

Interview Prep Sheet



Academy of Learning Career College Best Practices for a Job Interview

DO THIS:

- **Confirm interview location:** Address & Entrance (where to park, which floor, etc.)
- **Confirm interview time:** Interview Start and Estimated Finish Time
- **Confirm attendees:** Who will be interviewing you (Bonus: Find them on LinkedIn)
- **Confirm dress code**
- **Ask how to prepare:** Should you bring a portfolio? Will there be testing?
- **Bring 3 copies of your resume:** 1 for you, 1 for the interviewer, and an extra just in case
- **Accept the glass of water when offered:** This allows you more time to chit-chat with the hiring manager and can be a life saver for your breath and speech if you are talking a lot
- **Arrive early:** Shoot for 25 minutes early so that in the worst case scenario you are 15 minutes early. This gives you time to prepare, use the restroom, and find the actual office
- **Shower and use deodorant:** Interviews can be nerve wracking, which means you may sweat. Ensure you are fresh so that your nervousness doesn't result in body odor.
- **Take notes during the interview:** Make sure you are prepared with a pen and paper (and use them!)

DON'T DO THIS:

- **Cook strong smelling food prior to the interview:** Fish, curries, and other food smells can transfer to your clothes and into the interview room.
- **Smoke a cigarette before your interview:** If you smoke, this can be tempting, but the smell sticks to your clothes and can cause an employer to question if you are someone who will take too many smoke breaks.
- **Chew gum**
- **Ask for a restroom break:** Use the restroom before your interview
- **Over apply perfume or cologn:** You don't need to smell nice for an interview. Zero smell is better than a "nice" smell because even a nice perfume or cologne can be distracting for a hiring manager.

ANSWERING INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Many interview questions are behavioural and will begin with the phrase, “Tell me about a time when...”

This is because past performance is the best indicator of future performance. The interviewer is therefore looking for a story.

How you answer with the STAIR method.

S - Situation: Tell the hiring manager where you were, who you were with, and what was happening.

T - Task: What were your responsibilities and your team’s responsibilities? What was the problem?

A - Action: What did YOU do to solve the problem? Not what did your team do.

I - Implication: What might have happened if you did not take action?

R - Result: Describe the end result. Was the problem solved? What did you learn?

How to Prepare:

Write down 5 bullet points (S.T.A.I.R.) for 5 different stories that you can share during an interview.

Story #1: Conflict Resolution

Story #2: Failure

Story #3: Success / Accomplishment / Achievement

Story #4: Customer Service (Internal or External Customers)

Story #5: People Development or Teamwork (with partners, colleagues, or employees)

WHAT TO ASK THE HIRING MANAGER

1. What has made you successful?
2. What is a common characteristic amongst your most successful employees?
3. Based on what you’ve heard from me today, do you think I can do this job?
4. Can I meet some other members of your team?
5. What are the next steps?
6. If I haven’t heard from you by _____, can I call you?
7. If I have any questions before I hear back from you, can I reach out?
8. Job Specific Question: _____
9. Job Specific Question: _____
10. Job Specific Question: _____

Considering a career change? Contact [Academy of Learning Career College](#) to learn how you can earn more money in a career you love, in less than a year.

VIRTUAL INTERVIEW TIPS

The best tip for a virtual or phone interview is to treat it the same as an in-person interview. That means getting ready early, dressing to impress, and even making sure you aren't chewing gum!

- **Confirm how to access your interview:** If it is a phone call, are you required to call the hiring manager or will they call you? If it is a video call, will the interview be on Zoom? Or Google Meet?
- **Test virtual meeting software:** If your interview will be via Zoom, Google Meet, or a similar platform, do a test run with a family member or a friend. This allows you to ensure your audio and video are set up properly and you won't be late while waiting to download and install the software.
- **Remove distractions:** Turn the TV off, put your phone on silent, close any browser tabs that aren't related to your interview, and ensure you are in a quiet place where you can focus.
- **Plan around your children:** If you have small children, request an interview time while they are napping. Or plan to put on a movie or give them toys or a snack where they won't distract you during your interview or give the hiring manager the impression that your kids may be a problem if you're working from home. Another idea would be to ask a friend or a family member to watch the kids during your interview time.
- **Take time to set up your video:** Make sure that you are using the best video device you can for your virtual interview. Often times, this may be your phone instead of your computer. A phone is easier to position and you can purchase a table top cell phone holder to get the angle just right (not up your nose). Also make sure you don't have a window behind you, which will turn you into a silhouette.
- **This is an "open book" interview!** The biggest benefit of a video or phone interview is that you can have all of your interview prep right in front of you. While you don't want to read your answers, you can have the company website, the job description, and your resume open on your computer. And you can have your S.T.A.I.R. stories ready at your fingertips!

ADDITIONAL TIPS

When you don't know the answer: "I don't know, here is what I know and here is how I would find the answer."

When you're asked to share your weakness: Share a real weakness and follow it up by saying, "Can you help me with that?" This demonstrates a desire to learn and improve, shows self-awareness, and communicates that you welcome feedback.

Research the company! Visit their website and take notes. Then visit their social media channels to learn about their company culture and reputation. Then research the hiring manager and team members on LinkedIn to learn more about the people behind the company.

Remember - They want to hire you! No hiring manager intentionally brings the wrong candidate in for an interview. Therefore, every time a manager walks into an interview room, they aren't looking to find something wrong. Rather, the manager is looking to find something right. They want you to succeed and they are eager for you to help them with their business.