



Job interviews for young jobseekers

Getting invited

- You are half way there if you get an interview but there is still a lot of work to do.
- Make sure you let the employer know that you are coming to the interview. Ask them if there is anything you need to bring.
- If you don't get interviews, the reasons could include: not enough experience, too few qualifications and too much competition. Voluntary work can improve your chances.

Preparation

- Make sure you have read everything you have been sent. Also research the company/organisation on the internet.
- Plan how you will answer the questions. Employers like to hear examples rather than just be told that you are good at something.
- Check that you know how to get there – print out a map and look at the route. If possible, do a run-through of the journey so you know exactly where it is. On the day, allow extra time for unexpected problems.

Answering the questions

- Give honest answers but be tactful. Try to let your enthusiasm come across so that the employer is clear that you are willing to work hard.
- Some questions can be a bit confusing so ask if you do not understand something.
- Look at the interviewer/s when they are talking and when you are responding to questions but don't make them feel uneasy by staring.

Possible questions

- Tell me about yourself. Employers do not want to hear your life story! You could start with any voluntary/part time work you have done and say what you learnt.
- Give me an example of a problem you had in your last job/at college/school and how you handled it. What would you do now that you didn't do then? Employers want to be sure that you can learn from past mistakes.
- What makes you the best person for this job or why have you applied for this job? This is your chance to give a few examples of past achievements and to explain how your experience/personality would benefit their company.

Asking the interviewer questions

- If the interviewer asks if there's anything more you want to say, use the opportunity wisely – for instance, remind them of your suitability for the job or ask about training.
- Don't ask about things that have been answered already (either in the interview itself or in the literature sent to you). You can, however, ask for clarification.
- If there is nothing more to ask, say that everything has been explained very clearly and thank them for their time.

Things to remember

- Arrive on time.
- Be friendly and polite to everyone you meet, not just the interviewer/s.
- Try to relax.

Things not to do

- Don't interrupt the interviewer/s when they're talking.
- Don't be over-friendly.
- Don't assume that the interviewer/s will remember everything you've put on your application form or CV.

Telephone interviews

- Companies may use telephone interviews as a way of deciding whether to see you face-to-face. Banks, supermarkets and travel agencies often interview this way.
- You may be able to prepare for an interview but occasionally you will be phoned out of the blue. If it is not convenient to talk, agree on an alternative time.
- Treat the interview seriously. Take notes, speak clearly and listen to the questions. Have a copy of any CVs, application forms, etc close by just in case you are called.

After the interview

- If you are offered the position and are unsure, talk it through with someone but don't leave the employer hanging on. Remember, new job nerves are quite common!
- If you are not successful, the employer may be willing to give you feedback.
- Sometimes there may be a follow-up interview, especially if there is a lot of competition for the job and the employer is not sure.

Our equal opportunities policy: Successful Young People, Successful Communities

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This information is available in alternative formats, call 020 7938 8080.

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