

# Interview Preparation

Have you heard the story of the job seeker that went on an interview and was asked: “Why are you interested in our industry?” His reply: “What industry is this company in again?” Think he got the job? Think the interview lasted more than a few more minutes? To be taken seriously on an interview, you have to be serious in your preparation. Review the tips below and check our Interview FAQs and Speed Tips for more information on how to rise to the occasion.

1. **Research the company before the interview.** Make sure to go to the company website to obtain as much information as possible. Research products and services, customers, philosophy, history, recent news, financial information, etc. Also, skim through the annual report. These two sources will give you a broad array of relevant information. Besides allowing you to be more knowledgeable about the company, the information will help you formulate valuable interview questions.
2. **Practice interview questions and answers.** Visit our list of Interview FAQs. These will help you shine. Develop an answer for each of the questions that will tie your background into the goals and objectives of the company/position. Role-play interviews and consider taping a session so you can see yourself through the world’s eye.
3. **Prepare five good questions in advance.** Questions should concern the open position, company or industry. They should relate to or be a product of research that has been done beforehand. Ask thought-provoking and informed questions and you will be taken much more seriously. Bring five questions because some will be answered during the session. Never ask something that has already been answered or your listening skills will be questioned. When asked if you have any questions, never say no! Either have some questions at that point or tell the interviewer why you are interested in the job.
4. **Early on, ask the interviewer to describe the job and its responsibilities.** This will make it easier to relate your background and past experiences. Also, it will bring out any gaps or differences that exist between the job description and the actual duties.
5. **Don’t let a weak interviewer lead you to a bad interview.** If it looks like the interview is not going well, don’t get discouraged. Remain as positive, upbeat, poised and professional as possible. Bring your own energy to the meeting and

don't rely on the energy or skills of others to make you impressive. Be enthusiastic and focused, even if one of the interview team members is not.

6. **On a first interview, never inquire about salary, vacation or benefits.** These are questions that should not be asked until it has already been implied that the company is seriously considering you for the position. If for some reason salary does come up, provide details surrounding your present compensation and express an interest in continued learning and/or professional development more than a specific salary.
7. **Bring a pad and extra copies of your resume.** Be prepared to write down any critical information but do not take notes during the interview. Have some keywords to remind you of your questions, but never read them from notes. Do not bring samples of your work. You can bring copies of a few performance reviews, reference lists and letters of recommendation. But don't bring anything you can't leave behind and don't expect materials to be returned.
8. **Send a "Thank you" within 48 hours of the interview.** Use it as a reminder of how you are particularly interested in the company and the position. If you send this thank you via email, check it several times for accuracy and bounce it off a friend. Don't send email from "strange" screen names.