

Heading to your first interview

Your first interview is a big deal, you are venturing into the world of work but it can also be rather scary. An interview is all about showing your potential employer that you are a perfect fit for the role and that you are hardworking and trustworthy.

Stop and think

What will happen at my interview?

What should I wear?

What questions will I be asked?

How will the interviewer decide who to give the job to?



Job interviews are useful ways for companies to find the right person to work for them. Due to this, you will most likely discuss different aspects of the job, be asked questions about your qualifications, skills and any work experience that you may have.

Common problems

- Being overly anxious
- Being too laid back and unprepared
- Not giving relevant or concise answers
- Lack of research on the job or the company
- Not speaking clearly
- Not making eye contact with the interviewer

It is easy to overcome and avoid these issues, just spend some time thinking about and preparing for your interview.

Planning for an interview

As soon as you are offered the interview, you should start planning. There are some key areas of interview preparation that you should include:

- **Interview arrangements** - (make sure to check where and when the interview is being held)

- **Paperwork** - print off a copy of your job application/CV and any other paperwork that the interviewer may need
- **Reviewing your job application** - think of the questions that they might ask about your skills, qualifications, work experience and interests
- **Travel plans** - look into train times and bus times if necessary
- **Finding out about the job** - research the role that you have applied for
- **Researching the company** - if you don't know much about the company it can make you seem disinterested and poorly informed
- **Organise what to wear** - make sure that it is appropriate for the company



Interview types

One-to-one interviews - are the most common type of interviews. You meet with the interviewer face to face and discuss your job application and suitability for the job



Informal interviews - require some special care as it is easy to forget that you are being interviewed. Make sure not to divulge more information than you intend, especially about your home and social life.

Panel interviews - are where there is more than one interviewer. Quite often each interviewer will have a different role and may ask you questions depending on their job.

Telephone interviews - are used to screen a larger group of job applicants. Asking preliminary questions allows the interviewer time to decide who to invite for a face to face interview.

Group interviews - often require you to work together with other candidates under a time pressure. This is to show how quickly you can come up with ideas and solutions

How to make a good first impression?

If you make a poor first impression, you have very little time to change the interviewer's mind. However, if you make a good first impression, this creates a positive framework for the remainder of the interview. When you are trying to make a good first impression, there are some key factors that you should account for:

- **Arriving in good time** - arrive ten minutes early so that you can gather your thoughts, relax and feel in control
- **Facial expressions** - make sure to smile and look engaged
- **How you stand/walk** - don't slouch or hunch over as this looks unprofessional and makes you seem disengaged
- **What you are wearing** - make sure that it is appropriate for the type of interview, as well as for the company
- **Tone of voice** - sound enthusiastic in the conversation, if you sound or look bored then that is what you will be remembered for
- **How you shake hands** - a firm handshake always gives a great first impression



“My short-term goal is to bluff my way through this job interview. My long-term goal is to invent a time machine so I can come back and change everything I’ve said so far.”