



Feeling stuck?
We can help you...



Interviews and Testing

Before the interview

It is important that you prepare well for the interview in order to improve your chances of being successful.

- Make sure you know where to go and work out how you will get there (car/bicycle/bus times etc). Allow extra time for delays.
- Find out as much about the firm as you can e.g. what do they do, roughly how many people they employ and anything else of interest. Read any information you have been sent!
- Find out if there will be any testing involved in the interview process. See the section on Psychometric Testing to help you prepare.
- Read through a copy of your Application Form/CV/Letter to remind yourself of what you said when you applied.
- Think what questions you may be asked and prepare answers (e.g. Why did you apply for this particular job? Why did you choose this firm? Why do you think you would be good at the job?) Think of what experience and qualifications you have that could link with the available job.
- Think of a few questions that you may want to ask.
- Dress neatly, cleanly and appropriately.
- Make a note of the name and job title of the interviewer if you have this information.

During the interview

- Arrive early (or a little early). It is often possible to read information about the firm while you are waiting for the interview.
- Take a couple of deep breaths before you go in. This can help you to relax.
- When entering the interview room, smile, shake hands and wait to be asked to sit down. Be ready for the fact that there may be more than one person interviewing you.
- Sit in an alert but relaxed position, with your hands in your lap. Try to avoid sitting on the edge of your chair and fidgeting or slouching. Make eye contact with the interviewer.
- Do not smoke or chew gum, be polite throughout the interview.

- Answer questions clearly and fully. Try to avoid one-word answers and to give more information (without rambling on endlessly, or straying from the question).
- Don't be afraid to ask if you want a question to be repeated, or explained in more detail. If necessary, be prepared to spend a few seconds thinking before you reply!
- Be open and honest. You obviously want to present yourself as well as possible, but do not be tempted to lie. Don't try to bluff your way through if you do not know the answer to a question.
- Be prepared to ask one or two questions of your own. You will probably be asked if you have anything you want to ask. Questions about training or future prospects would be appropriate. If you have not been told, then you need also to check conditions of work and wages / salary.
- Before you go - Make sure you know how and when you will be told the result of the interview.
- When you leave - Smile, thank the interviewer and shake hands.

After the interview

- Immediately make a note of anything you may forget (e.g. wages, possible start date, name of interviewer or other contacts etc). It can be helpful to make a note of the main questions you were asked for future reference.
- If you do not hear the result of the interview by the specified time, telephone to find out. (Some firms do not contact unsuccessful interviewees, but the decision may have been delayed for some reason - or they may have your telephone number wrong).
- If unsuccessful, do not be afraid to contact the interviewer to ask if there were things you could improve next time. (But do not get into an argument with them about why you were not appointed). Discuss any questions you found difficult to answer.
- No interview is wasted. Even if unsuccessful, it can be very useful experience. You will be better prepared next time as a result with more of an idea of what questions to expect and will be more at ease.

Psychometric assessments and tests

Some employers sometimes use psychometric assessments as part of their selection process. If used early on, the results will be used to determine who is short listed for interview. If used later in the selection process, the results can help interviewers select from a number of short listed candidates.

There are two main types:

- Aptitude Tests – which assess abilities such as maths, typing, or a specific vocational skill such as programming.
- Personality assessments - which assess your personality, such as your ability to work within a group.

If you take the time before your interview to find out if testing is involved, you'll be better prepared. Most tests are multiple choice, and most are timed, but this varies so it is a good idea to ask in advance.

You can find out a lot more about psychometric testing and even complete practice questions on the Internet.

www.morrisby.co.uk - good section on preparing for tests plus examples

www.shldirect.com - examples of test questions

www.advisorteam.com - information on personality tests