

Interview Preparation

- ◆ **The 3 Ps of Job Interviews**
 - ✦ Preparation
 - ✦ Practice
 - ✦ Presentation
- ◆ **Questions Often Asked in Employment Interviews**
- ◆ **Sample Thank You Letter**
- ◆ **Phone & Skype Interview Tips**

The 3 Ps of Job Interviews

STEP 1: Preparation

A) Know Yourself

- ✦ Be ready to explain why you are interested in this particular position.
- ✦ What skills, abilities, values, strengths and accomplishments do you bring to the job? These can be transferable skills and strengths.
- ✦ Share your enthusiasm for joining this profession and what you can to contribute.
- ✦ Review résumé (applicable/transferable skills used and knowledge gained from your educational training, work/internship/volunteer experience, community involvement, leadership experience, etc.)

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B) Know the Position Requirements, the Company and the Field

- ✦ Thoroughly review the job description and qualifications including duties and responsibilities as well as the required skills.
- ✦ Research the company's goals and mission, products and services, organizational structure and culture, clients, growth and future direction, and current challenges.
- ✦ What are some of the hottest topics and trends in your field of interest?

Conduct employer research and make a link between your academic preparation, interests, and work experience with the target position.

C) Know the Star Method & Prepare for Some Potential Interview Questions

- ✦ Review the attached list of 50 Questions Often Asked in Employment Interviews and generate possible questions for the particular position.
- ✦ Develop 10-15 sixty seconds personal stories related to skills, strengths, and accomplishments.
- ✦ Use the **Situation Task Action Results (STAR)** mnemonic to help you develop and deliver your answers to interview questions. (See next page for details and an example)

D) Develop a Brief List of Questions for You to Ask the Interviewer(s)

Sample Questions to Ask Employers:

- ✦ What are some typical career paths of employees in your organization? What is a realistic time frame for advancement along these paths?
- ✦ What characteristics best describe a successful person at your company?
- ✦ Please describe the training and/or professional development opportunities offered by the company.
- ✦ How are trainees evaluated?
- ✦ What are some typical first-year assignments?

STEP 4: Follow-Up

- ✦ Write a thank you note to your interviewer(s) within 24 hours.
- ✦ Hand written notes, if possible, are more personal but email is okay too.
- ✦ Thank the employer(s) for their time, reference some things discussed in the interview, and reiterate your interest in the position.
- ✦ See an example thank you note on pg. 5.

STEP 2: Practice, Practice, Practice

STEP 3: Presentation – Day of the Interview

- ✦ Prepare beforehand and **Practice, Practice, Practice** your responses to questions.
- ✦ Be prepared for all types of questions.
- ✦ Arrive punctual and well dressed.
- ✦ Be professional and enthusiastic.
- ✦ Conclude strongly by asking meaningful questions and summarizing your positive points.

STAR_{example}:

Please describe the most challenging team experience you have encountered?

Situation or Task: I was involved in a group project last quarter for a class where our team had to create a business plan. Group members varied appreciably in their skills and motivation to complete the project, and each member was delegated tasks and deadlines for completion, including progress updates every week. One group member had fallen far behind and our group's success and grade were in jeopardy.

Action(s) Taken: Being the group leader and the one responsible for delegating the project components, I reached out to the group member who was no longer keeping pace. In talking with him, it became clear that he had an entirely different understanding of our objective and how it would be achieved. This realization, however, was important since his unique viewpoint actually helped better inform our group's approach in creating the business plan.

Results Achieved: As a result, our group became more cohesive, which helped us produce a successful business plan and made the group experience more enjoyable.

50 QUESTIONS

OFTEN ASKED IN EMPLOYMENT INTERVIEWS

Here you are, a list of questions. If you look at this list very carefully, you'll see that employers are actually only asking a handful of questions—far fewer than fifty. They want to know how you, Gaucho, can add value to their team. They want to know if you have a clear idea of what your strengths are and how those strengths might help them solve their problems. If you can identify and talk confidently about how you can help them solve their problems, you can answer any of these questions with Gaucho grace and power. The staff at Career Services is here to help you face the interviewing challenge. So, don't hesitate to ask us questions about these questions.

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. Tell me about your experience.
3. What is your most important accomplishment to date?
4. How would you describe your ideal job?
5. Why did you choose this career?
6. When did you decide on this career?
7. What goals do you have in your career?
8. How do you plan to achieve these goals?
9. How do you personally define success?
10. Describe a situation in which you were successful.
11. What do you think it takes to be successful in this career?
12. What accomplishments have given you the most satisfaction in your life?
13. If you had to live your life over again, what one thing would you change?
14. Would you rather work with information or with people?
15. Are you a team player?
16. What motivates you?
17. Why should I hire you?
18. Are you a goal-oriented person?
19. Tell me about some of your recent goals and what you did to achieve them.
20. What are your short-term goals?
21. What is your long-range objective?
22. What do you see yourself doing five years from now?
23. Where do you want to be ten years from now?
24. Do you handle conflict well?
25. Have you ever had a conflict with a boss or professor?
How did you resolve it?
26. What major problem have you had to deal with recently?
27. Do you handle pressure well?
28. What is your greatest strength?
29. What is your greatest weakness?
30. If I were to ask one of your professors (or a boss) to describe you, what would he or she say?
31. Why did you choose to attend your college?
32. What changes would you make at your college?
33. How has your education prepared you for your career?
34. What were your favorite classes? Why?
35. Do you enjoy doing independent research?
36. Who were your favorite professors? Why?
37. Why is your GPA not higher?
38. Do you have any plans for further education?
39. How much training do you think you'll need to become a productive employee?
40. What qualities do you feel a successful manager should have?
41. Why do you want to work in the _____ industry?
42. What do you know about our company?
43. Why are you interested in our company?
44. Do you have any location preferences?
45. How familiar are you with the community that we're located in?
46. Are you willing to relocate? In the future?
47. Are you willing to travel? How much?
48. Is money important to you?
49. How much money do you need to make to be happy?
50. What kind of salary are you looking for?

This current list of 50 Questions printed with permission from CollegeGrad.com

For behavioral based questions, see next page



BEHAVIORAL BASED QUESTIONS

MOST OFTEN ASKED BY EMPLOYERS DURING INTERVIEWS WITH COLLEGE SENIORS

1. Tell me about a stressful situation that you experienced. How did you handle this situation?
2. Describe a situation in which you had to take a risk. What was the outcome?
3. Describe the most creative work-related project which you have carried out.
4. Tell me about your role in a project team. What did you do to contribute toward a teamwork environment? Be Specific.
5. Has anyone asked you to do something unethical? What did you do?
6. Give me an example of a time in which you felt you were able to build motivation in your co-workers or subordinates at work.
7. Give me an example of a time you successfully calmed down an irate customer. Now tell me about a time in which you were unsuccessful.
8. Tell me about a time when you had to deal with a personality conflict with a boss or co-worker.
9. Describe an unpopular decision you had to make, but made it anyway.
10. Give me an example of a time when you set a goal and were able to meet or achieve it.
11. Tell me about a time when you had to go above and beyond the call of duty in order to get a job done.
12. Tell me about a time when you had too many things to do and you were required to prioritize your tasks.
13. Give me an example of a time when something you tried to accomplish failed.
14. By providing examples, convince me that you can adapt to a wide variety of people, situations, and environments
15. Give me an example of a time which you had to be relatively quick in coming to a decision.
16. Relate a personal story in which you persuaded someone to do something that initially did not appeal to him or her.
17. Describe a time in which you took initiative rather than waiting to be told what to do.
18. Tell me about a time when you made a mistake and learned from it.
19. If I asked someone about your leadership style, what do you think they would say about you?
20. Give me an example of a problem, issue or concern that you handled in a unique, creative way.



Sample Interview Thank You Letter

Your Street Address
City, State and Zip Code
Your Phone Number

(Date of Letter)

ABC Corporation
1111 A Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93106

Dear (Recruiter's Name):

I want to express my appreciation for the chance to visit with you regarding your opening for a Research Analyst. This sounds like an exciting and challenging opportunity, and I want to reaffirm my strong interest in the position.

I was particularly interested in our discussion of the customer surveys you are planning to develop over the next year. As we discussed, I recently completed a similar project where I designed a survey instrument that is now being used on a regular basis to measure customer satisfaction. The experience and expertise gained from this assignment would be especially beneficial in developing an effective tool to meet your needs.

Again, I am very interested in this position and believe that, with my overall qualifications and experience, I could make a significant contribution to your market research team and to ABC Corporation as a whole.

Thank you again for your time. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Your Signature

(Your typed name)

Phone Interview Tips (source: Allison Doyle's Phone Interview Tips www.jobsearch.about.com/cs/interviews/a/phoneinterview.htm)

This increasingly popular interview format presents one of the great challenges in business communication. If you follow a few tips, you can get to the next step, a face-to-face interview.

Confirm All Aspects of the Phone Interview

- ✦ Before the call, confirm all arrangements such as the date, time, and who you will be talking to.

Prepare for the Phone Interview

- ✦ Research the job and the company so you are prepared to discuss the organization and your role.
- ✦ Practice interviewing so you have an idea of what you'll say in response to likely interview questions.

Practice Regular Interview Formalities

- ✦ Use the person's title during the conversation (Mrs. or Mr. and their last name).
- ✦ Only use a first name if they ask you to. Otherwise, stick with the formal title.

Choose a Smart Interview Space

- ✦ Use a quiet, comfortable, and private space. Turn call waiting off on your phone and use a land line, not a cell phone, whenever possible. You don't want to have to worry about static or dropped calls.
- ✦ Evict all roommates, turn off any device that might beep or ring, put a "do not disturb" sign on your door.
- ✦ Have your résumé in clear view.
- ✦ Have a notepad and pen ready for note-taking.

Be Cognizant of Your Phone Communication

- ✦ During the interview, sound as professional as if you were meeting the interviewer face-to-face.
- ✦ Don't smoke, chew gum, eat, or drink while you're on the phone.
- ✦ Smile. Smiling will project a positive image to the listener and will change the tone of your voice.
- ✦ Speak slowly and enunciate clearly.
- ✦ Don't speak in run-on sentences that will not allow the interviewer to interject or ask more questions.
- ✦ Thank the interviewer and ask what the next step in the process will be.
- ✦ Remember to send a thank you note after every interview, regardless of how it is conducted.

Skype Interview Tips

Technology plays a large role in the hiring the recruiting process. So, don't be surprised if you are asked to participate in an online virtual job interview. The same rules apply whether the interview is in person or online. You should conduct yourself in a professional manner while also considering these aspects when it comes to using technology:

- ✦ Get your technology ready.
- ✦ Dress for the camera.
- ✦ Remove distractions.
- ✦ Do a test run.
- ✦ Look directly at the camera when answering questions.

Resources to Ace Your Next Interview

- ✦ Career Spots videos and the Interview Section on the Career website (career.ucsb.edu).
- ✦ Mock Interview with a Career Counselor.
- ✦ Career Manual (pick up a free copy at Career Services).
- ✦ Career Resource Room library books.
- ✦ Free apps for Apple and Android.

