

Congratulations!

You're scheduled to interview for a new job! While interviews can be exciting but also a little nerve-wracking, a little preparation can give you a sense of confidence that will help set you apart.

In the Days Before the Interview

1. Draw a line down the center of a piece of paper. On the left side, make a bulleted list of what the employer is looking for based on the job posting. On the right side, make a bulleted list of the qualities you possess that fit those requirements.
2. Research the company, the industry and the competition. Visit the company websites and social media pages, and search for recent news stories. Learn as much as you can about your prospective employer's business model, and identify main products, services and functions.
3. Prepare your 60-second personal statement, which will serve as your answer to the "Tell me about yourself" question.
4. Write at least five success stories to answer behavioral interview questions (e.g., "Tell me about a time when..." or "Give me an example of a time...").
5. List 10 questions to ask the interviewer about the job, the company and the industry.
6. Research salary data and determine your worth.
7. Determine your salary needs based on your living expenses. What is your bottom line?
8. Get permission from your references to use their names.

10 most common interview questions

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. Why did you leave (or why are you leaving) your last position?
3. What do you know about this company?
4. What are your goals?
5. What are your strengths and weaknesses?
6. Why do you want to work for this company?
7. What has been your most significant achievement?
8. How would your last boss and colleagues describe you?
9. Why should we hire you?
10. What are your salary expectations?

REMEMBER: Don't just rely on your prepared list of questions. There are few better ways to make an impact with a prospective employer than by catching the details of what the interviewer is saying, and then spinning those points into observations or well-crafted questions. Smart employers see curiosity as a valuable trait.

Before You Go to the Interview

Do you look professional? Part of your confidence will come from looking good. And be sure to bring these items to the interview:

- Several copies of your resume on high-quality paper
- A copy of your references (if not included on your resume)
- A pad of paper on which to take notes (notes are optional)
- Directions to the interview site

When You Arrive

1. Arrive early. Enter the building 10 minutes before your appointment.
2. Review your prepared stories and answers.
3. Go to the restroom and check your appearance one last time.
4. Announce yourself to the receptionist in a professional manner.
5. Stand and greet your interviewer with a firm – but not bone-crushing – handshake.

During the Interview

1. Try to focus on the points you prepared without sounding rehearsed or stiff.
2. Relax and enjoy the conversation. Learn what you can about the company, and show your passion for what they do.
3. Ask questions and listen.
4. At the conclusion, quickly summarize how you can deliver solutions to their problems, thank the interviewer for taking the time to speak with you, and sincerely express interest in the position and ask what the next steps will be.
5. Ask for the interviewer's business card so you can send a follow-up note.

After the Interview

1. As soon as possible, write down what you're thinking and feeling.
2. Later in the day, look at what you wrote and assess how you did.
3. Write a follow-up thank-you note, reminding the interviewer of your qualities. Send an email immediately and follow up with a hand-written note in the mail.

