valuable in this role.

### 4. Prepare Questions

Prepare 3-5 insightful questions about the organization, such as:

- What is the culture like at this organization?
- What is your role here?
- What would be especially rewarding about this position?
- What might be challenging?

### 5. Know How You Will Get There

Map out how you will get to the interview, what you will wear, and what you will bring with you. Dress in business professional wear, typically a full suit.

## ON THE DAY

### 1. Arrive Early

Plan to arrive 15-20 minutes early to your interview.

### 2. Be Courteous to Everyone You Encounter

This includes employees of the organization and fellow candidates. If you have multiple interviewers, collect their business cards or names and contact information if you can.

### 3. Be Open

Go in with an open mind and a positive outlook.

### 4. Be Aware of Your Non-Verbal Communication

Be friendly, polite and engaged. Posture, eye contact, dress and facial expression can communicate just as much as what you actually say.



## CHALLENGING INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

### 1. "Tell me about yourself."

To answer, consider the following model: PRESENT — PAST — FUTURE

- What are you doing now?
- What kind of relevant experience do you have?
- What do you hope to do in the future?
- Why are you interested in this position?

Avoid personal information like family details or relationship status.

### 2. "What are your future professional goals?"

Give them some real information about your goals, but keep them open enough so that they don't foreclose relevant paths within the organization.

### 3. "What are your strengths and weaknesses?"

Prepare 3 strengths and 3 weaknesses in advance. Strengths should be relevant to the position, and should be accompanied by an example. For weaknesses, think about 3 types of tasks or situations that are challenging for you. Be sure to have examples ready for these, and finish your answer by describing how you manage each of these tasks or situations.

### 4. "Why should I hire you?"

Imagine they are asking "What makes you unique as a candidate for this job?" Reiterate your strengths or describe how two of your strengths are powerful when paired together. This is your professional "superpower."

### 5. Behavioral Questions — "Tell me about a time when..."

Remember the STAR acronym. SITUATION — TASK — ACTION — RESULT.

Describe the situation, and name the task you were trying to accomplish. Describe what actions you took and the results of the project. Finish with what you learned from the experience.

## FOLLOW-UP

### 1. Thank Your Interviewer(s)

Send a thank-you email within 24 hours of the interview and/or deliver or send a handwritten note. Reiterate your interest in the position and let them know that they can contact you with any further questions.

### 2. If You Don't Hear Back

If you've been given an expected decision date and have not heard back, follow-up 1-2 days afterwards. Send a short and polite email to check on the status of your application. If no date was provided, give the organization 2-3 weeks, and then follow-up. Large organizations may take several weeks to produce an offer.



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