

# SIMPLE GUIDE TO SUCCESSFUL INTERVIEWS

Just the word “interview” is enough to spark anxiety for many. The idea of sitting in front of a possible employer answering whatever questions they throw your way might sound intimidating. With the right preparation and knowledge, however, you can walk into your first interview feeling confident in yourself and your interview skills.

## **Before the Interview**

The first step is preparation. You’ve already been invited to interview, so the interviewer most likely has seen your resume. Still, you should have some extra copies to bring with you and be ready to explain any portion of it comfortably. You may be asked to describe a past job, a gap in your career, or any of the skills you have listed.

Before going into the interview, spend an ample amount of time researching the company. Brush up on its history and learn what you can of its culture, organizational structure, and various information such as where headquarters are located, who the CEO is, and the mission of the company. Read about the person who will be interviewing you if information is publicly visible on their company page or LinkedIn profile, and be sure to remember his/her name and address him/her correctly.

Go through some common interview questions and try answering them out loud to practice. Some will be general questions about yourself such as the classic “tell me about yourself,” or, “what are your weaknesses?” while others might be more behavioral-based such as “tell me about a time you dealt with conflict in the workplace.” Have various examples from your past experience ready so you can avoid drawing blanks. Find someone you trust to act as the interviewer and hold a mock interview session before the real one if you can.

## **The Interview**

Dress neatly and professionally, and be sure to arrive a little early for your interview. Punctuality is especially important for your first impression. Give a firm handshake and make eye contact with your interviewer.

An interview isn't just a test to see if you're "good enough" for a position. Its purpose is to see if you and the company are a good fit for each other. As someone who is pursuing the position, answer questions in a way that shows that you have something of value to offer the company. Be honest but don't be overly humble.

Since the goal of the interview is to see that you are a good fit for the company, it is expected that you will ask questions as well. You should have a list of questions about the company and position ready beforehand, but also go with the flow and ask relevant questions that may come up during the interview.

## **After the Interview**

Within a couple of days after the interview, send a brief thank-you note by email thanking your interviewer and highlighting your interest in working at the company. If you'd like to stand out, you could also send a handwritten thank-you note by mail. The interview and hiring process can take some time, and some companies are not great at communicating with potential hires. Wait a while before you send a follow-up email with any inquiries about if a decision has been made yet about the position. In the meantime, keep your options open and continue applying and interviewing at other companies. The more practice you get, the more comfortable you will become at interviews!