

The Job Interview Speech

You will be interviewed as a potential employee in a career you have researched for your I-Search paper. A job interview is a series of impromptu speeches that are both informative and persuasive. To prepare for this speech you must:

1. Write a résumé and cover letter. Edit and revise them until they are perfect.
2. Practice responses to possible interview questions.

How will the job interviews work in class?

- You will each serve on three different interview committees.
- You will work with your committee to generate interview questions for your interviewee/s (9 questions per interview—make the questions relevant to the position the interviewee hopes to earn).
- DO NOT tell the interviewee the questions you will ask him/her.
- One person will be in charge of the interview committee (I will choose the lead interviewer).
- The room will be arraigned for the mock job interview. The interview committee will sit on one side of desks and will face the interviewee on the other side.
- The speech will be taped.

Responsibilities of the Lead Interviewer:

- Arrange a meeting time with your group to generate questions for the interviewee.
- Decide which questions are most important to ask, and arrange the questions in a logical order.
- Bring 4 copies of the interview questions the day of the interviewee's speech.
- Answer the interviewee's question at the end of the interview.
- Complete the evaluation chart and write an evaluation for the interviewee.
Discuss: responses to questions, professionalism/interview etiquette, enthusiasm and attitude, believability, question asked.

Responsibilities of the Interview Committee Members:

- Help the Lead Interviewer generate interview questions.
- Be present the day of the interviewee's interview.
- Bring a pen and pencil.
- Take notes during the speech.

Responsibilities of the Interviewee:

- Dress professionally.
- Bring 2 copies of your résumé.
- Avoid interview mistakes (see the list in this packet).
- Prepare a question to ask the interview committee.
- Write a 1-2 page self-reflection after the speech. Discuss: responses to questions, professionalism/interview etiquette, enthusiasm and attitude, believability, question asked, what you learned, and what you did well/poorly.

The Job Interview

A job interview is a business meeting (in-person or by telephone) with a representative(s) who has either the authority to hire or make recommendations to hire. Your goal is to convince them that you have the skills and ability to do the job and make a positive contribution. To prepare for a job interview it's important to:

Research the Company

- Visit the company's Web site before the interview.
- Know the company's mission statement and their history, latest sales figures, number of employees, locations, major competitors/affiliates, etc.
- Learn the company's short-term and long-term goals so you can present yourself as a key asset in achieving their objectives.



Be Aware of Current Events

- Read the paper, and/or search the Internet to learn of any news events that could possibly affect the company.

Be A Salesperson

- Know the product you are selling... YOURSELF!
- Be ready to give examples of how you have used your skills to accomplish goals.
- You may be asked if you have any weaknesses. Be prepared and clarify how you turned a weakness into a positive. For example, *"I used to not be a morning person, until I started running and working out everyday. It has really increased my energy levels throughout the whole day and my overall productivity and personal confidence has been enhanced as well."*

Practice, Practice, Practice!

- Review and prepare answers to some common interview questions (see examples on next page).
- Time your answers - they should not be too long or too short.
- Role play with a friend and, if possible, videotape your mock interview. Pay attention to your posture, body language, and eye contact.

Be Prepared! Don't forget to bring:

- Several forms of identification (driver's license, social security card, etc.).
- Any relevant training certificates/licenses.
- Names, addresses and phone numbers of at least three professional references.
- Several copies of your résumé as you may interview with more than one person.
- An example of your work that best demonstrates your skills relevant to the position you are applying for (optional).

Present a Professional Image

- Dress professionally and arrive 10-15 minutes early for your appointment.
- Maintain a positive, enthusiastic and courteous attitude, eye contact, and use a firm handshake.
- NEVER criticize or make negative statements about former employers.
- Give complete and thoughtful answers; avoid using slang like, "yup" or "nope."

Close the Interview and Follow-Up

- Offer your appreciation for the interviewers' time, and send a thank you letter within 24 hours after the interview.
- Call in a week after the interview to reconfirm your interest and to inquire about when a final decision is expected to be made.

Common Interview Questions

To be successful in an interview you need to be prepared to answer a variety of personal and professional questions. Below is a list of commonly asked questions:

BACKGROUND QUESTIONS - The interviewer may make inquiries regarding your personality, education, and overall career development.

- Can you tell me about yourself?
- How would your friends and past employers describe you?
- Where do you see yourself five or ten years from now?
- How do you make use of your spare time?
- What do you consider to be your greatest accomplishment(s)?

WORK HISTORY QUESTIONS - Work history questions are used to determine if you have the skills and experience to perform the job, and if you have a good work ethic.

- What do you know about our company and what skills do you have that can benefit us?
- Why do you want to work here, what interested you about our company?
- How does your training or work experience prepare you for this job?
- Can you give an example of your creativity and problem-solving ability?
- How do you function/manage under pressure or stressful situations?
- What are your three greatest strengths? ...greatest weaknesses?
- In your last job, what special responsibilities or projects did you undertake?
- Can you provide a sample of your work?
- How did you spend the time you were unemployed?
- You seem overqualified for this position. Why do you want this job?
- How do you feel about possible travel/relocation/overtime/weekend work demands of the job?

Question: *Why did you leave your last job?*

Answer: *While I enjoyed my work environment and received positive performance reviews, I felt ready for more responsibility and challenges.*

Don't Sweat It!...
job interview questions ARE wonderful things!
They are your greatest opportunity to prove that you
are the best person for the job!

Common Interview Questions (cont.)

MANAGEMENT QUESTIONS - These questions are often used for positions that involve employee supervision and to determine what kind of management style you work well with and if you *'fit'* the company's work philosophy.

- What type of managerial style do you respond to best?
- What methods do you use when managing others? How have they been effective?
- If asked to lead a project or initiative, who would you involve in the planning process?
- What do you see as the major role of management, and why?
- How do you motivate employees and maintain good morale?

Question: *If you had a problem with your supervisor, how would you solve it?*

Answer: *As most problems are due to simple miscommunication, I would request a personal meeting to discuss the issue and resolve the matter.*

STRESS QUESTIONS - Stress questions are intended to test your response to demanding or high pressure situations. Take a deep breath, remain calm, give a positive answer with conviction, focusing on your experiences and what you have learned. Do not answer defensively or portray a 'victim' attitude.

- What aspects of your work are most often criticized?
- You seem underqualified for this position. Why should I hire you?
- Have you ever failed at a job assignment? How did it make you feel and what did you learn?

Question: *Describe a weakness or flaw in your working style?*

Answer: *In the past, I have procrastinated on large projects. However, after taking a training course in project planning & management I learned skills such as breaking down a large project into smaller more manageable steps and effective time use. The skills I learned were a great use for a recent budget project I led and completed three weeks before the deadline.*

QUESTIONS TO ASK THE INTERVIEWER - Asking the interviewer questions will not only give you more information on which to base a decision, but will also express your interest in the company and the position.

- Why is this position available?
- What are the specific duties and responsibilities of the job? What would a typical workday entail?
- How would you describe the management style and reporting structure?
- What are the goals for this position, department and company?
- When do you expect to make a hiring decision?

“Dressing for a Job Interview”

<http://www.best-job-interview.com/dressing-for-a-job-interview.html>

*Your goal in **dressing for a job interview** is to project a professional and capable image whatever position you are interviewing for. If you are serious about getting the job you want you will focus on clothes that send the right career message.*

Consider these key aspects when dressing for a job interview:

Style

“Style is synonymous with the appropriate.” Often job candidates are unclear about what is appropriate interview clothing. The style of the candidates' clothing choice speaks loudly about their capability to correctly assess the job requirements. Formal business wear is usually appropriate for a job interview. This means a business suit or matched skirt and jacket for women. Most workplaces also consider a pantsuit or matched pants and blazer as appropriate formal business attire.

Complete the outfit with closed-toe shoes, a smart blouse, understated jewelry and make-up. For men a formal business environment generally means a suit, shirt and tie. A suit with matching coat and pants is the standard professional look. The style should be single-breasted and traditional. Designer suits that are highly fitted are generally inappropriate for a formal interview situation. Suits should be plain with no fancy buttons, stitching, or special trim.

If you know that the company you are interviewing for has a more casual dress code then go for a smart but less formal look. For women this means well tailored pants and a blouse, a smart dress or a well coordinated skirt and blouse. Tailored knit sweaters and sweater sets are appropriate business casual choices for women. Denims, T-shirts or baggy clothing are inappropriate interview wear. For men, dressing for a job interview in a less formal environment means tailored slacks with a long-sleeved shirt.

Appropriate style means avoiding a lot of logos and accessories. Rather select well-made clothes that are free from obvious logos or designer labels. This gives a professional rather than a trendy and frivolous look. Remember clothes do not have to be expensive to look good.

Color

Dressing for a job interview in the most appropriate manner means paying close attention to the colors you select. Color plays a key role in projecting a professional image. Neutral colors can be relied on to convey a competent and capable image. Neutral colors include navy blue, gray, camel, cream, white, beige and black. These colors look both professional and keep the focus of the interview on you and what you are saying.

For women a more personal touch can be included by using appropriate feminine colors like ice blue, lilac, a dusty or soft pink and a soft green as part of the mix. This can be in the form of a blouse or a scarf. Loud colors such as hot pink or bright red prove distracting in an interview. Hosiery should be tasteful and unnoticeable. Nude colors, or sheer black hosiery in

winter are appropriate. Shoes should be tasteful and not the first thing the interviewer notices about you.

The best suit colors for men are solid navy, beige or gray. Subtle pinstripes or plaid may also be acceptable. Men can include a pastel colored shirt to lift the neutral color of their suit or pants or add a distinctive tie. Shirt colors should always be lighter than the tie. Busy prints and loud colors are overwhelming and look unprofessional. Men's shoes should either be black or dark brown leather. Socks should be the same color as the suit and long enough so that your legs don't show when you sit.

Fit

Fit is all-important when selecting the most appropriate clothes for your job interview. Pants should be fitted but not tight. Skirts, especially straight styles such as pencil skirts, should be loose enough to sit down in comfortably. The skirt should also be an appropriate length, usually just above or below the knee, that you can sit without having to tug the hem down. Jackets and blouses should button up comfortably with no pulling or gaping. The shirt collar should fit the width of the jacket lapels and the sleeve cuffs should extend about a half-inch below the jacket sleeve.

Men should wear a belt with a suit. Belts should be plain leather with traditional buckles, avoid big, heavy and fancy buckles.

Avoid tight clothing when dressing for a job interview but also stay clear of baggy, ill-fitting clothing. This just looks sloppy.

Dressing for a job interview is key to your success. Your interview clothes send a powerful message to the interviewer about your professionalism and competence.



50 Worst of the Worst (and Most Common) Job Interview Mistakes ~Karen Burns

Here are 50 (yes, 50!) of the worst and most common job interview mistakes:

1. Arriving late.
2. Arriving too early.
3. Lighting up a cigarette, or smelling like a cigarette.
4. Bad-mouthing your last boss.
5. Lying about your skills/experience/knowledge.
6. Wearing the wrong (for this workplace!) clothes.
7. Forgetting the name of the person you're interviewing with.
8. Wearing a ton of perfume or aftershave.
9. Wearing sunglasses.
10. Wearing a Bluetooth earpiece.
11. Failing to research the employer in advance.
12. Failing to demonstrate enthusiasm.
13. Inquiring about benefits too soon.
14. Talking about salary requirements too soon.
15. Being unable to explain how your strengths and abilities apply to the job in question.
16. Failing to make a strong case for why you are the best person for this job.
17. Forgetting to bring a copy of your resume and/or portfolio.
18. Failing to remember what you wrote on your own resume.
19. Asking too many questions.
20. Asking no questions at all.
21. Being unprepared to answer the standard questions.
22. Failing to listen carefully to what the interviewer is saying.
23. Talking more than half the time.
24. Interrupting your interviewer.
25. Neglecting to match the communication style of your interviewer.
26. Yawning.
27. Slouching.
28. Bringing along a friend, or your mother.
29. Chewing gum, tobacco, your pen, your hair.
30. Laughing, giggling, whistling, humming, lip-smacking.
31. Saying "you know," "like," "I guess," and "um."
32. Name-dropping or bragging or sounding like a know-it-all.
33. Asking to use the bathroom.
34. Being falsely or exaggeratedly modest.
35. Shaking hands too weakly, or too firmly.
36. Failing to make eye contact (or making continuous eye contact).
37. Taking a seat before your interviewer does.
38. Becoming angry or defensive.
39. Complaining that you were kept waiting.
40. Complaining about anything!
41. Speaking rudely to the receptionist.
42. Letting your nervousness show.
43. Overexplaining why you lost your last job.
44. Being too familiar and jokey.
45. Sounding desperate.
46. Checking the time.
47. Oversharing.
48. Sounding rehearsed.
49. Leaving your cell phone on.
50. Failing to ask for the job.

Thank You Letter

Job seekers should mail a thank you letter within 24 hours after the interview. The letter should be typed and refer to the topics discussed during the interview and remind them of your relevant qualifications. Finally, and most importantly... PROOFREAD!

Sample Thank You Letter

Andrew Dragon
42 Blossom Drive
Wethersfield, CT 06109
860-555-5555
adragon@email.com

April 23, 2009

Chris Thompson, Editor
American Literature Monthly
55 Elm Street
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Ms. Thompson:

I enjoyed our discussion on Tuesday, April 21, regarding the American Literature Monthly's history and future goals, along with the role of the Writing Assistant position. Your plans to expand coverage on modern literature and poetry will certainly add a new dynamic to the magazine, and thereby increase its audience. Such growth can be accelerated with innovative marketing research and materials.

As we discussed in our meeting, I have exceptional skills and experience in creating marketing materials that would be of significant value to this new venture. For example, my marketing decisions have increased sales at Quiet Corner Book Store by over 30% in just two months. Combined with my knowledge of American Literature, I feel confident in meeting your expectations.

Thank you for the opportunity to meet with you. I am very interested in working for the American Literature Monthly, and look forward to speaking with you soon.

Sincerely,

Andrew Dragon

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