

What is an Interview?



Introduction: An interview is a “face-to-face meeting” or a meeting arranged for the formal discussion of some matter. There are several kinds of interviews. A job interview is a formal meeting between a job applicant and a representative of an organization to discuss a job. In this type of interview, the company representative asks the questions and the applicant responds. An informational interview is a less formal interview with a company representative in order to find out more about the company and the jobs available in that company. In this type of interview, the applicant or student asks the questions and the company representative responds. While the goals of these two types of interviews are different, much of the process is the same.

An informational interview can help in two ways: (1) provide more information about a company and/or job in which you are interested, and (2) give you practice in an interview situation. Being properly prepared and informed about the interview process can help you positively focus your energies on what needs to be done and help you find the right job.

Interview Tips

- A. Be prepared. Know about the company. In an informational interview, you will learn more about the company, its products/services, and be better prepared for an interview.
- B. Practice interviewing techniques with a friend. Role play different situations.
- C. Go to your interview alone and arrive 10-15 minutes early. If the interview site is in a part of town unfamiliar to you, practice driving there so you know the way and how much time it will take to get there.
- D. Be properly dressed—even for an informational interview. Be neat and clean, pressed and polished. Avoid excessive jewelry, perfume, make-up and extreme hair styles and body piercing. Do not smoke before or during the interview. Remember that many companies now have “no smoking” policies to guard the health of their employees. Do not chew gum.
- E. Prepare yourself mentally. At the interview, present yourself in a positive and confident manner. Shake hands firmly. Know and use the name of the person with whom you are meeting. If it is a difficult name to say, ask the receptionist for the correct pronunciation.
- F. Watch your body language - smile, maintain proper posture, maintain alertness, avoid nervous mannerisms such as playing with your hair or jewelry, maintain proper eye contact, be enthusiastic. Lean forward slightly to express interest and be comfortable in your seat.

- G. Be aware of time--if a limit to the interview has been set, pace yourself. Don't overstay your welcome. Speak in a clear voice, using good grammar and avoiding slang. At all times remember the purpose of the interview. Treat the interview as a great learning experience!
- H. Shake hands and thank the person before leaving.
- I. Write a thank you letter. Whether it is an informational interview or a job interview, the person took time out of his or her day to extend courtesy to you; for this he/she should receive a formal thank you.

Common Interview Questions

- Tell me about yourself.
- Will you relocate?
- What motivates you?
- What are your short-term goals?
- What are your long-term goals?
- What can you do for us?
- How do you work under pressure?
- What salary are you worth?
- What are your three most important accomplishments thus far in your career?
- What is your greatest strength? Weakness?
- Give an example of your creativity.
- Give an example of your analytical skills.
- Give an example of your administrative skills.
- Give an example of some of your leadership skills.
- How do you interact with co-workers?
- How do you motivate people?
- What do you know about our company?
- In what way do you feel you can make the biggest contribution to this firm?
- Why are you changing fields?
- What direct supervisory experience have you had?
- What did you like best about your last (or present) job?
- Is your present (or past) income commensurate with your abilities?
- What are your general feelings about psychological assessment?
- What are your thoughts regarding promotion for yourself?
- How would you describe the "ideal" boss?
- How do you define cooperation?
- How do you spend your spare time? Do you have any hobbies?
- What would you do to improve our firm? How?
- Could you have done more in your last (or present) job?
- What suggestions have you offered former employers that were actually adopted?
- How do you define success?