

Ultimate!  
The <sup>^</sup> Job Search Guide  
for teens



{Everything you need to know to land  
a job you'll love!}

# Through the Interviewer's Eyes

{Here's what they're thinking when you walk in ...}

Are you:

- Neat or sloppy?
- Smiling or scowling?
- Courteous or disrespectful?
- Positive or negative?
- Making eye contact or looking at the floor?

What the interviewer is concerned about:

- "I want to hire the right person."
- "Will this candidate work well with other staff?"
- "Will this candidate represent the company well?"
- "I'm nervous."
- "What if I make a mistake?"



Hiring you, or anyone, is a risk for the employer. The business will invest time and resources in hiring and training you. *So this is a big deal to them, too.*

## First impressions say a lot!

### DON'T

- Wear too much make-up or perfume
- Wear anything with advertisements or sayings
- Give anyone the cold shoulder. The secretary will report your attitude and behavior back to the interviewer.

### DO

- Give a nice, firm handshake.
- Dress neatly: Tuck in shirts, belt pants that are loose, etc.
- Strike up friendly conversations with other workers.



## What does the interviewer want out of the interview?

- To know without a doubt that you can do the job
- To feel good about taking the risk of hiring you
- To be inspired about the benefits you will bring to the company
- To be reasonably sure that you are committed to staying with the company long-term

Help the interviewer feel at ease by ...

1. Offering information that is relevant to the job and your capabilities to do the job. This will help keep the interviewer on focus.
2. Listing your skills and how you applied them in a previous position. The interviewer will know you can do what you say you can do.

DON'T give any personal information that isn't relevant to the job: marital status, religious affiliation, sexual orientation, family size, etc. And do not talk badly about previous employers!

# Prep Questions

{Trust us, these are pretty common questions during an interview}

- 1. Tell me about YOURSELF.** What the interviewer is looking for is a couple of minutes of your work-related accomplishments, qualifications and experience - NOT your life history.
- 2. What are your STRENGTHS?** Choose a few of your characteristics that would most pertain to the position the employer is trying to fill.
- 3. What are your WEAKNESSES?** Choose a characteristic that is considered a weakness by some, but would be attractive to an employer (“I love to work nights and weekends!” “I’m a workaholic” etc.) or show a past weakness that you have turned into a strength.
- 4. What QUALIFICATIONS do you have?** “Could you please tell me what qualifications you are looking for in your next employee?” Then, compare with your knowledge, skills and abilities.
- 5. Why should I hire you?** Research the company or the available position. You should stress how your knowledge, skills and abilities relate to the employer’s needs. It’s time to brag.
- 6. Where do you see yourself in 5 years?** Communicate that you hope to learn and grow with the company, while contributing to the company’s goals.
- 7. What are your biggest ACCOMPLISHMENTS?** Keep your answers job-related. Talk in terms of contributions made as part of a team to the success of a company goal.
- 8. What was your greatest FAILURE?** What did you learn from it? Admitting to a failure shows maturity. Avoid examples that might reflect on your ability to do the job.

# Prep Questions, *continued*

- 9. Give an example of a major problem that you have had to handle.** 1. Define the problem. 2. Identify options. 3. Decide on a solution. 4. How did you handle the obstacles? 5. Results: Your approach to solving problems is the important part.
- 10. What do you know about the company?** You must do research on the company and be prepared for this question. What do they do? How long have they been in business? How large is it? Keep answers
- 11. What did you like LEAST about your most recent boss?** Be careful with this one. Any negative things you say about past supervisors will reflect what negative things you may say about future bosses. It is safe to say nothing.
- 12. What did you like MOST about your most recent boss?** This is not a personal question. Focus on something that demonstrates your appreciation for their supervisory skills. (Good role model, encourages communication, supportive, etc.)
- 13. What contributions did you make to your last company?** Try to make a logical connection between your past achievements and the job for which you are interviewing.
- 14. Why have you switched jobs so often?** Use reasons that are leading your career in a positive direction or situations that were beyond your control (job stagnation, demotions due to downsizing, etc.)
- 15. How much are you looking to earn?** This is a direct question looking for a direct answer. Give the wrong answer and you can get eliminated. Answer with a question, "How much does the job pay? Is there a budgeted salary? What can you afford?"
- 16. Do you have any questions?** Always have at least 10 questions prepared.

# Preparing for the Interview

Congratulations, you've landed an interview! Now, it's time to prepare.



## Know about the company

- Research the company using pamphlets, informational interviews, Chambers of Commerce, library and websites.
- Get a job description. Do this by looking up the job, website, informational interview, by calling the company, or by talking to someone you know who works there.
- Information you should know: Name of company, what service/product they offer, what is the product used for/what is its purpose, what positions are they hiring, the company's community involvement and other details.
- Find out who will be doing the interviewing and how to spell their names.

## Questions to ask when called for an interview

- Who will be handling the interview? Be sure to get the correct spelling and pronunciation of the name or names. You may be interviewing with more than one person.
- Where will the interview take place? Ask for the specific location, so you know where to go.
- What entrance to the building should I use? You don't want to walk into a restricted area.
- Where should I park? If that is full, is there another place I could park? (If applicable)
- Who should I report to when I get there? If the person says "me," be sure to get their name also and write it down.

**At a job interview: "What are your strengths?"**

**"I'm an optimist and a positive thinker."**

**"Can you give me an example?"**

**"Yes, when do I start?"**

## How to prepare

- Role-play questions and answers with someone, paying attention to tough questions.
- Prepare a list of 5-10 good questions you can ask the interviewer.

## What to bring with you

- Portfolio
- Extra copies of your resume (5-6). Feel free to leave a resume in front of you during the interview for reference.
- Folder with a pen, questions, blank paper, thank you note, and 2-3 manila folders.

▪ Manila folders should contain: resume, references, letters of recommendation, work evaluations, certifications/licenses and other relevant documents. Make sure your name is written on the folder and the items inside are important and apply to the position. Leave this with the employer at the end of the interview.

▪ **A positive attitude!**

# Preparing for the Interview

## How to dress

- Dress “one step above” what you would be wearing on the job.
- Remember to remove coat and hat before interview.

## The Extras {They go a long way}

1. Eat well.
2. Get a good night’s sleep.
3. Don’t smoke before the interview.
4. Remember, the secretary looks for the first impression.
5. Have a good attitude and SMILE!
6. No chewing gum.



## Making Introductions

1. Introduce yourself to the secretary. “Hello, my name is \_\_\_ and I am here to interview for the \_\_\_\_\_ position.”  
*Remember to smile politely.*
2. Introduce yourself to the interviewers. “Good morning/afternoon! My name is \_\_\_.”  
*Remember to smile politely and offer a firm handshake.*

## Body language during the interview

1. Smile and use consistent eye contact with all of the people in the interview.
2. Use good posture. Relax your back against the chair, hold your hands in your lap, and keep your feet together on the floor with your portfolio in front of you.
3. Avoid doing anything that would distract the interviewer from focusing on your answers, i.e. tapping fingers, swinging feet.



## Interview Checklist

- Smile and make good eye contact.
- Show enthusiasm!
- Know your skills, education, training, background, and understand the job requirements.
- Convince them that you will be punctual, reliable and a team player.
- Convince them you really want to for the company.
- Remember to keep family matters and personal problems out of the conversation.
- Use interviewer’s name during the interview.
- Be honest and believable.
- Ask questions you have prepared.
- Be confident and relax; practicing will help with this one.
- Answer questions without talking too much, but get your point across.
- Take the initiative to ask if you can check back about a decision on the job.

Be sure to send a thank you card to each individual directly after the interview.

# Big! The Interview

This is your chance to sell yourself using proofs (previous work experience, education, and training), emphasizing your skills, strengths and abilities.

## The flow of the interview

1. Present your proofs.
  - a. Describe past experience.
  - b. Demonstrate that you are a successful worker.
  - c. Tell a brief story.
2. Refer to your portfolio.
3. Describe experience and education in a positive way. For example, don't say, "I started training in welding but became distracted because of high workload."
4. It is OK to ask questions about the company or the position as you think of them, as long as it doesn't interrupt the flow of the conversation. This lets them know you are interested in the company.



### 5. Make sure you show the interviewer and express through your answers that:

**You can do the job.** The employer is looking for your skills, abilities, education, past experiences, strengths and background to see if you can successfully perform the duties of the job. Show them you are confident, have a positive attitude, can manage conflict and adjust to change, and you have a desire to work for the company.

**You will do the job.** The employer looks at a person's attitude and work ethic, transportation issues, child care, any prior convictions/arrests, substance abuse problems, health issues and reasons people left previous jobs. If asked, answer these questions discreetly but honestly.

**You are motivated to do the job.** Employers want to know you are interested and you will do the job with consistent effort.

**You can get along with others.** They want to know if you will fit into the existing team already on staff and if your work ethic, values and goals are similar to that of the organization. They look at an applicant's character, personality, attitude and temperament.

## Closure

1. When the interview ends, you will be given the chance to ask questions. Use your list of prepared questions.
2. After the question and answer sessions is complete, hand them your manila folder. "If you don't mind, I would like to leave you with copies of my portfolio."
3. Thank them, using their names, for the opportunity to interview, and shake hands firmly.

## On your way out

1. Thank the receptionist. "I had a nice interview and would like to thank the interviewers. Could you please help me with the correct spelling of their names?"
2. Be friendly to whomever you meet. You never know what their importance or role may be.



# After the Interview

## Follow up

1. Send out a thank-you note immediately after the interview to all interviewers. If you interviewed with three people, you should send three thank-you notes.



### Example thank you note format

Your name  
Address  
City, State, Zip  
Phone number

Date

Manager's name  
Department  
Company name  
Address  
City, State, Zip

Dear Ms. Hireyou,

Thank you so much for interviewing me for your \_\_\_\_\_ position on May 17, 2017. I enjoyed meeting with you and learning about your company.

I am a fast learner and hard worker. I try to give more than what is expected. I appreciate the time you took to interview me. I am very interested in working for you and look forward to hearing from you about this position.

Sincerely,

Your signature

Your name printed

2. Make your follow-up phone call. Make sure to have a pleasant tone in your voice.

A. "Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_. I interviewed for the \_\_\_\_\_ position and am following up on whether a decision has been made on who will be hired."

B. If the position **has not been filled**: "Please let \_\_\_\_\_ know that if they would like any additional information, to feel free to contact me at (phone number). Thank you for your time."

C. If the position **has been filled**: "I appreciate the opportunity to have interviewed for this position. If possible, could you please keep my resume and application on file for any additional positions that come available for which I may be qualified?" You might also want to ask, "Is there any information you can offer as to what disqualified me and could assist me in my continued job search or pursuit of training?"

## A few reminders

{Or, what to do if things don't work out this time...}

- Learn from your experience.
- Do not be discouraged if you feel that you did not do well in an interview. Rather, take what you learned and practice for your next one.
- Only one applicant is chosen for each job opening, which means that all other applicants are rejected.
- Being turned down is part of the process. It is not a signal to become discouraged or to blame yourself or the company. Use it as an opportunity to take stock of your interview performance and make any necessary changes.
- Give yourself a break and improve your self-esteem and confidence by recognizing that sometimes, you are not hired despite excellent qualifications and a flawless interview performance. It happens.

## What questions should I ask at a job interview?

- Would you please describe a typical workday and my duties?
- Which duties are most important for this job?
- How will I be trained for this job?
- How long should it take me to get my feet on the ground and become productive?
- Would you please describe the ideal employee?
- Who are the people I'd be working with and what do they do?
- How would I get feedback on my performance?
- How long do most people stay on this job?
- Why do people leave the job?
- How does someone get promoted?
- What do you consider to be my strengths? My weaknesses?
- Could you give me a brief tour? I would enjoy seeing your employees at work.
- I want this job. What could I say or do to convince you to offer me this job?
- When should I expect to hear from you?

Other:

# Career Preparation Activities

- Functional Vocational Evaluations
  - Career Scope
  - Casey Life Skills
  - Interest Inventory
  - Work Evaluations
- Education Development Plan
  - Career Cruising
- Site Visits
- Job Shadowing
- Work-Based Learning
- Acquisition of Daily Living Skills
  - Social Skills
  - Personal Appearance
  - Communication
- Development of Employment
  - Phone etiquette
  - Work habits/skills
  - Resume Development
  - Job Applications
  - Mock interviews, interview practice
- Community Experiences
- Post-secondary Education/Training
  - College visits (NCMC, NMC, Baker College, Kirtland Community College, etc.)
  - Vocational/Technical School visits (MCTI, IAI, MTec, etc.)
  - College applications
  - FAFSA
  - Scholarships
- Disability Awareness
- Self-Advocacy
- Independent Living Skills
  - Acquisition of Driver's License
  - Selective Service registration
  - Voter registration
  - Filing taxes
  - Budgeting (Life Unplugged)
  - Connect students with agencies
    - Michigan Rehabilitation Services
    - Social Security
    - Health Department
    - Community Mental Health
    - MichiganWorks!