

Going to an interview



Learner guide

Ready for work

Pre-employment skills

Going to an interview

Version 1.2



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Version control and modification history

Version	Release date	Modification
Version 1.1	May 2016	First release
Version 1.2	November 2017	Minor corrections as part of our continuous improvement program

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First published May 2016
Reprinted (with amendments) November 2017

Cover design: Aspire Training & Consulting

e-ISBN 978 1 76031 842 0 (PDF version)
ISBN 978 1 76031 841 3

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Prepare for a job interview

When you get a job interview, you will probably feel pleased and a bit nervous.

Before you even get to the interview there are many things you should know.

The most important thing is to be prepared. Learn about the workplace before you go to the interview. Think about the questions the interviewer may ask you.

If you follow the ideas in this learner guide, you will be well prepared for your interview.



What day and time is the interview?

Make sure you know the exact date and time for the interview. Note it down, so you don't forget. You could:

- circle the date on your calendar
- write the day and time in your diary
- enter the day and time into the calendar on your mobile phone.



Where will the interview take place?

Write down the address where the interview will be held. Then work out the best way to get there. You should look at a map and think about your transport options:

- Will you drive your car?
- Is there a carpark nearby?
- Will you need coins for a parking meter?
- Will you go by bus, tram or train?

You must be on time for the interview. Work out how long it will take to get from your home to the interview. Remember to include the time it takes to walk from the bus stop or carpark.

What do you know about the company?

Employers like you to know a bit about their company. This shows that you are interested in the job and have done some research. The interviewer may ask you what you know about the company, so you need to be prepared.

Here are some of the things an employer would like you to know about their workplace:

- The kind of products the company sells
- The kind of services the company offers
- The type of customers the company has
- The type of work the people do

How can you find out about a company?



You can access the company website. Look for the 'About us' or 'What we do' sections. You can also look at their Facebook page, product catalogue or advertising material.



You may be able to visit the workplace. For example, you could visit a clothes shop, gym or café to learn about the business. You would not be able to visit a factory or office, because these workplaces are not open to the public.



You can telephone the company and talk to someone in the human resources (HR) department. They can tell you more about the job and the company.



If you know anyone who works at the company, you can ask them to tell you about it.

Activity 1

Choose a company you would like to work for.

Find out the following things and write your answers in the boxes on the right.

Information	Details
The kind of products the company sells OR The kind of services the company offers	
The type of customers the company has	
The type of work the people do	
Whether workers have to wear a uniform or safety clothes at that workplace	

[Click to complete Activity 1](#)

What to take to the interview

The employer may ask you to bring examples of your work to the interview. This is common for art and design jobs. It's a good idea to take examples with you, even if the interviewer doesn't ask you to bring them. Collect the best examples of your work to show the interviewer what you can do.

- For a graphic design job, you could show brochures and posters you have made.
- For a gardening job, you could show photos of a garden you've worked on.

In some jobs, you won't have examples of your work. In that case, think of things you have achieved at work that you can tell the interviewer about.

- For a customer service job, you could tell the interviewer that you were named 'Employee of the month'.
- For a catering job, you could tell the interviewer how you planned and costed a menu for 200 guests.



What questions will the interviewer ask you?

The interviewer will ask you questions about the skills you have. Make sure you have some answers ready. You won't be so nervous at the interview if you have practised what you will say.

Here are some questions they may ask you:

- What do you know about our company?
- Why do you want to work for us?
- Why do you think you would be good at this job?
- What are your best qualities?
- What are your weaknesses?
- What will you do if you're not sure how to do something?

The interviewer might ask you to think of a difficult situation you have had at work and describe how you dealt with it.

Activity 2

Choose an ad for a job you would like to have. You may like to search for a job at: <http://aspirelr.link/seek>

Imagine you have an interview for the job you have chosen. Practise answering the questions listed above, out loud, as you would in a real interview.

[Click to complete Activity 2](#)

Have some questions to ask the interviewer

It is a good idea to have two or three questions ready to ask the interviewer. They will often ask, 'Is there anything you would like to know?' Asking a question shows you are interested.

Don't ask a question if the interviewer has already told you the answer. However, you could ask them:

- How much training will I receive?
- Will I have to travel in this job?
- How many people will I work with?
- When will I find out the outcome of the interview?

Don't ask about money or holidays at the interview. You can discuss these things if you are offered the job.



How to behave in the interview

Everyone is nervous at interviews – even the person interviewing you may be nervous. It is important to look confident, even if you don't feel it. Here are some tips.

Things to do



- Find out who will be interviewing you. Practise saying the person's name. It is polite to say the person's name correctly.
- Smile. The employer wants to see a friendly face.
- Be polite. Call the interviewer by their title; for example, Mr Donovan or Ms Anthony.
- Use full sentences and professional language when speaking.
- Sit up straight in your chair.
- Look at the interviewer when he or she is talking to you.
- Listen to what the interviewer is saying. Don't think about something else.
- Show you are keen to get the job. Nod your head as the interviewer is talking and ask questions to show your interest.

Things not to do



- Don't look at your mobile phone. Switch it off in the waiting room and put it away in your bag.
- Don't slouch.
- Don't chew gum.
- Don't use slang terms or swear words.
- Don't fidget or bite your nails.
- Don't interrupt. Wait until the interviewer has finished speaking before you reply.
- Don't answer a question with just a 'yes' or a 'no'. Give the interviewer more information.

How to present yourself

How you present yourself can say a lot about you. If you went to an interview with dirty clothes and messy hair it would tell the employer that you have not taken the time and effort to prepare. They may think you are not serious about the job, or that you can't be relied on to do the job to the required standard.

Think about what you will wear for the interview. The clothes you wear must be neat and clean. It is best to be formal, not casual. For an office job, men should wear a suit and tie, and women should wear a suit or separates with a jacket.

If the workplace is more casual, then you can follow a dress code called 'business casual'. Look online and you will find plenty of example photos and advice.

Get your clothes ready the day before the interview. Make sure they are clean and there are no holes or missing buttons. Iron your shirt. Make sure your shoes are clean.

Do not wear a lot of jewellery, make-up or strong perfume. Make sure you have had a shower, cleaned your nails, combed your hair and brushed your teeth.

If you present yourself well, the employer will see that you are serious about getting the job.



Activity 3

Make yourself a checklist to follow when you are preparing for an interview. List at least 10 points. There are two listed below to help:

Checklist:

- The date and time of the interview is in my diary.
- I know the address for the interview and how to get there.
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

[Click to complete Activity 3](#)

The day of the interview

Double-check the time of your interview so you arrive on time. Have your clothes ready and collect all the things you are going to take. When you are ready, check your appearance in a mirror.

Arriving at the interview

Arrive at the interview 5–10 minutes early. This shows that you are able to be prompt. You also have time to relax and calm down when you are on time. Now is a good time to turn off your mobile phone.

Greet the receptionist

The receptionist is the person who meets and greets visitors. He or she usually sits behind a desk in the entrance to the office. Go to the receptionist and say who you are. Smile and introduce yourself. For example, 'Hello. My name is Megan Wallis. I'm here for an interview at 10 o'clock with Mr Aden Maxwell.'

The receptionist will ask you to sit and wait. They will let the interviewer know you have arrived. While you wait, you can look around the room to see what the workplace looks like. How many people can you see? What types of jobs are they doing? You can learn a lot just by looking around.

Greet the interviewer

The person interviewing you will come and meet you. Smile and say hello. They may offer their hand to shake. Say their name correctly; for example, 'Good morning, Mr Maxwell. It's nice to meet you'.



In the interview

Most interviews are held in an office at the workplace. Sometimes more than one person will interview you. The interviewer will show you where to sit. Remember to sit up straight. This is your chance to show the interviewer what a good employee you will be.

Here is an example of how most interviews take place.

Part of the interview	What this means
The welcome	The interviewer may thank you for coming to the interview. He or she will also introduce you to anyone else who is interviewing you.
About the company	The interviewer tells you a bit about the company. They may describe the position you have applied for.
About you	The interviewer asks you to talk a bit about yourself. You should tell them: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what work you have done (include any part-time or casual jobs) • the relevant skills you have • any courses you are studying or have studied. Speak slowly and clearly when you answer.
Questions for you	The interviewer asks you some questions. They want to know how your skills can be used in the job, and how you would be good for the company.
Questions you have	The interviewer offers you the chance to ask any questions you have. Now is your chance to show you are interested in working for the company. Ask the questions you have prepared.
A test or trial	Sometimes the interviewer will ask you to do a test. If the job includes typing, they may ask you to type a document on the computer. If the job is in a factory, they may ask you to operate a machine.

Part of the interview	What this means
The closing or farewell	The interviewer thanks you for coming to the interview. You should also thank the interviewer for giving you their time. The interviewer will take you to the door and say goodbye. You will not find out straight away if you have got the job; you must wait to hear from the employer again.

Tips

If you forget what to say:

- Take a deep breath.
- Concentrate.
- Ask the interviewer to say the question again.
- Think of the answers you practised before the interview.

If you can't answer a question:

- Be honest. Tell the interviewer you don't understand the question.
- Tell the interviewer if you don't have a skill he or she wants, but that you learn quickly.

Activity 4

Look at the pictures of the people being interviewed. Then answer the questions that follow.

1. What is the person being interviewed here doing wrong?



2. What is the person being interviewed here doing right?



[Click to complete Activity 4](#)

What you have learnt

Put a ✓ in the box when you have learnt these things.

- Be prepared for the interview:
 - Remember the day and time.
 - Know the address.
 - Find out about the company.
 - Practise answering the questions you may be asked.
 - Prepare two questions to ask the interviewer.
 - Arrive 5–10 minutes early.
- Present yourself well for the interview. Wear neat and clean clothes.
- Be polite and smile when you greet the interviewer.
- Show you are keen to get the job:
 - Be confident.
 - Answer the questions honestly.
 - Tell the interviewer your good points.
 - Sit up straight.
 - Speak clearly.
- If you forget what to say:
 - take a deep breath
 - concentrate
 - ask the interviewer to say the question again.

Check your learning

Choose an ad for a job you would like. You can access job ads at: <http://aspirelr.link/seek>

Imagine you are asked to have an interview for the job you chose. Your trainer will ask you the questions below. Write down your answers, then practise saying them.

Tell your trainer when you are ready to do the 'interview'.

1. What do you know about our company?

2. Why do you want to work for us?

3. What skills do you have to do this job?

4. What will you do if you're not sure how to do something?

5. What kind of work would you like to be doing in five years' time?

6. What do you think are your best qualities?

7. Tell me how you plan your day. What do you do when you have lots of things to do?

[Click to complete](#)

Answers

Answers to activities

Activity 1

Answers will vary. Here is an example answer.

Information	Details
The kind of products the company sells OR The kind of services the company offers	It sells stationery, office products and furniture. It has many stores Australia-wide.
The type of customers the company has	The customers are individual people and many other businesses.
The type of work the people do	Customer service – the workers are retail staff who assist customers, process orders and use cash registers.
Whether workers have to wear a uniform or safety clothes at that workplace	The workers wear a uniform. They don't wear any safety clothes.

Activity 2

Answers will vary greatly depending on the job chosen.

Activity 3

Answers will vary. Here is an example answer:

Checklist:

- The date and time of the interview is in my diary.
- I know the address for the interview and how to get there.
- I have found out some information about the company.
- I have collected some examples of my work.
- I have practised answering questions the interviewer may ask.
- I have prepared two questions to ask the interviewer.
- I have practised staying calm.
- I have chosen the clothes I will wear.
- I know how to say the interviewer's name.
- I have turned my mobile phone off.

Activity 4

Answer to Question 1

The woman is yawning. This may be considered rude. The interviewer may also think the woman is not well prepared or interested in the job.

Answer to Question 2

The woman is making eye contact and looks keen and interested. She is sitting up straight.

Answers to check your learning

Answers to all the questions will vary according to the company. Here is an example answer for a part-time administration assistant position. The job is at a shelter for dogs.

Answer to Question 1

It is a not-for-profit company, so all the money donated goes into caring for lost or abandoned dogs. It is run by a small staff and volunteers. It is open every day at various hours. People can make cash donations or donate food, toys and other items to help care for the dogs. People can adopt a dog from the shelter at a small cost.

Answer to Question 2

I like the values of the organisation as they match my own. I also love dogs and would love to work for an organisation dedicated to helping them. The part-time position would also suit as I am studying to become a vet nurse.

Answer to Question 3

I have excellent computer and typing skills. I am also confident using the telephone and telephone systems.

Answer to Question 4

I would ask my supervisor or a co-worker and clarify anything I am not sure about.

Answer to Question 5

I would like to finish my studies and become a vet nurse, ideally in a charity organisation like this one.

Answer to Question 6

I am friendly and easygoing. I get along with everyone. I am also hard-working and take pride in my work.

Answer to Question 7

I write lists of what I need to do, with the most important things at the top. As I complete one task I cross it off and go on to the next job. If I ever have lots of things to do, I check with my supervisor what is most important and do that first.