

Preparing for the interview

- Make sure your clothes fit right
- There's a psychology of color choices, to some extent (ex. red power tie)
- Wearing their color makes it look like you're already one of them
- Be polite to the receptionist. A lot of interviewers will ask the receptionist if the candidates were rude or polite
- Think positive
- Arrive early
- Turn off your phone
- Enunciate - speak slowly
- Don't complain, but you can use words like "challenging" or "complicated"
- Good posture, smile
- A CV is about you; a resume is about the employer. Tailor it to the job position by highlighting only the relevant stuff and reusing the words from the job posting
- Do your research; look them up on LinkedIn, or maybe Facebook (with a big question mark)
 - You can ask ahead of time who will be conducting the interview
- Bring a notebook, with questions to ask them
 - Blank pages for notes
 - Get their names for thank you notes
 - Maybe even tabbed pages about them?
 - Include your application materials (resume, cover letter, etc.) in case you need to refer back to something you said. It's also good to review them ahead of time, because you're likely to forget stuff even though you wrote it
 - You can color-coordinate with their company colors
 - It's okay to bring a hot pink folder and be remembered as the "pink folder guy." It'll be memorable enough to set you apart, and for a good reason
- Have [additional] references, but only give them if they ask
- Phone interviews
 - Schedule it, if possible
 - Have a picture of them so you're talking to a person
 - Have your application documents in front of you
 - Have a mirror, so you can see yourself smile. The smile will carry through your voice even if they can't see you
- Skype interviews
 - Same as phones, plus a neutral background and dress well

Common interview questions and the "correct" responses

- Tell me about yourself
 - Concise: 2-3 minutes
 - Compelling - grab their attention
 - Keep it professional. Don't try to make it interesting; just keep it relevant
 - End with "And so now I'm here, and I'm hoping to ..."
 - Have an elevator pitch

- How did you hear about the position?
 - Be excited!
 - Name drop, if appropriate
- What do you know about the company?
 - Short, but not generic
 - “I really believe in this approach because...”
- Why do you want this job?
 - Prepare an enthusiastic answer
 - It should be easy!
 - Focus on work, not benefits
 - Mentioning people you’d work with is okay, but secondary to the work itself. It’s helpful because it makes the transition easier
- Why should we hire you?
 - You can do the work
 - You’ll fit in
 - Concise
- What is your greatest strength?
 - Relevant
 - Honest
 - Not what you think they want to hear
 - Specific
 - “I did it in this example...”
 - You can humble-brag with a second thing too, if you’re careful:
 - “I feel like I’m very good at ____, but I’ll answer with this other thing...”
- What is your greatest weakness?
 - First, change the conversation
 - They’re looking for red flags (ex. “I can’t meet deadlines to save my life” or “I’m perfect”)
 - Checking self-awareness, honesty
 - Describe a challenge you’re working on
 - Share a story of identifying a weakness (or better yet, an “opportunity for growth”) and then working to resolve it
 - “You know, something I’m working on figuring out right now is...”
- Describe a challenge/conflict and how you dealt with it
 - How do you respond to conflict?
 - Focus on how you handled it professionally and productively
 - Ideally close with a happy ending (resolution or compromise)
- Where do you see yourself in 5 years?
 - Talk about future goals
 - Can you set realistic goals?
 - Test of ambition
 - Test alignment between job and your goals
 - Where can the job take you? Target your response
 - Your answer could focus on achievements or professional positions

- Acceptable: “Not sure what opportunities will present themselves, but this sets me up well for them”
- Why are you leaving your current role?
 - Stay positive
 - Better fit for the new role
 - What did you learn? How do you want to grow next?
- What are your salary expectations?
 - “My salary expectations are in line with my experience and qualifications”
 - “My salary expectations are flexible”
 - “If I’m the right fit, we’ll figure something out”
 - “I’m flexible and more interested in finding the right fit”
 - Do the homework to have a range (GlassDoor to start, but sometimes it’s a guess)
 - “My research indicates something in the range ____ and something in there sounds acceptable to me”
- Behavior-based questions
 - “Give an example of a time when you ____”
 - Prepare a story
- Questions about protected categories (race, age, marital status, children/family, etc.)
 - “I don’t see how this relates”
 - Answer the question they’re trying to ask
 - “My family is important, but that’s for me to worry about in my off-work hours”
 - “Is there something in particular you’re concerned about?”
- Do you have any questions for me?
 - Always “Yes.”
 - Have that list ready in your notebook
 - What would you want me to achieve in the first ~2 months?
 - What does success look like in this position?
 - Are there any specific/additional challenges the company faces which haven’t been discussed?
 - Company culture
 - Ask how they like working there
 - ~~Do you have any concerns about my candidacy?~~ No. Do not ask this.
 - Better way: “From our discussion, clearly XYZ are important. Is there anything else you’re looking for?”
 - Ask about next steps, timetable
 - “I was excited before, but after talking I’m actually really excited about this job”

Post-interview

- Bad interview, but still think you’re a good fit?
 - Write a note, call, or send an email
 - Reiterate your qualifications
 - May not work, but it can’t hurt
- Write/send thank you notes/emails

- No texts!

- **Remember, it's not adversarial**
- **Be assertive**
- **Be clear - quick answer, and then expand with a story**

Other questions I was asked during my own interview process

- Sometimes you'll be working with a lot of strong, independent, stubborn people. When they start to butt heads, are you comfortable with that?
 - My answer said something about my "conflict resolution style." I don't remember exactly what I said, but the interviewer said "You said the words 'conflict resolution style,' which is the kind of thing we were looking for."
- What is your five year plan?
- What is something you've had to work on within yourself (i.e. not work-related, but related to your personality and character)?
- Describe a time when you had to learn something new *outside* of your research.
- What are you working on right now (in other words, briefly describe your job/research)?
- Why did you apply for this office in particular? How will it help you?
- Do you have any leadership experience? Describe a time when you had to show it.
- What would you hope to get out of this job after the first year?
- If you weren't applying for this job, what would you be doing?
- Is there anything we haven't asked or that wasn't on the application materials, but which you'd like us to know?
- How do you handle bureaucracy?