



Interviews

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Updated:

Preparing

Do some background research on the company/organization you're applying to:

- What does the company/organization do?
- Who are their clients/customers?
- What is the position you're applying to?
- What kinds of skills are needed for the position?
- How long has the company/organization existed?
- What are the company's/organization's values?
- Size of the company/organization

Doing this background research will save you from asking questions in the interview that they may expect you to already know.

Prepare yourself for interview questions by asking yourself:

- Why do I want this job?
- Why am I interested in this field?
- What do I have to offer the company/organization?
- What are my top 3 strengths and top 3 weaknesses?
- Where do I see myself in 5 years (career wise)?

Strengthen your answers by:

- Thinking of specific times you've demonstrated your strengths and skills
 - Volunteer work
 - School projects/team projects
 - Extracurricular activities
 - Past employment
- Thinking of specific conflicts you've had with people and how you've dealt with it
 - Co-workers
 - Team members
 - Teachers
 - Classmates

- Make a list of accomplishments that are relevant to the position and your strengths
- Make a list of challenges you've faced, how you overcame them, and how you learned from them

How to Dress

- Good hygiene
 - Neat & clean hair
 - Tidy facial hair
 - Clean
- Business clothing is appropriate for all job interviews
 - Button up shirt & slacks
 - Blouse & dress pants or skirt
 - Clean footwear
 - Minimum jewelry
 - Clothing should fit well
- Avoid:
 - Jeans, especially ripped or faded
 - Muddy/dirty footwear
 - Strong perfume/cologne
 - Leggings; leggings can sometimes be worn professionally however it is a controversial article of clothing still, best to avoid until after you've been hired
 - Athletic clothing
 - Short skirts & shorts
 - Outfits with logos (acceptable when applying to the same clothing store)

What you choose to wear will change depending on the type of job you are applying for. The above information is what will generally be accepted for any type of job. Read the following article from "The Interview Guys" if you want to get more specific: [What to Wear to an Interview](#)

What Employers Evaluate During the Interview

- Mature behaviour & judgment
- Communication skills, how you listen and interact with others
- Personality, enthusiasm, cheerfulness, flexibility, & sense of humour
- Problem solving & analytical abilities
- Interest & knowledge of the field
- Appearance

Illegal Questions & How to Handle Them

Illegal Questions

It is illegal for an employer to ask questions about your personal life that will not affect the job. Here is a sample list of illegal questions:

- How old are you?
- What religion do you practice?
- Are you married?
- Do you have children?
- What are your child care arrangements?
- What country were you born in/are you from?
- Are you a Canadian citizen?
- Is English your first language?
- Do you plan to have a family? When?
- Who do you live with?
- When did you graduate?
- How much do you weigh?
- Do you have any disabilities?
- Have you ever been arrested?
- Are you in good health?

This is a small sample of illegal questions to ask in an interview. For more information about what questions are considered illegal or legal check out this site: [Canada Human Resources Centre](http://www.canadahumanresourcescentre.ca)

How to Handle Them

If you are asked an illegal question, you have three ways of handling it:

1. Answer the question. If you are comfortable answering the question you are free to do so. Just keep in mind that you are answering a question that is unrelated to the job and some employers may consider certain answers to be “wrong” and may hurt your chances of getting hired.
2. Refuse to answer the question. It is within your rights to refuse to answer these questions, however, the way you refuse to answer may give off the impression of being confrontational or rude.
3. Answer in a way that is related to the position. You can examine the question, take its original intent, and answer accordingly.
 - Q: “Are you a Canadian citizen?”
A: “I am authorized to work in Canada.”
 - Q: “Do you have any disabilities?”

A: "I am able to perform the essential functions of this job."

Questions for You to Ask

- What kind of internal or external training do you provide?
 - Shows you are interested in advancing in your position
- How often are performance evaluations conducted and how will I know that I have met your goals?
 - Shows you want to meet their expectations and know where you can improve
- Does this position have room for growth and advancement?
 - Shows you are interested in advancing in the company and are planning to stay long term
- When do you anticipate making the decision about hiring this position?
 - Good information for you to have and shows you are serious about the position

Tips

- **Dress for Success**
 - Putting effort into your appearance shows you are serious about the position
 - Dressing for the job will allow them to visually picture how you will fit in the company/organization
- **Don't be Late**
 - Plan ahead of time where the interview will take place, how you will get there, and leave 5-10 minutes early
 - Even doing a trial run a day or two ahead of time will ensure you know the way and how long it will take
- **Be Excited**
 - If you are excited about the position, show it because employers want passionate employees
- **Be Confident**
 - It's normal to be nervous about a job interview, but keep eye contact and speak clearly and slowly to show them you can handle anything
- **Watch Your Body Language**
 - Sit naturally without slouching
 - Don't chew gum or candy
 - Don't fidget
- **Be Polite**
 - Shake hands, smile, and be polite to everyone you come across (including customers or clients)
 - Turn off your phone

- **Listen**
 - Listen and don't interrupt
 - Ask for clarification if you need it so that you are able answer the question
- **Don't Get Too Personal**
 - Don't talk about your personal problems, including money