

Preparing for an Interview

Before the day:

Get information: Find out about the company and the job. You could ask for an information pack, google the company. If you know someone who works there, talk to them.

Try to find answers to these questions:

- What do they make or sell or what service do they provide?
- What do they think are their core values? (often a company will have a strap-line)
- Who are their customers?
- What sort of organisation are they? How big a company (turnover, etc)?
- What exactly will the job involve?
- What sort of person do I think they want?
- How can I best fit my skills to match the job?

Plan for the interview: Ask who will be interviewing you and what form the interview will take. Whether you will be given a test or asked to do some task to demonstrate your ability.

If you have a disability, contact the employer prior to interview if you require any particular arrangements. Check the day before that they are noted.

Questions you may be asked (and some guidelines on answering them)

1. **Why do you want to work here?** Mention the good reputation of the firm; "it will give me an opportunity to do work which interests me; I believe I can contribute to the company's success.
2. **Why did you leave your last job?** Explain briefly and honestly the main reason, If there is anything positive to say, say it! E.g. If the reason relates to my health say "I can now carry out ALL the duties the job on offer.
3. **Have you done this kind of work before?**
 - a. **Yes :-** tell them the skills I have and how I have and can use them.
 - b. **No:-** describe related work experience which will help me learn quickly. Emphasis my interest and enthusiasm to learn.
4. **What did you do in your last job?** Describe skills and duties relevant to the new job, machinery, software used, my responsibilities, people I dealt with, how long I was there, Make sure I mention if I was promoted.

5. **What kinds of equipment can you operate?** Name any type of equipment relevant to the new job; my training and qualification on specific equipment. Length of time I operated this equipment.
6. **How long have you been out of work –** how did you spend your time? Describe job search activity; voluntary work; further education or study, hobbies that demonstrate skills related to the new job. If I have been a carer, pick out a skill or two that I have been using that relates to my new job – planning, supervising, etc.
7. **Why have you had**
 - a. **So many jobs?** I wanted to widen my experience; many jobs are temporary; I would rather be in work than out of it.
 - b. **Only one job?** I moved role in my previous job; the job offered opportunity to develop; the work was enjoyable and challenging
8. **Why should I take you on?** Describe my skills and experience and how they relate to the job. Reassure the employer that I am hard-working, reliable and capable.
9. **Aren't you too**
 - a. **Old?** Emphasise the benefits of long experience, I am looking for many further productive years, I can still adapt to change, I have a good work history.
 - b. **Young?** Emphasise experience to date and that I am keen to prove myself,
10. **Aren't you over-qualified?** I am looking for something fresh/ new/ different. I can take as well as give instructions.
11. **How do you get on with people?** Describe how I have previously worked as part of a team; mention how I get on with customers, colleagues, managers. Give examples.
12. **What makes a good team member?** Describe skills required e.g.: good communication, flexibility, adaptability, co-operation, sense of humour and how I showed this in previous work or activities.
13. **How do you cope with pressure?** Describe an example of how I coped with a changed deadline; completing a rush order; dealing with staff shortages.
14. **What are your strengths and weaknesses?** They should know my strengths from my application form/CV but be ready to give key strength relating to the new job. On weaknesses describe how I found a particular task difficult but how I overcame the difficulties.

15. **What would you like to be doing in five years' time?** Explain that I ideally hope to be working for the same company but to have developed within it.
16. **When was the last time you did anything stupid or lost your temper?** Describe an example but I have learned from that experience to avoid the situation or to manage my own reactions better.
17. **What wage do you expect to earn?** If the wage is negotiable – be prepared to negotiate. The dilemma is where to pitch my opening bid. Too high and I could price myself out, too low and I could lose out. Before going to the interview try to find out about wage levels from similar job advert. I may be able to use this in negotiation. Be prepared to accept less than my initial bid but have in mind my baseline.
18. **How often were you absent from your last job?**
- If rarely** say so.
 - If absence has been a problem**, explain the reasons why and reassure the new employer.
 - If you have a disability**, discuss openly the possible solution available – be positive.
19. **When would you be available to start?** As soon as possible! Do not put barriers in the way. If I have to complete a contract give a specific date when I can start.
20. **Do you have any questions?** This is worth preparing for as it is usually asked towards the end of the interview and I have been concentrating hard on answering up to now. I need to ask a couple of questions to show I am interested in the job.
- Why is the job vacant?
 - Why did the last person leave?
 - Who would I report to (Who would be my line manager)? What training will I have to do, if any?
 - Does the company carry out Job Reviews? If yes, how often?
 - How soon will I hear about the result of my application?
 - How would I be paid?

Plan Your Journey

Use TfL, google, etc to plan your journey. Allow plenty of time for unexpected delays, particularly if your journey is in the rush hour. If necessary ask the employer for directions, bus routes or details of car parking.

Consider a 'dummy' run the day before the interview to check how long the journey will take and details like which entrance, where to park.

Plan an alternative in case the unexpected happens!

If you are disabled, check there are no obstacles or restrictions which could cause you problems or delays.

Think about what you will wear

This will depend on the nature of the job you are applying. Generally, too smart is better than too casual.

Make sure day(s) before that what you choose is clean and ready. You don't have to buy a new outfit! Aim for neat, tidy, clean and uncluttered appearance.

If you look good, it will help you feel good!

Information you will need at the interview.

Gather together

Your CV

Items requested by the employer or which you may have to provide such as references, certificates, portfolio or examples of your work.

The job description, person specification, the advert, information about the company. Re-read to refresh your memory.

Try to get a good night's sleep.