



JOBSEEKERS

INTERVIEWING TIPS



INTERVIEW PREP

PRIOR to an IN-PERSON Interview

- Is the proper attire business casual or professional?
- Are you clean? Avoid any fragrance or cologne.
- Arrive 10-15 minutes early.
- Bring extra copies of your resume and references.

DURING the IN-PERSON Interview

- Introduce yourself.
- Thank the interviewer for the opportunity.
- If appropriate, give a firm handshake. Post-COVID, handshakes may be optional.
- Maintain eye contact
- Use correct grammar.
- Know it is expected and okay to take time to gather your thoughts.
- Smile! Be enthusiastic! Show positivity!
- Show interest in the job and company.
- Be prepared to ask questions at the end of the interview.
- Be cognizant of your BODY LANGUAGE.

AVOID:

- being late.
- folding your arms, crossing your legs, fidgeting. (If this is an issue, place a small coin, or bead, in your hand and fidget with it under the table.)
- chewing gum or telling any jokes.
- saying anything negative, particularly about a former employer.
- taking your cell phone. If you need to, turn it **OFF**.



INTERVIEW TYPES

A **TRADITIONAL** interview contains time-tested questions that allow the interviewee to give vague, unverifiable, or hypothetical answers.

What is your greatest strength?

STRATEGY: Identify one development area and how you are improving. For instance, "Technology but I am currently taking an online class to improve."

Tell me about yourself.

Strategy: Describe experience, skills, highlights. Highlight points from your updated resume summary. Create and practice your Elevator Speech.

A **MODERN** interview reflect an employer who believes past performance indicates future success.

Can you give me an example of...?

- Successful past performance
- Learning from mistakes or problems at work.
- Use the STAR Method to answer Modern Interview Questions.





ELEVATOR SPEECH



Creating an effective Elevator Speech

An Elevator Speech is a clear, concise message or “commercial” about you. It communicates who you are, what you’re looking for, and how you can be a benefit to a company or organization.

An Elevator Speech should:

- ABSOLUTELY not be longer than 25-30 seconds.
- approximately 80-90 words / or 8-10 sentences.
- be memorized and practiced. Practice it OUT LOUD.
- something you are comfortable saying so it does not sound forced or rehearsed.



Example of an Effective Elevator Speech

“Hi, I am [NAME], a dedicated and experienced [your trade] with [#] of years of hands-on field experience. I pride myself on consistently delivering high quality work, problem solving on the spot, and maintaining a strong safety record. I’m eager to contribute my skills to your team and ensure your projects are completely efficiently and to standard.”

Hi, I’m [NAME], a passionate educator with [#] years of experience in [relevant subject area]. I’m excited about the opportunity to join your team because of my proven ability to engage with students through creative teaching methods, fostering a positive learning environment where every child feels supported. My dedication to student success makes me confident in my ability to contribute meaningfully to your school community.”

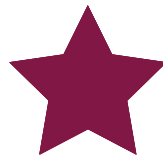


S.T.A.R. METHOD

Behavior based questions are one of the most common types of job interview questions used today. Employers believe that the best indicators of future performance is past performance.

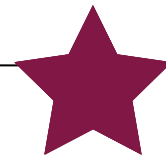
COMMON BEHAVIORAL-BASED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS:

- Tell me about a difficult situation you encountered at work and how you overcame it.
- Tell me about a time when you were required to work with a challenging person. How did you handle the situation? What was the outcome?
- Explain a time you failed to meet a deadline and how you handled it.
- Share an example of a time you went above and beyond in your role.
- Give me an instance where you had to handle a change you disagreed with.
- Tell me about a project where you demonstrated strong leadership skills.



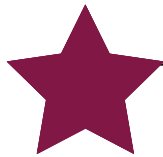
SITUATION

Set the scene. Provide context and background to the situation you were in.



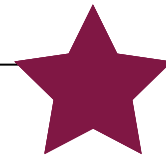
TASK

Describe what problem or challenge you faced in that situation.



ACTION

Explain WHAT YOU DID and HOW YOU DID IT.



RESULT

State the IMPACT of your action and what you LEARNED.



DO YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS?

Asking questions at the end of an interview is crucial because it demonstrates genuine interest in the role and company, showcases your preparation, allows you to gather further information about the position and can leave a positive impression on the interviewer.

Do NOT ask first about salary and benefits INSTEAD:

- ▶ What training do you offer? What does the company's professional development look like?
- ▶ Describe advancement opportunities.
- ▶ If hired for this position, what are the expectations of the job within the first year?
- ▶ What is the timeframe to make a decision?
- ▶ What do you like most about working for this company?
- ▶ Can I clarify anything I said or that you read in my resume?

HOMework

If you have properly done your homework, you will have visited their website and learned as much as you can about the company in advance of your interview. Ask about an initiative you saw on their website. Read their annual report and ask questions about their current annual goals. This will show interest and, quite possibly, help you stand out from the others they are considering.

WAGES

- Do not bring up wages in an interview, unless the interviewer brings it up first.
- Do your research or call your local Workforce Center to learn the average salaries for the position in your area.
- Provide a range of salary and not an exact number. This will reflect you have done the research and your flexibility.
- Discuss salary expectations with a positive and professional attitude, avoid appearing overly focused on money.
- Focus on value first. Highlight your skills and experience relevant to the role before discussing salary. Emphasize your value.



HANDLING THE UNEXPECTED

The Colorado Rural Workforce Consortium Workforce Centers can offer to assist you in preparing for interviews with our mock interview service. A mock interview is a practice interview that simulates a real job interview. It allows you to practice your answers, improve your communication skills, and become more comfortable in an interview setting.

There are times during an interview where you may be asked a question that throws you for a loop. You may have all your answers for the typical questions rehearsed, but interviewers want to see if you can think on your feet, so they may toss in an unexpected question to get your candid response.

-
- **JUST BREATHE.** Instead of focusing on the specific question, prepare yourself by remembering to speak slowly and remain calm. Body language can reveal a lot about you. Get comfortable appearing comfortable in stressful situations and you'll come off much more composed than you may feel on the inside while answering an unexpected question.
 - **BE YOURSELF.** The entire purpose of an interview is to learn more about you, your skillset, your personality, and your character. If a question catches you off-guard, take a breath, and then answer it honestly. Prepare your best stories that prove your creativity, so you have something to fall back on when a question is truly off-the-wall.
 - **TAKE YOUR TIME.** Don't feel the need to fill every moment with talking. It's okay to simply pause to think. You might add, "Good question, let me think about that one," and form a few thoughts. If you speak too quickly, you might not give your best answer.
 - **EXPLAIN YOUR THOUGHT PROCESS.** If your short pause is turning into a longer break, consider explaining your thought process. Many times, interviewers ask difficult questions to learn how you might solve a specific problem, so voicing your thoughts will give them some insight.
 - **PIVOT WHEN YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND.** What if the interviewer uses words you don't understand? The first step is to ask for clarification and see if the explanation makes sense. If you're still lost, let them know that while you're unsure of the concept, you're excited to learn about the industry in this role.

EXAMPLE

THANK YOU EMAIL

Hello (Interviewer's Name, Panel Members' Names):

I wanted to take a minute to thank you for your time (yesterday, Friday, etc...). I enjoyed our conversation about (specific topic of interest) and enjoyed learning about the (insert position title) position overall.

It sounds like an exciting opportunity and an opportunity I could succeed and excel in! I'm looking forward to hearing any updates you can share. Please contact me if you have any follow-up questions in the meantime.

Thank you again for the great conversation (yesterday, Friday, etc...).

Best Regards,
Your Name

What if it didn't go so well?

Hello (Interviewer's Name, Panel Members' Names):

Thank you for taking time to speak to me today. I'm very interested in the role and am excited about the opportunity to work for [name of the company].

I wanted to follow up with you about a specific part of our conversation. I know I struggled to select a story to share when you asked about a situation in which I demonstrated leadership. After we ended the call, I realized I should've told you about the marketing committee I led during my previous role.

{Now, answer the question posed using the S.T.A.R. Method. Keep it to two or three sentences.}

If possible, I would love the opportunity to speak with you again briefly so that we can further discuss my leadership experience. Are you available for 10 minutes sometime this week?

Again, thank you for your time and consideration during our interview. I thoroughly enjoyed our conversation, and I am genuinely excited about the potential to contribute to [company name].

Best Regards,
Your Name