

INTERVIEW

An interview is a way for the employer to get to know you. There are 4 ways to have an effective interview:

1. **PREPARE-** Find out as much as you can before the interview
 2. **SHARE-** Communicate your message effectively during the interview
 3. **CONNECT-** Show how your skills and past experiences are related to this position
 4. **FOLLOW-UP-** Have a list of action items for once the interview is over
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PREPARE- *Getting ready for the interview is a big part of being successful. The more you know before you head into your interview, the more effectively you can plan for it. You should be able to answer the following questions before you go to your interview.*

- When is the interview?
- Where is the interview?
- What is the parking availability? What bus will I take?
- How long will the interview take?
- What is the type of interview? (this may not be shared prior to the interview)

Additional considerations- *Plan to arrive 10-15 minutes early and don't schedule anything right after your interview in case it takes longer than you planned.*

Interviews Types *Some interviews take several stages and use different formats. The most common ones are:*

- *Phone interview-* Usually shorter (30 minutes or less) and may be used to screen candidates.
- *One-on-one-* You will meet with one individual and answer questions for about 30-60 minutes.
- *Group interview-* Several candidates will meet with one or more interviewers; process can be used to look at group behavior or may be used if the company is hiring multiple candidates.
- *Panel interview-* One candidate will meet with a few interviewers at once so that the people who will be impacted by the hiring decision can share their feedback and thoughts.

Materials *You should bring some materials with you to show that you're prepared.*

- Address of company and name of interviewer
- Copy of job application (optional)
- 5 copies of your resume
- Reference List (only give to interviewers if asked)
 - Portfolio (optional) with letters of recommendation(s)
 - Photos of projects
 - Transcripts
- Paper & pen/pencil

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Appearance *Your appearance contributes to the impression you'll make. Here are some things to think about:*

- Is my outfit industry appropriate and professional?
- Are my clothes clean and unwrinkled?
- Are my shoes close-toed and polished?
- Are my accessories/jewelry distracting or too large?
- Am I wearing too much cologne or perfume?

****Come to the WorkSource at South Seattle College for a clothing voucher for YWCA Dress for Success***

SHARE- *Communication is both verbal and non-verbal and begins as soon as you walk in the door! Your preparation will help you deliver your message most successfully to show your best self.*

Non-Verbal Cues *Non-verbal communication includes your eye contact, facial expressions, and body language.*

- Make eye contact and smile with everyone you encounter, from front-desk staff to interviewers
- Offer a firm handshake to your interviewers; if a handshake is not culturally appropriate, smile and let the employer know that you do not shake hands but are excited to meet with him or her
- Get settled: Remove your jacket, take out and distribute your resume copies, and glance at your notes
- Sit up straight

Nervousness *Here are some tips that might help if you feel anxious or nervous.*

- Take deep breaths and pause before answering questions
- Fold your hands in your lap to avoid fidgeting or using too many gestures
- Speak slowly to avoid saying words like, "Um" or "Uh" repetitively

CONNECT- *An interview is a conversation that should relate directly to the job at hand and shows how your past experiences and current skills relate to the job.*

General tips:

- Take notes while the interviewer asks questions to help you organize your answer.
- Make sure that you answer the question completely.
- Listen to each question and rephrase the question for clarification or ask for clarification if you need to.

General Questions- *About you, your skills and abilities, experience, interest in the position and company, and goals. Your answers to these questions will demonstrate your passion and interest in the position.*

- "Tell me about yourself."
- "How did you hear about this job?"
- "Why are you here?"
- "How are you qualified for this job?"
- "Where do you see yourself in 5 years?"
- "What do you like to do outside of work?"
- "What team sports or activities do you enjoy?"
- "Why did you leave your last position?"
- "Why are you interested in this role and/or our company?"
- "What are you passionate about doing either professionally or personally?"
- "What do you do for fun?"
- "What's been your biggest success to date? Why and what have you learned from it? Biggest failure to date? Why and what have you learned from it?"

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Activity- Explain why an employer might be asking you the following question. This will help make sure that you answer the questions correctly and entirely.

“Why are you interested in this role and/or our company?”	
“Where do you see yourself in 5 years?”	

Scenario, Role Play, or Skills Test- You could be asked to do an activity so interviewers can observe your ability to think and solve problems or demonstrate a technical skill. Prepare by thinking about the types of tasks the position requires and how you might complete them.

Interviewee Questions- Most interviewers will end the interview by asking if you have any questions. Below are some appropriate questions to ask.

- What skills does the ideal candidate for this position have?
- When and how often will I be evaluated? What are the performance standards?
- What sorts of professional development opportunities do you offer?
- Why is this position open?
- **May I have your contact information? How and when should I follow up about this position?**

*Pay scale, scheduling, and benefits are appropriate questions to ask about **when** you receive a job offer.

Activity- Write down a question you might ask that is related to your industry or the position you are applying for.

Question	
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Illegal or inappropriate questions- Below is a resource regarding questions that are off-limits or how certain topics can be addressed or asked about in an interview.

Washington State Workers Rights Manual:

http://georgetown.southseattle.edu/documents/LERC/Chapter%206_Discrimination.pdf

If asked a question in the link above or something similar, you can:

- Repeat the question to make sure you understood it correctly and ask how it relates to the job.
- Respectfully say that you are not going to answer the question and move on.

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Behavioral Questions- *These questions ask you to talk about an experience or time that shows a skill or characteristic you have that relates to the position. These questions are designed to show the interviewer if you have the skillsets they are looking for.*

Communication

- Give a specific example of a time when a co-worker criticized your work in front of others. How did you respond? How has that event shaped how you communicate with others?
- How do you ensure that someone understands what you are saying?
- Discuss a time when you had to present or share complex information.
- Talk about an example of when you had to use written communication to share an important point.

Decision Making

- Give an example of a time when you had to make a difficult decision.
- Describe a specific problem you solved for an employer. How did you approach the problem? What role did others play? What was the outcome?
- Talk about a time when taking your time to make a decision paid off.

Initiative or Assertiveness

- What did you do to prepare for this interview?
- Talk about a time when you sold your teacher or supervisor on an idea or concept. How did you proceed? What was the result?

Planning and Organization

- Describe a situation when you have many projects due at the same time. What steps did you take to get them all done?
- Describe two goals you set for yourself and how you met them successfully. What factor led to your success in meeting your goals?

Flexibility

- Talk about a time where you were faced with problems or stresses that tested your coping skills
- Give an example of when you put your needs aside to help a co-worker understand a task better. How did you help them? What was the result?

Leadership

- Share a time when you influenced the outcome of a project by taking a leadership role.
- Describe a time when you involved others in making a decision.

Time Management

- Talk about a time when you failed to meet a deadline. What did you fail to do? What were the consequences? What did you learn?
- Share an example of when you were effective at prioritizing tasks and completing a project on schedule.

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STAR Technique- Use the **STAR Technique** to answer behavioral questions using a story form that gets to the point.

<p>Situation or Task</p> <p>Describe the situation and set up the story using enough detail that the interviewer understands the task you were trying to accomplish. This situation and task can be from any relevant experience- work, volunteer, class, etc.</p> <p>Many behavioral questions try to learn how you deal with NEGATIVE situations. You want to have examples of negative experiences on-hand to demonstrate how you made the best of a bad situation or created a positive outcome from a negative situation.</p>	<p>I was working on a school project and there was a communication breakdown.</p>
<p>Action you took</p> <p>Describe what you did and keep the focus on yourself, even though you might be talking about a group project. Don't tell what you might do, talk about what you did.</p>	<p>To try and resolve this problem, I organized informal meetings and lunches so people could talk and discuss their issues.</p>
<p>Results you achieved</p> <p>Share the outcome of your actions and what you accomplished. Talk about what you learned and how it relates to the position you're applying for.</p>	<p>Morale improved, as well as communication and our project was completed successfully.</p>

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Think of 5 examples from your past experiences where you demonstrated top skills and qualities that employers look for.

- Half of your examples should be positive and half of your examples should include situations that began negatively and ended positively.
 - Use examples that are within the last year or two and from different areas of your life and resume.
- With practice, a handful of examples can be used to respond to many different behavioral questions.

Activity- Use the STAR Technique to answer this question: **“Describe an accomplishment you are proud of.”**

<p>Situation or Task</p> <p><i>Use an example from an internship, class, school project, team activity, volunteer opportunity, work experience, or special accomplishment.</i></p>	
<p>Action you took</p>	
<p>Results you achieved</p> <p><i>Try to quantify your results when you can- numbers impress employers.</i></p>	

Activity- Use the STAR Technique to answer this question: **“Tell me about your biggest professional mistake.”**

<p>Situation or Task</p> <p><i>Use an example from an internship, class, school project, team activity, volunteer opportunity, work experience, or special accomplishment.</i></p>	
<p>Action you took</p>	
<p>Results you achieved</p> <p><i>Try to quantify your results when you can- numbers impress employers.</i></p>	

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FOLLOW-UP- *The interview is almost over... Here are some next steps.*

Sending a thank-you note or email after the interview can make a lasting impression. Your note or email should:

- Tell the interviewer(s) you are excited about the position and thank the employer(s) for meeting with you and mention the position title that you interviewed for.
- Mention something memorable that was said in the interview, state why you think you should get the job or want to work for the company you interviewed with, and tell the employer that you appreciate being considered for the position, and that are excited about the position.

If you are offered the job, respond with enthusiasm!

- Ask about an offer letter with details about the salary and benefits and take a day or two to decide if you want the job... **This is your time to negotiate and make appropriate counter offers.**
- Check out wage data for Washington State here: <https://fortress.wa.gov/esd/employmentdata/>

If you weren't chosen for the job, give a gracious response.

- Ask for feedback on how you could become a stronger candidate.
- You can also request that the company to keep your resume on file for future possibilities (if you are still interested).

If you take another offer, let your interviewer know that you have taken another position and show appreciation for his or her time.