

Interview prep and follow-up cheat sheet

Let's break down the interview process into simple, manageable steps, helping you feel prepared, confident and ready to make a great impression.

BEFORE THE INTERVIEW

☐ Research the company

What does the company do? What is it that they offer, their main product or service.

What's their company culture? Explore their *about us* webpage and mission/values statement to gain insight into the workplace environment and whether it suits your ideals. Note key characteristics, such as emphasis on teamwork, innovation or community engagement.

Why it matters: It shows you're truly interested, not just applying everywhere.

☐ Prepare questions for them

Think about what you want to know about the job or the team. For example:

- What does a typical day look like in this role?
- How does the team usually collaborate on projects?
- What opportunities are there for learning and development within this role and the company?

Why this matters: It shows you are engaged, have initiative and are thinking ahead, not just waiting to be asked questions. It also lets you know what working there would feel like.

☐ Outfit check

- See whether there is a company dress code. Is it a formal environment where you need a suit, or is smart casual appropriate?
- Wear something comfortable, clean and ironed.
- Keep accessories minimal and makeup tasteful.
- Ensure you're neatly groomed: clean and tidy hair, facial hair and nails.

Why this matters: Dressing appropriately helps you make a good first impression and demonstrates your professionalism and preparedness.

☐ Logistics

In-person: Know exactly how to get there, how long it takes and where to park. Aim to arrive 10-15 minutes early.

Virtual: Test your internet, camera and microphone. Find a quiet, well-lit spot with a tidy background. Have the meeting link ready.

Why it matters: You don't want any surprises that could stress you out. Preparation is key to a professional, calm and impressive start, signalling your reliability and attention to detail.

DURING THE INTERVIEW

- ❑ **Be on time (early is punctual):** Arrive 10-15 minutes early for in-person or log in 5 minutes early for virtual.
- ❑ **First impressions count:**
 - **Smile:** A genuine smile makes you seem approachable and confident.
 - **Make eye contact:** Look at the interviewer when they're speaking and when you're answering.
 - **Good posture:** Sit up straight as it projects confidence.
 - **Listen to understand:** Listen carefully to the entire question before you start answering. If you're unsure, it's okay to say, "Could you please clarify what you mean by...?"
 - **Answer clearly and concisely:** Get straight to the point. Use simple language and try to connect your answers back to the job requirements or what you can offer.
 - **Be polite and appreciative:** Thank them for their time at the end of the interview. Be respectful to everyone you meet (receptionists and other staff).

Why this matters: This is their chance to get to know you and determine whether you're a good fit for their team. Every action contributes to demonstrating your professionalism, confidence and genuine interest, allowing you to effectively communicate your value and leave a positive, lasting impression.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS TO PREP

Tell me about yourself

Tip: This isn't your life story! Focus on 2-3 key things: who you are, what you're passionate about (related to the job) and why you're interested in *this* opportunity. Keep it brief (1-2 minutes).

Your notes:

Why do you want this job?

Tip: Connect your skills/interests to what the job needs and what you learned about the company. Show enthusiasm.

Your notes:

Can you tell me about a time you faced a challenge and how you handled it?

Tip: Think of a simple challenge (e.g. a difficult school project, a disagreement with a friend or a task that didn't go as planned). Describe the situation, what you did and what the positive outcome was or what you learned.

Your notes:

Why should we hire you?

Tip: Briefly summarise your enthusiasm, your relevant skills (even if they're from school or volunteering) and your willingness to learn and contribute.

Your notes:

Do you have any questions for us?

Tip: Always say yes and ask one of the smart questions you prepared. Remember, you're also interviewing them.

Your notes:

AFTER THE INTERVIEW

☐ **Send a quick thank-you email (within 24 hours)**

It reiterates your interest and professionalism. Send it as soon as possible after the interview, ideally the same day or early the next morning.

☐ **Reflect and learn**

Take a few minutes to think about how the interview went. What questions did you answer well? What could you improve next time? This helps you grow for future opportunities, regardless of the outcome of this one.