



## Top interview tips

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An interview is a discussion between you and an employer to find out if you can do the job. However, there are certain rules and conventions to follow in interviews. Here's a checklist of the main do's and don'ts.

### What to do:

- dress smartly, look bright and attentive, and speak clearly and confidently. Don't forget that only 7% of the interviewer's opinion of you is formed by what you say - the rest is judged on how you look, act and sound
- find out where the venue is beforehand, how to get there and how long it takes
- get your outfit ready the night before
- find out what kind of interview it will be so you can prepare
- examine the person specification and your CV/application form, and think about what type of questions they will ask you
- prepare answers for the main questions - for example, why do you want the job, what are your strengths and weaknesses, what are the main tasks in this job
- make about three or four points in each answer
- quote real examples of when you've used certain skills - just saying you've got a skill isn't enough
- take your time when answering the questions. Make sure you understand the question and take your time if you need to think
- sell yourself. No-one else is going to! Be positive about yourself and your experiences
- prepare some questions to ask at the end - use it as an opportunity to find out more about the role and the company. But don't ask about money or perks just yet!
- when discussing salary, know your market worth and start by quoting a little higher than this
- get feedback on your performance, whether you were successful or not
- turn off your mobile! Treat the interviewers with respect and give them your undivided attention
- keep your answers focused on what you can do for the employer, not what they can do for you

### What not to do:

- don't be late!
- don't swear or use slang words
- don't slouch in your seat or do anything else that makes you look disinterested
- don't smoke

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- don't lie! The interviewer may see through you. Even if you get the job, your employer can dismiss you if they find out
- don't let your nerves show too much. A few nerves are normal but extreme nerves will affect your performance. Use breathing techniques and try to remember that it's not a life and death situation - there are plenty of jobs out there!
- don't be arrogant and assume you've got the job. Nothing turns off employers more than someone who is disrespectful and over-confident
- don't discuss controversial topics such as religion, politics and gender relations
- don't read from notes or your CV. You should be familiar enough with your own history to be able to talk about it unprompted
- don't criticise former employers or colleagues. Interviewers may mark you down as a troublemaker and a gossip
- don't argue with the interviewer, no matter what. Remember to keep things positive!

These rules apply for most jobs. However, employers in some industries can use more relaxed and informal interviewing techniques. In some creative fields (design and media for example) it may be expected that you turn up for the interview in casual clothes, as that is the dress code in the office. If you're in any doubt, do some research on typical interview technique in your line of work.

**Above all, preparation is the key to performing well in interviews. Research the role and organisation, and prepare evidence and examples of your skills and competencies.**

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