

Checklist: 7 ways to prepare for a job interview

Here are some key things to get sorted when you're preparing for a job interview:

1. Know where you're going.

This one might sound obvious, but many people leave home without the address or their contact's name. Write down the address and the name of the person you're meeting (and their phone number if you have it), or put it in your phone.

Look up the address on a map in advance so you know exactly how to get there. Make sure you check the timetables if you're getting there on public transport.

2. Don't be late!

Give yourself plenty of time to get there so you're not flustered and sweating. Aim to arrive at the interview at least 15 minutes early.

3. Dress to impress.

Even if you're going for a job where you'll have to wear a uniform or overalls and get down and dirty, make sure you're wearing clean and ironed clothes. That way you will appear committed and professional.

4. Sniff the pits!

Make sure you're showered and deodorised and smelling pleasant and your hair is clean and tame. Don't use too much perfume or aftershave though!

5. Bring your resume.

Take a copy of your resume with you and refer to it during the interview if you need to. Read over it on the way, or while you're waiting for the interview to start.

6. Do your research.

It's important to know the company and know what the job requires. If you can, visit their website and see what they have to say about themselves. Do a search for them online to see if they've been in the news. If you can, try to find other people who work for the company so you can ask them some questions.

7. Prepare your answers.

You should prepare some answers to the questions you're expecting. You should also prepare some questions to ask them yourself. Some common questions you could prepare answers for are on the next page.

13 common job interview questions

Here are some common interview questions and some quick tips for ways you could answer them.

1. Tell us about yourself.

- Talk about school and work - don't talk about your personal life.
- Be brief - try to speak for no more than two minutes.
- Use this as an opportunity to demonstrate your communication skills.

2. What do you think this position involves?

- You can only properly answer this if you've researched the company and the job.
- Pay attention to what they say about the job and the company, then try putting it into your own words.

3. Why do you want this job?

- Show that you know about the company and prove you've done your homework.
- Tell them why you're the right person for the job.
- Don't sound like you're desperate!

4. What are your strengths?

- Know at least five things you're good at.
- Make your strengths relevant to the job.
- Keep your answers short.

5. What are your weaknesses?

- Turn a negative into a positive.
- Talk about what you're doing to overcome your weaknesses.
- Make it relevant to the job.

6. Tell us about a time when things went wrong and what you did to fix it.

- Prepare two or three examples in advance.
- Make your examples relevant to the job.
- Show that you have initiative.

7. How do you deal with conflict in the workplace?

- This question tests your 'people' skills.
- Conflict could be a conflict of opinion or ideas.
- Conflict could also be a personality clash.
- Not all conflict is negative - it can inspire creative solutions to problems.
- Demonstrate your ability to resolve issues.

8. Give us an example of how you have worked as part of a team.

- Prepare an example that demonstrates how you fit into a team - you could either be the leader or the one who's good at following orders.
- If you don't have paid work experience, talk about work experience you've done for school, volunteering, school projects, sport or a hobby group you belong to.

9. What has been your biggest accomplishment so far?

- You don't have to have done something earth-shattering - small things done well can be just as impressive.
- Think of something you've done at school or work that you're proud of or happy with.
- If you're just starting out in work you could talk about what you hope to accomplish in the future.
- Be honest - don't make anything up!

10. What are your goals? Where do you see yourself in five years?

- Talk about work or study - don't talk about your personal goals.
- Try to connect your goals to the company and the job.

11. When can you start and what's your availability?

- It's important to know the answer to this one before you come to the interview.
- Do you have to give notice to your current employer? Check your contract or agreement.
- Do you want to take a break between jobs for some rest and recreation?
- Are there any days or times you're not available?
- Try to be flexible.

12. What are your salary expectations?

- Check out awards and minimum wages before the interview - call the Federal Government's Fair Work Infoline on **13 13 94** or visit www.fairwork.gov.au for more information.
- Use this question as an opportunity to sell yourself.
- Don't negotiate a final figure for your salary or wages in a job interview - wait until they offer you the job.

13. Any questions for us?

- It's OK to ask the interviewer about the salary range during the interview.
- Try to ask specific questions about the company and the role
- If you're stuck, ask:
 - How would you describe the culture here?
 - What would I be expected to do on an average day?
 - What would be the top three priorities for this job?

Want to find out more?

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