

Tips for a Successful Interview

Before the Interview

Do your homework! Know your audience. Research the college or employer that is interviewing you for admission, a scholarship or employment. We recommend you visit their website and/or read recent editions of magazines or newspapers so you are aware of some current events or issues involving the company or college. If you have filled out an advance application, re-familiarize yourself with anything you said about yourself, any writing sample you gave, etc.

Prepare your resume. A resume is a good way for people to get to know you, but more importantly, it is a way to highlight your strengths in order to steer the interview in directions that are more familiar and comfortable for you. An interviewer may be more apt to ask you a question about something on your resume than something for which you are not as well prepared.

The Interview Itself

Bring a resume (even if you sent one in advance). Have information available in case you have to fill out an application or give names for references.

Write down the names of your interviewer(s). Remembering the names of the people who interview you is important in order to send a thank you note later.

Relax and be yourself! This is not the time to be shy. This may be your only opportunity to show your strengths. In addition to your strengths, be able to talk about your weaknesses and how you have been able to use them to your advantage. If you don't know an answer to a question, don't make up an answer. Just say you don't know; it will look better than trying to fake it.

Be sure to:

- Arrive early. Allow time to find the correct building, park and relax for a few minutes before the interview.
- Dress appropriately (this generally means dress up).
- Use a firm handshake and have good posture. It shows you are confident.
- Make good eye contact. It shows you are confident and honest.
- Ask your priority questions. You also are interviewing the college or company.

After the Interview

Always send a thank you note to the person or persons who interviewed you. You never know when this person might cross your path again. It is especially important to send one if you are still interested in the opportunity you just explored!

Make notes about your visit or interview while thoughts are still fresh and if it is appropriate (e.g., a college visit or an employment interview). What did you see or hear that you liked or disliked? What do you still need to see or know more about?