

# Interview 101



How to Prepare for an Interview in  
the United States



## Interview 101: How to Prepare for an Interview

*So you have landed an interview for a job or internship... now what?*

### Before the Interview:

- Research

Take the time to research various aspects of the company and the specific position before your interview. Make sure to know what the company does, what they value (try to find their mission statement), and what exactly the requirements and functions of the job you are interviewing for are.



The more research you do before hand, the more intelligent you will sound in the interview, and you can use this information to make your answers more relevant to the position and company.

- Practice

Look up practice interview questions online and compose answers that you could use. Remember to incorporate your relevant experience and characteristics to what they are asking and looking for.

Grab a friend and have them pretend to be the interviewer. They can ask you the practice questions and you can get practice answering just as you would during the interview.



\*When you are answering interview questions, both in practice and in the interview be sure to always BE TRUTHFUL AND BE YOU.

- Prepare

Prepare questions that you would like to ask the interviewer. These questions may include things like, what is their company culture, or how does the interviewer like working for the company?



\*Do not ask questions regarding pay in a first interview.

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*So you have an interview for a job or internship today... now what?*

### During the Interview:

- **Present Yourself Appropriately**

Dress for success, meaning in a professional and presentable manner. It is better to be over dressed in an interview than under dressed. Consider wearing a traditional suit and tie or skirt with a dress coat for women. Pick an outfit that makes you look and feel great.

Make sure your hair is pulled away from your face so you are not tempted to touch it during the interview. For men, make sure to groom yourself beforehand (shave your facial hair so that it is clean and professional looking).



Don't wear clothing or accessories that too flashy. Items that are very large, bright or make noise when you move may be distracting to the interviewer and could take away from what you have to say.

- **Show Confidence**

Although interviewing can be nerve racking try to display confidence in your words and actions. You were selected for an interview because the company has an interest in you, so express yourself and don't get too nervous.



Greet the employer with a handshake. This will show respect and professionalism.

- **Actively Engage in Conversation**

Relax and participate in the conversation. When asked questions do not simply respond with yes or no answers, try to use real examples from your life and experience. This will make the interview run more smoothly, and will give the interviewer a better understanding of whether you are the person for the job.

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*So you had an interview for a job or internship... now what?*

### **After the Interview:**

- **Follow Up**

The selection process does not end when you leave the interview. A simple Thank You note to your interviewer can make a huge impression. Send an email or typed letter to the person that interviewed you within 2 days of your interview. This gesture will show that you appreciate the time they spent with you and that you are serious about the position.

Include the name of your interviewer and the company. Thank the person for taking the time to meet with you, and include one statement about what you learned or enjoyed about the interview. You may also briefly discuss why you think you are the best candidate after meeting with them and hearing more about the position and company. Finally close with a statement about looking forward to hearing from them soon.



Make your note short and succinct. Include the necessary information, but do not go into too much detail. This is supposed to be a quick note, not a lengthy letter.



Be personal and specific. Make sure to address the specific person you met with during your interview and their company. If your note sounds too generic, the meaning and positive perception may be lost.

**CAUTION:** Do not accept a position without first consulting Padnos International Center for international student work guidelines.

## Interview 101: How to Prepare for an Interview

*So you could use some more interview help... now what?*

### **Additional Resources:**

- For more information about interviewing, check out the following sources:

Grand Valley Career Center

Allendale Campus: 206 STU (616) 331-3311

Pew Campus: 101B DeVos (616) 331-6406

<http://www.gvsu.edu/careers>

<http://www.gvsu.edu/careerresources>

- For Interviewing tips as well as sample interview questions visit:

Monster Career Resources

<http://resources.monster.com>

- For help with how to dress for an interview visit:  
8 Dos and Don'ts of Dressing for Job Interviews  
<http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/08/15/job-interview-dress-tips>