

Tips for Having a Successful Interview

The most important part of a successful interview is to prepare well. When employers ask questions to prospective employees, those who prepare in advance deliver answers that seem much more polished and concise. Everyone becomes nervous when they are on the spot, but knowing even a little of what to expect can give you a winning edge. **And always remember to practice!** Here are a few of the most common interview questions. Practice your answers in front of a mirror or with someone else. It may feel strange now, but it will pay off in the long run.

1. How would you describe yourself?

What employers really want to know is why they should hire you. This is where they can **briefly** hear about your experiences, personal qualities, and interests that are not reflected in your résumé. However, try to always incorporate examples to support everything you say: *"I am an excellent communicator and enjoy talking with people. At school, I am involved with yearbook, which requires a lot of interpersonal interaction and teamwork."*

2. What are your strengths and weaknesses?

Be honest, but don't demean yourself. Try not to focus on your negatives too much. Briefly mention them, but end with a positive spin. *"Sometimes I get nervous when it comes to public speaking in front of large groups, but I do enjoy talking with people in general so it's not that bad. I am working on this, however, through classroom presentations and extracurricular activities. I believe I am getting better. And I have no trouble speaking with people in small groups or one-on-one."*

3. Why are you interested in working for us? / Tell us what you know about our organization.

Relate your interest to the business in question. *"I am really interested in fashion and your business, Forever 21, is always selling the trendiest clothes. I have sales experience but I want to focus on clothing retail."* Make sure you do some research about your prospective job before you come for your interview. Check out their website online and impress your interviewer with all of your knowledge. Plus, it gives you a great opportunity to ask questions. *"I am also really curious as to how you know what the future trends will be. What kind of research goes into that?"*

4. How are you qualified for this job? / Why should we hire you?

List your skills, and tell them that you can learn more! *"I am a people person, I am interested in fashion, and I have sales experience. I am sure that there is a different vibe to working in clothing sales but I am a fast learner and I want to succeed in this industry."* I know it seems like you have talked about your skills a lot, and it's true, but the most important thing is to show your interviewer that you are motivated and a hard-worker.

5. How would you deal with a difficult customer/client/coworker?

These are the questions employers ask to see how you would behave in certain situations. They don't expect you to have all the right answers, but they do expect you to think sensibly. *"I would hope that if I spoke calmly and tried to show the other person that I was listening to what they are trying to say, then the client and I could come to an agreement. But I know, sometimes, things don't always run that smoothly, in which case I would probably call my supervisor."*

6. How would you balance school and work?

Interviewers want to know if you will be reliable and handle your job in addition to your busy school schedule. State your plan to accommodate your job and prove that you are an efficient and trustworthy person. *"I do have some other extracurricular activities going on, but I manage my time efficiently. I use schedule book to organize all of my tasks. I believe that I am a multi-tasker that enjoys a busy schedule!"*

