



Job interview tips for teens

by: AMY WHITE

So you've found a great job, applied for it and now it's time for the interview! How are those butterflies in your stomach? Not so good? It's OK, we're here to help. Here is some advice to help calm your nerves and get you prepared for your interview.

Don't be late for the interview!

Punctuality is very important when arriving to an interview. This is the first impression the employer gets, and if you're late, it gives the impression that you don't value the interviewer's time. Even arriving five minutes late can lose you the job - we're not kidding. Arriving 10-15 minutes early, on the other hand, will give you time to prepare. Be sure you have directions and you know how to get to your interview location. If you're unsure, go the day before to make sure you know how to get there.

Dress up

Keep your interview outfit casual, but not too casual. Showing up in jeans and a T-shirt may be comfy but doesn't give the best impression, even if that's what you'd be wearing on the job. Khakis and a nice collared shirt, or a tailored top and (not mini) skirt are always a good choice. If you're applying for a retail clothing store, avoid wearing clothing with a competitor's logo. A full suit is probably too much, unless you're applying for an office support job or a prestigious internship.

Prepare, prepare, prepare

Did I mention prepare? Know the company you are interviewing with and have questions ready for your interviewer. This shows the interviewer that you have an interest in the company. Keep in mind that it never hurts to practice. Make sure you know who you are and

what skill set you possess. And always be yourself - you want them to hire the real you, not a fake version of you.

Be aware of your body language

When you're nervous, do you tend to rub your arm? Jiggle your foot? Or click a pen? You are going to drive the interviewer *crazy* if you do any of those things! At the job interview, do your best to keep still, sit up straight and look the interviewer in the eyes. You want to appear calm and in control.

Practice interview questions and answers

"Tell me a little about yourself."

This is always a tough one, because you ask yourself, "What do they want to know?" Focus on your skills, abilities and your interests. The interviewer wants to know about you and what your plans are for the present and the future. Definitely don't start talking about your childhood, the music you like, your soccer trophies or anything else that's not relevant to the job. Remember to keep the answer brief, because it can set the tone for the rest of the interview.

"Why do you want to work for us?"

Here's your chance to tell the interviewer why you chose to apply for the job. Don't say because of the pay. This is your opportunity to talk about why you think you'd fit in really well and what you could bring to the team.

"What extracurricular activities do you participate in?"

This is your chance to talk about you and show your personality - but again, keep it short! Your extracurricular activities should reflect your best traits and your interests.

"Why should I hire you?"

Be honest. Let the interviewer know why you are the best for the job. This is your chance to sell yourself and set yourself apart from the other job candidates.

That's it! Just keep our rules in mind and you'll be sure to impress.

Good luck on your interview

Teen Job Interview Questions

When you are a teen preparing for a job interview, it can be helpful to review typical interview questions that you will most likely be asked. Reviewing answers as well can help you come up with your own responses. Take the time to personalize your answers so they reflect you, as a person and as a candidate for employment.

Teen Job Interview Questions

Why Are You Looking for a Job? - Of course, everyone wants to make money at a job, but the reasons you should share with a potential employer should reflect your interest in the field, or in helping to develop your skill set.

Why Are You Interested in Working for Our Company?

Employers ask this question to gauge your interest in the field, and to see if you have done your research. Make sure you check out the company's website at the very least, and familiarize yourself with what the company does, what the work and the work culture are like, and what's important to them.

How Has School Prepared You For Working at Our Company?

Here is your opportunity to talk about the skills you have gained in your education that will make you an ideal candidate for the position.

Why Should We Hire You? - New hires take time to train, and the company wants to know you are worth it. Let them know about your interest in contributing to the company immediately, and be sure to mention if you think they are a firm you would like to consider when your studies are complete. -

What Do You Think It Takes to be Successful in This Position?

The job posting can be very helpful in letting you know how they will want you to answer this question. Let them know about the skills you have that they are looking for.

How Would You Describe Your Ability To Work as a Team Member?

There have likely been many times you have worked as a team, on projects, in sports or while volunteering.

The interviewer will want to hear a specific example of a time you worked successfully in a team situation.

What Has Been Your Most Rewarding Accomplishment? - You don't want to brag, but you should share an accomplishment that relates to some of the qualities or experiences required for the job you're interviewing for.

What Are Your Salary Expectations? - With this question, the employer is trying to establish that your expectations are reasonable. As a young worker, the salary you are offered will probably align with an entry level position. It's usually best to avoid a specific number, unless you know for a fact what the job pays.

Tell Me about a Major Problem you Recently Handled. - With this question, the interviewer is trying to determine how skilled you are at problem solving. It's fine to use an example from school, work, sports or volunteering. Make sure you show a positive resolution.

Have You Ever Had Difficulty With a Supervisor or Teacher?

The interviewer will ask this question to determine how you relate to authority. Always answer honestly, but make sure that you have a positive outcome. Remember that the most difficult situations are sometimes the best learning experiences.

Tips for Handling a Job Interview for Teens

The key to successful interviewing for teens is to do exactly what a professional candidate for employment would do. That's the best way to make a positive impression on a prospective employer and to enhance your chances of getting the job.

I worked with a teen going on her first interview for a volunteer position, and she got a job offer on the spot. Why was it so easy? She dressed appropriately, answered questions in an informed manner, had questions to ask the interviewer, and, in general, made a very good impression on the interviewer.

Be Prepared

Don't just show up for the interview. The more information you have prepared in advance, the better impression you will make on the interviewer. Take the time to get working papers (if you need them) and references, before you start looking for a job.

Do your research. Learn all you can about the position and the company. The job posting, and others for similar positions, can offer valuable information about what they are looking for in a candidate.

That will let you know what skills you should be emphasizing on your resume and in your interview. Checking out the company website will give you insight into the company culture, and exactly what they do and aspire to accomplish. All this information will allow you the opportunity to give complete, educated answers to anything the interviewer might ask.

Bring the following with you to the interview

- Completed job application (if the employer doesn't have it already)
- Working papers
- References
- Resume (if you have one)
- Notepad / pen

Be Polite

It's essential to have good manners when interviewing. Shake your interviewer's hand. Make sure you listen carefully and thoughtfully to the interviewer. Don't sit until you are invited to. Don't slouch in your chair. Don't use slang or swear. Be polite, positive, and professional throughout the interview.

Know Your Schedule

Know what days and hours you are available to work, as the employer will almost surely ask. Flexibility is definitely an asset, because the more time you are available, the easier it is for the employer to set a work schedule. Also know how you are going to get to and from work, if you don't drive.

Be on Time

Arrive at the interview site a few minutes early. If you're not sure where to go, get directions ahead of time. If you aren't driving yourself, make sure you have a reliable ride.

Go on Your Own

If your mom or dad brings you to an interview, don't bring them into the interview room with you. It's important that you speak for yourself and connect with the interviewer, without someone else's assistance. You need to present yourself as a mature, responsible candidate for employment.

Send a Thank You Note

Take a few minutes to thank the person who interviewed you. If you have an email address, send an email thank you note, otherwise send a paper note thanking the interviewer for taking the time to meet with you.

YOU'RE
HIRED!



the balance

