



Interview Skills



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Introduction

Overview

The purpose of this unit is to identify the steps involved in the job interviewing process and to prepare you to be successful in every phase. After completing this unit, you will leave confident in your ability to prepare for an interview.

Objectives

The information, activities and practice provided in this unit will enable you to:

1. Identify the phases of the interview process.
2. Prepare a resume.
3. Prepare for a job interview.
4. Complete an employment application.
5. Follow up after the interview.

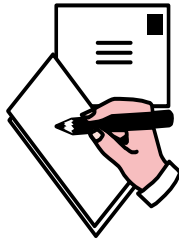
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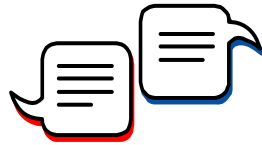
The Job Interview Process

Introduction

Interviewing is a process. It does not begin when you walk into the personnel office at a company. If you want to have the best possible chance of getting the job, the job interview process should begin long before you get to the company.



Preparation



Rapport Building



The Interview



Closing



Follow-up

The Job Interview Process

Preparation

There are three specific areas of personal preparation you should concentrate on before going to the interview. You must decide the type of image you need to present in order to give you the best possible chance of getting the job, assess your job history, and gather information about the company to give you an idea of how to evaluate the opportunity and determine how you will best fit into the position.

Rapport Building

Another word for rapport is “harmony.” During the rapport building phase of the interview process, your objective is to build good feelings between you and the interviewer. The interview should start on a positive note.

The Interview

This is the main part of the process. You and the interviewer gather information. This opportunity allows the interviewer to evaluate you, while you evaluate the company and the position.

Closing

During this phase you and the interviewer wrap up the interview and identify the next step in the interviewing process.

Follow-up

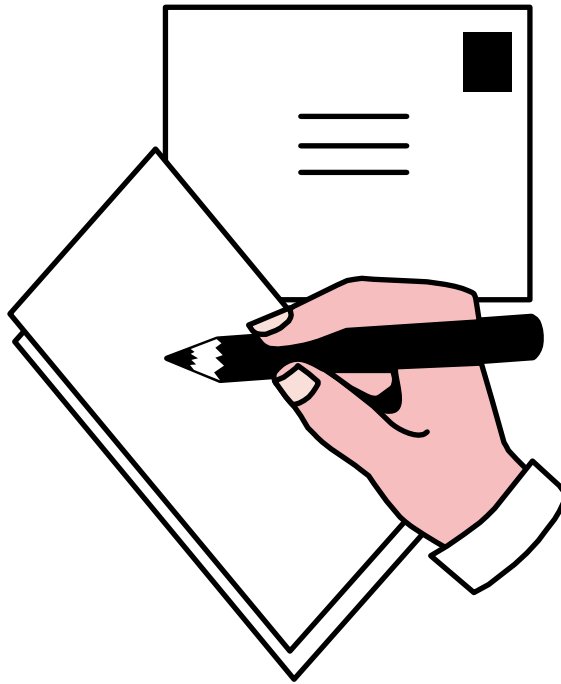
In this phase, you take steps to increase your chance of getting the job (e.g. writing a thank you letter indicating your interest in the position).



Preparation

Personal Preparation

Before going to the interview, there are three specific areas of personal preparation you should concentrate on.



Personal preparation involves:

- Image
- Background and Experience Assessment
- Data Preparation

Image

You need to be aware of the message your personal image sends. Before you go on an interview, decide the type of image you need to present in order to give you the best possible chance of getting the job.

Wear appropriate clothing for the interview. Make sure your clothing is clean, pressed, and fits well. If necessary, get a hair cut or have your hair styled in a way that complements your facial features and body type. Make sure your hair and fingernails are clean and neat.

Background and Experience Assessment

Review your job history and think about the various types of experience you have had. Try to answer the question: “How does my background and experience make me qualified for this job; which of my experiences most closely relate to the duties of this job?”

Data Preparation

Be prepared to provide the interviewer with pertinent information about yourself. Gather the information you will need in order to fill out a job application quickly and accurately.

The following information is usually required for a job application:

- Social Security Number
- Dates of school attendance
- Completion dates for courses or skills training
- Copies of special licenses or certificates
- Dates of previous employment and descriptions of the job duties
- Names of supervisors, addresses and phone numbers of former employers
- Full names, addresses and phone numbers of references



If you have a current resume, you should bring it with you to the interview. Some employers will accept the resume as a substitute for the employment history section on the employment application. Others will require you to complete this section of the application, and the resume can be used as a source of information or attached to the application.

Contact your references first to get permission to give the interviewer their names.

Investigate the Company and Position

Knowledge about the company gives you a better idea of how to evaluate the job opportunity and whether if you will fit into the position. Interviewers are impressed by applicants who take the time to find out about their prospective employers and show knowledge about and interest in the company.

Friends or others you know who work for the company are good sources of information. They not only can give you facts about the company, but a sense of how things operate, what the people who work there are like, and a sense of the corporate culture.

The business section of your local newspaper features articles about employers in the area. The newspaper office or the local library can also get you copies of past articles on companies.

Developing a Resume

A resume is another way to present your skills, employment history, qualifications and job desires to potential employers.

Having a prepared resume shows that you are serious about employment and want to ensure that all of your abilities or experience is noted and noticed. This doesn't mean that you won't have to complete an employment application. In most cases you probably will still be required to complete the application of the potential employer. Don't be offended if asked to fill out an application even if you brought your resume. You can use your prepared resume to assist in this process.

In many cases employers look at hundreds of resumes per day. Resumes that get noticed are those that are clean, brief and quickly show your job desires, skills and employment history. Interviewers don't want to waste time trying to understand a fragmented or unorganized resume. If they don't understand they may just simply move to the next resume.

You can ensure that your resume is appropriate by following a standard resume strategy.

The Chronological Resume

Typically the standard chronological resume type is the best for most purposes. This type of resume lists your most recent employment history first, next most recent, etc. This is usually similar to the process used on an employer's application.

However, the use of a resume allows you to the opportunity to explain your job history and qualifications in more detail. It allows you to indicate the contributions you have made while working with other employers and highlight your skills.

Let's take a close look at what should be included in a resume.



The Chronological Resume

YOUR FULL NAME (In capital letters)

Mailing Address

City, State, Zip Code

Area Code – Phone Number (Alternate number if needed)

E-mail address (If available)

OBJECTIVE

State your preference regarding the type of work that you are seeking. Make sure your objective is short and concise. If you are not highlighting a specialized skill, be sure to indicate your general strengths in the objective statement.

EXPERIENCE/JOB HISTORY

August 19XX to May 20XX Most Recent Employers Name

Job Title

List the major job responsibilities, accomplishments, advancement and skills used in performing the job. This is your opportunity to show how you've contributed to the success of your recent employer. Again the key is to be clear and concise.

SKILLS AND QUALIFICATIONS

This is your opportunity to highlight any special skills or training you have received. This information will also help the potential employer direct your resume toward positions that utilize these skills or prior experience.

If this is your first time entering the job market, this section will be utilized instead of the "Experience/Job History" section.

EDUCATION

List schools attended. High school, vocational or technical school, certification programs, past employer training programs and current programs you are attending. Make sure you indicate any specialized training.

PERSONAL

List any personal information that you would like to share that would show personal activities, memberships, charitable activities or interests.

REFERENCES

Professional and personal references may be included here. Some individuals provide a separate reference page and include a note in this section that “References are provided upon request.”



ROBERT THOMPSON

1234 Lakeside Drive
Edmonton, GA 12345
Home Phone (235) 573-6830

OBJECTIVE: Seeking Supervisory position in Engineering Department where I can utilize my technical experience and leadership skills.

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

2000-Present Control Specialist, ACME Corporation, Rome, GA

In charge of all control systems. This included building controls, boiler controls, and chiller controls. Supervised all installations of energy control systems. Designed building, boiler, and chiller control systems as part of engineering group.

1999-2000 Lead Boiler Technician, Watkins Engineering, Rome, GA

Supervised the start-up of a new boiler control group for Watkins service.

1998-1998 Control System Technician, Holbrook Industries, Atlanta, GA

In charge all control systems in the Atlanta plant. Supervised the installation of all energy management control systems.

1990-1998 Senior Technician, Bulman Boiler Works, Atlanta, GA

Started up all types of boilers/burners (from 250,000 Mbtu/hr. to 600,000 PPH steam flow). Started up all types of PLC systems, calibrated all types of transmitters, control valves, oxygen trim systems, and variable speed/frequency drives. Troubleshooter of most PLC and DCS systems as well as tuned control loops.

EDUCATION

1986-1988 Electrical Controls and Construction, Northern Technical Institute, Rome, GA

SKILLS AND QUALIFICATIONS

Start-ups on boilers (boilers up to 600,000 PPH steam flow). Start-ups on PLC based systems (including Variable Speed/ Frequency Drives). Calibration on all types of transmitters, control valves, oxygen trim systems, and variable/frequency drives. Set combustion on all types of burners, and calculate all flow rates.

REFERENCES

References provided upon request.

Activity: Developing a Resume

Using “The Chronological Resume” as an example, practice creating your own resume. Be sure to include the following.

Full Name:

Address:

Telephone Number(s):

E-mail:

Objective

Skills & Qualifications



Experience/Job History

Education

Personal

References

Plan for the Interview

Always arrive on time for the interview. You don't want to start the interview on a negative note by arriving late and making the interviewer wait for you. Allow yourself at least 10 minutes before your scheduled interview to be in the building, visit the rest room for a last minute image check and arrive at the interview site on time.

Sometimes, accidents happen. If you are going to be late and there is nothing you can do about it, be sure to call the interviewer and explain the circumstances and ask to reschedule the interview. If you don't call and let the interviewer know what happened, the interviewer's likely conclusion is that you are rude, not interested in the job, or both.

If you are not familiar with the location of the company, it's a good idea to make a "dry run" to find out how long it will take you to get there. If possible, do this at the same time of day that you will have to travel for the actual interview.

On the day of the interview, allow yourself additional time in case the weather or the traffic increase travel time. It is better to arrive early, than to arrive late.

You will probably have to complete paperwork, so make sure you have the right tools.

Make sure you have the following for the interview:

- Ball Point Pen
- Resume (if appropriate)
- Personal Data (mentioned previously)



Complete an Application Form

You will probably have to complete an application for employment the day of the interview. Refer to the application form samples at the end of this guide.

This step is very important because the application form is usually the interviewer's first encounter with you. The interviewer begins to form impressions about you based on the way you complete your application form.

You want to take every opportunity you have to make a good impression. Let's look at some things you should do to ensure your application form gives the interviewer a favorable impression of you.

- Fill in your complete name and address, Social Security Number and other personal data.
- Complete the work history and the dates, names of supervisors, and description of duties. Do not substitute your resume for the requested information in this area of the application (for example, writing "see resume") unless the interviewer instructs you to do otherwise.
- Write neatly.
- Follow instructions (e.g. if instructions state for you to print, then do not write).

NOTE: Some positions require drug screening, personality tests, and psychological testing. The application may have an area requesting your willingness and agreement to this testing, requiring your signature for authorization.

Activity: Interview Preparation

Review the interview situation your group has been assigned and list the steps the applicant should take to prepare for the interview.

Situation 1

Marie has an interview with a manufacturer of circuit board assemblies. The ad for the job stated general assembly and soldering skills were required, and there was a possibility of advancement.

Marie hasn't been in the city very long, and although she has a general idea of the company's location, she isn't sure where it is.

Her appointment is at 9:00 a.m., and traffic into the city during the morning rush hour is usually very heavy. She understands the city has subway service in the area and a station is near the firm's office, but she doesn't know anything about the train schedules.

Her sister's roommate in college works for this company, but Marie hasn't contacted her since she moved to town.

1. Personal preparation steps:

2. Information the applicant should gather about the company and position before the interview:

3. Plan for the interview:



Situation 2

Bob has an interview for a powered industrial truck operator's position with a large manufacturing company. Bob understands the company pays well, but requires a lot of overtime. Bob has also heard the company had a tough time financially last year. He was recently laid off from another firm because it went bankrupt; he doesn't want to go through that again.

The job requires a powered industrial truck operator's license and proof of a good driving record. It also requires strong team skills because the driver must work closely with other coworkers on a quality improvement and safety team.

1. Personal preparation steps:

2. Information the applicant should gather about the company and position before the interview:

3. Plan for the interview:

Situation 3

Ann has an interview for a machine operator position with a food processing company. Ann is going to school at night and has plans to get a degree in management. She wants to make sure there are opportunities for advancement with the firm. She has heard the company follows strict sanitary and clean-room processes and has a strict dress code.

She knows a woman who sings with her in the choir at church who works in the customer service department of this company.

The company recently relocated to a distant suburb. Although Ann drives, she isn't sure she would like to drive that far every day to work.

1. Personal preparation steps:

2. Information the applicant should gather about the company and position before the interview:

3. Plan for the interview:



Situation 4

Carlos has an interview for a job as a Team Leader with a printing company. The company has a reputation for promoting from within.

Carlos recently completed business and management courses at the local junior college. He doesn't have much work experience, except for head cashier at a fast food restaurant, but thinks this job would be a good opportunity. He looks young for his age, but he is very responsible. He has worked his way through high school and junior college and is helping to pay his younger brother's tuition.

His car is in the shop, but one of his friends said he might be able to give him a ride to the interview.

1. Personal preparation steps:

2. Information the applicant should gather about the company and position before the interview:

3. Plan for the interview:

Notes:



Rapport Building

Breaking the Ice

The dictionary definition of rapport is “harmony.” During the rapport building phase of the interview process, your objective is to build good feelings between you and the interviewer. The interview should start on a positive note.

The rapport building phase of the interview doesn’t have to be long or elaborate. It may be as simple as a good firm handshake or discussing some hobby that you and the interviewer have in common.

Rapport building is similar to the ice breaking exercise we completed at the beginning of this unit. It allows you and the interviewer to exchange information and begin to get to know each other before you get down to the serious business of the interview.

Image and Rapport

One of the most important things you can do to build rapport is present a positive image. A positive image increases the probability of a positive response from the interviewer. When the interviewer first sees you, he or she will form first impressions about you.

When the interviewer greets you and you are the picture of cleanliness and professionalism, you have the opportunity to make a positive first impression before the interview even begins. What is the next step?

Rapport building steps:

- The Greeting
- Opening Conversation

The Greeting

A warm greeting is a rapport builder. Smile and shake the interviewer's hand if he or she extends it. Offer a firm handshake and make eye contact with the interviewer. Make sure your palms are dry.

When greeting, do not...

- Look down or away from the face of the interviewer as you shake hands.
- Slap the interviewer on the back.
- Pump the interviewer's arm like a hand crank on a water well.
- Grin unnaturally (like the "Cheshire Cat" in *Alice in Wonderland*).
- Reach for the finger tips of the interviewer's hand. Instead, grasp the entire hand.

Opening Conversation

The opening of a conversation takes place at the beginning of an interview. Usually, the interviewer will initiate some light conversation. For example, the interviewer might say:

- "I hope you didn't have any trouble finding us."
- "Traffic was awful this morning."
- "It looks like it might be another cold day."
- "I see on your application you listed football as a hobby. Are you an Atlanta Falcons fan?"

These types of questions or comments do not require a long and drawn out response. The interviewer is trying to "break the ice" before settling into the heart of the interview.



In return, you might ask a question about a trophy or certificate you notice in the interviewer's office or make a similar comment at the beginning of the interview as you settle into your seat. This brief exchange allows you and the interviewer to begin to see each other as people and begin to establish some common ground.

Follow the interviewer's lead during this phase of the interview process. Some interviewers skip any opening conversation and jump right into the interview. Others may want to engage you in informal conversation to get a sense of your social skills and ability to communicate.

Be sure to maintain eye contact, listen to what the interviewer has to say, and respond in a pleasant conversational, yet professional manner.

Accept the seat indicated by the interviewer. If the interviewer does not indicate where you should sit, select a seat across from the interviewer where you can maintain eye contact and face the interviewer.

While the interviewer reviews your application or resume, do not fidget or chatter.

Rapport Breakers

Rapport breakers are things that get an interview off to a bad start.

For example:

- Bumping into the interviewer as you both try to go through the office door.
- Lighting a cigarette during an interview.
- Answering a conversational question from the interviewer with a long, detailed account of your hobbies, life story, Uncle Harry's surgery, or some other irrelevant speech.
- Not paying attention when the interviewer is speaking, (e.g. trying to read papers on the interviewer's desk).
- Failing to maintain eye contact with the interviewer.
- Accepting a cup of coffee and then spilling it.
- Answering an opening question from the interviewer with a very opinionated response and finding out that the interviewer has the exact opposite opinion. e.g., "How do you think the primary elections will go?" "I don't think candidate so-and-so has a chance, he's such a loud mouth who thinks he knows it all." "Oh really, candidate so-and-so is my father-in-law."



Activity: Rapport Building

For each situation, discuss and list your observations about rapport builders and rapport breakers. Then discuss how the situation should have been handled differently.

Situation 1

Brian Walker arrived for his interview at 9:15. His interview was scheduled for 9:00. Traffic was backed up today because of an accident and there wasn't any way to get off of the highway to call.

The interviewer comes out to meet Brian and says, "Mr. Walker, I see you finally arrived."

Brian is straightening his tie and trying to get his hair back in place and mumbles something about terrible traffic as he rolls his eyes and shakes the interviewer's hand vigorously.

The interviewer goes into her office and is still standing. Brian takes a seat before she sits down behind her desk. She moves toward a small table and chairs at the back of her office and says, "Why don't we move over here? It's less formal."

She reviews his resume. Brian rambles on and on about the traffic, how terrible the accident was, and how truck drivers really need to learn to drive better.

The interviewer does not look up, and continues to review his resume.

Brian asks, "Do you think I could have a cup of coffee?"

1. Rapport builders:

2. Rapport breakers:

3. How should the situation be handled differently?



Situation 2

Edna Moore arrives at the Brown Company 15 minutes before her interview is scheduled. She walks to the restroom, but the door is locked. She enters the reception area and the receptionist asks, “May I help you?”

Edna asks the receptionist for a key to the ladies room, and tells her she has an appointment for an interview with Mrs. Johnson.

Edna returns to the ladies room, checks her hair and makeup and smooths her skirt.

She greets the interviewer with a smile and tells her the directions she gave her were excellent.

The interviewer asks if she would like a cup of coffee. Edna says, “Only if you were about to have one.” The interviewer orders coffee for both of them.

Edna notices a softball team picture on the interviewer’s wall. She says, “Do you play softball?” The interviewer says, “Yes, that’s our department team. We were company champs last year.” Edna says, “I played on a team for several years before I moved here. We were region champs for two years in a row. I’ve missed playing.”

1. Rapport builders:

2. Rapport breakers:

3. How should the situation be handled differently?

Situation 3

John Dodd arrives for the interview a few minutes early. The interviewer's schedule is backed up because of an emergency department meeting. John takes a seat in the reception area. After waiting 10 minutes, he starts to fidget.

He turns to the man seated next to him and says in a loud voice, “You’d think that a company as big as this would have its act together enough to do stuff on time.”

Just then, the interviewer comes in. He says, "I'm sorry to have kept you waiting, we'll try to speed things up."

1. Rapport builders:
2. Rapport breakers:
3. How should the situation be handled?



The Interview

Conducting the Interview

The third phase is the actual interview. The interview phase is the time when you and the interviewer obtain information required to make a decision. The interviewer will ask questions to help determine if your skills and experience are suitable for the job and if you have the characteristics that will allow you to fit into the organization and be effective. You want to respond to the interviewer's questions in a way that allows you to show how your experience suits the job and gives the interviewer a good idea of your strengths.

You should ask the interviewer questions to determine if this is a company you want to work for and a job you believe will fulfill your career and personal goals. You want to obtain information about the company, the job responsibilities, and the career potential of the job.

Common Interview Questions

1. Why did you leave your last job? Why do you want to leave your present position?

Don't say negative things about your job, supervisor or employer. Give the interviewer the impression you're looking for a better opportunity, career advancement or salary.

2. Tell me about yourself?

This is not an invitation to tell your life's story. The interviewer wants to see how you communicate.

3. What are your greatest strengths and greatest weaknesses?

This is a job-related question. Be prepared to discuss why you're a good employee. Think about areas you could improve, but remember you want to give the interviewer a positive impression. If you don't state any areas that need improvement the interviewer may think you haven't made an honest assessment of your capabilities.

4. What are your long term/short term goals?

Be specific and concise; do not ramble.

5. Do you have any questions about our company?

This is where your research pays off. Share some of the information about the company that you learned, and ask the interviewer some questions about the company to give him or her an opportunity to give you additional information.

6. Do you prefer working with others or by yourself? Why?

This is tricky. You need to let the interviewer know you can work independently and follow directions, but are not a hermit. You can also be a team player.

7. When are you available?

Let the interviewer know when you can start work.

8. How many days of work did you miss in your last position?

This is designed to determine if you're reliable. You can't get the job done if you don't show up. If you missed several days due to one reason, be specific (e.g. state 6 days due to an emergency appendectomy, 4 days due to the flu).

9. Would you be able to work overtime?

Before automatically responding yes, ask what type of overtime the position requires (e.g. is it seasonal, daily).

10. Tell me about a goal you set for yourself recently and how you accomplished it.

The interviewer is trying to determine how you approach problems or challenges. Answer to demonstrate that you research, plan and follow a course of action to reach goals.

When the interviewer asks if you have any questions, based on the research and preparation you did for the interview, you should have some questions about the Company. You should also get the interviewer to give you specific details about the job responsibilities, if he or she hasn't already done so.



Get a picture about how this job fits into the organization and find out if there is a career path for the job.

Applicant Question List

1. What are the responsibilities of this job?

You need to determine whether or not the position interests you, and whether or not you have the background and skills to perform the job.

2. Did the individual who had this position previously transfer within the company?

If the person left the company, it is important to find out why. You also have an opportunity here to see if the company promotes from within.

3. How does this position fit into the organization? Department?

You can determine if this position is believed to be significant to the overall operation of the company.

4. Do you see the company/department changing in the future?

You may learn of opportunities in the future or if none are offered.

5. What are the plans for future expansion for the company/department?

Expansion usually means opportunities for growth.

6. Thank you Mr./Mrs. ____, I believe you have answered my questions.

Courtesy is always welcomed and remembered.

7. Mr./Mrs. ____ can you explain what the next step is in the process?

You want to know if you're being considered seriously and will be asked to continue the interview process. You want to know if the interviewer is ready to make a decision and/or when a final decision will be reached.

Interview Do's

- Research information about the company.
- Prepare answers to common interview questions before the interview.
- Plan your outfit.
- Allow extra time to get to the interview site.
- Arrive ten minutes early for the interview.
- Visit a rest room before entering the interview office for a last minute appearance check.
- Greet the interviewer warmly, make eye contact, and use a firm handshake.
- Maintain eye contact throughout the interview.
- Answer the interviewer's questions completely.
- Pause to think about your answers if necessary, don't try to fake an answer or be dishonest.
- Ask when you may expect to hear about the position.
- Thank the interviewer for his/her time.

Interview Don'ts

- Don't arrive late.
- Don't chew gum.
- Don't ramble when answering the interviewer's questions.
- Don't ask about salary until the interviewer brings it up.
- Don't say negative things about former employers or supervisors.
- Don't scowl or frown.
- Don't slouch.



Activity: Interview Role Plays

Each person in the group will take turns playing the roles of applicant, interviewer, and observer. The person playing the role of observer will complete the Role Play Observation sheet. Repeat the process until everyone has had an opportunity to play the role of the applicant.

Role Play #1

Applicant Background Information:

You are visiting the Acme Tool Company to interview for a position as an assembly operator.

You have worked as an assembly operator for an automobile manufacturing company, so you have good assembly-line skills. However, you don't know a thing about tools.

You want to get away from your current job, because there is no chance for promotion and you need more money. In addition the supervisor of your department is a real control freak. She hovers over people while they work and criticizes people in front of the whole department.

You have completed high school, and have been saving money to take some night classes at the local technical college. You want to get a job with a company where you can move up and continue your education.

You don't know a lot about Acme, but you've heard they have a good tuition refund program, and tend to promote from within. In addition, people you know who work there really like the company. You also read in the paper that they are planning to open four new stores in the area.

Interviewer Background Information:

You like what you hear from this applicant; however, you are concerned that he is overly ambitious and might become bored with the position.

Ask the applicant the following:

- Tell me about yourself.
- Why are you interested in leaving your current position?
- How would a coworker describe you?
- What would they say are your strengths and weaknesses?
Do you agree?
- What interests you about the opening we have?
- Do you have any questions for me?

Role Play Observation Sheet

Did the applicant:	Yes	No
Maintain eye contact with the interviewer?	___	___
Smile and maintain a pleasant facial expression?	___	___
Answer the question "Tell me about yourself?" without rambling and in a way that presented some sort of relevant experience?	___	___
Obtain information about the job duties?	___	___
Describe his/her strengths and weaknesses?	___	___
Explain why he/she wants to leave his/her current job without saying negative things about his/her employer or supervisor?	___	___
Ask questions about the company?	___	___



Role Play # 2

Applicant Background Information:

You are interviewing for a job as a machine operator at one of the largest manufacturing plants in the area.

You have been working part-time for a smaller plant for about 18 months, but they are not willing to hire you full-time. Every time you get close to eligibility for full-time employment, they lay you off for a few weeks.

You were named outstanding employee of the month 3 times while working for the company.

Before you began working for the smaller plant part-time, you worked as a volunteer PTA Leader and head of the fund-raising committee for your son's little league team.

You recently took a course in leadership at the local technical college at night.

Interviewer Background Information:

This applicant seems perfect. You want her to take a series of standard tests before making a decision.

Ask the applicant the following:

- Tell me about yourself.
- Why are you interested in leaving your current position?
- How would a coworker describe you?
- What would they say are your strengths and weaknesses? Do you agree?
- What interests you about the opening we have?
- Do you have any questions for me?

Role Play Observation Sheet

Did the applicant:	Yes	No
Maintain eye contact with the interviewer?	—	—
Smile and maintain a pleasant facial expression?	—	—
Answer the question “Tell me about yourself?” without rambling and in a way that presented some sort of relevant experience?	—	—
Obtain information about the job duties?	—	—
Describe his/her strengths and weaknesses?	—	—
Explain why he/she wants to leave his/her current job without saying negative things about his/her employer or supervisor?	—	—
Ask questions about the company?	—	—



Role Play #3

Applicant Background Information

You are applying for a job as a packing and shipping operator. You have had four years experience in the same position for a competitor. You have taken some computer software courses and know how to use a couple of inventory management software packages. You understand the position may require using internal software packages you are not familiar with, but you are certain you can learn quickly.

You have been with your current employer for two and a half years, working in the shipping and receiving department. There are not many opportunities for advancement unless you are willing to commute to a new facility which will be located 55 miles away. You would also like to learn new skills and have an opportunity to earn more money.

Interviewer Background Information:

Applicant will have to learn new systems. You are concerned about his/her reason for leaving a similar position. The pay between the two companies is very similar.

Ask the applicant the following:

- Tell me about yourself?
- Why are you interested in leaving your current position?
- How would a coworker describe you?
- What would they say are your strengths and weaknesses?
Do you agree?
- What interests you about the opening we have?
- Do you have any questions for me?

Role Play Observation Sheet

Did the applicant:	Yes	No
Maintain eye contact with the interviewer?	—	—
Smile and maintain a pleasant facial expression?	—	—
Answer the question “Tell me about yourself?” without rambling and in a way that presented some sort of relevant experience?	—	—
Obtain information about the job duties?	—	—
Describe his/her strengths and weaknesses?	—	—
Explain why he/she wants to leave his/her current job without saying negative things about his/her employer or supervisor?	—	—
Ask questions about the company?	—	—



The Closing

Leave a Favorable Impression

The close of the interview is as important as the greeting.

To leave a favorable impression, you should:

- Thank the interviewer for his or her time.
- Shake the interviewer's hand and maintain eye contact.
- Express your interest in the position and indicate that you hope to hear from him/her soon.

Assess Your Performance During The Interview

The Interviewer's Objectives

In order to close the interview effectively, remember the interviewer's objectives are to:

- Let the applicant know the information gathering phase is over.
- If not interested or unsure of this candidate, bring the interview to an end while remaining noncommittal about the applicant's chances of getting the job.
- Let promising applicants know what the next step in the process will be.
- Get an indication of availability and interest from potential hires.

The Applicant's Objectives

The applicant's objectives are to:

- Leave a favorable impression with the interviewer.
- Get an indication as to whether or not he/she is being seriously considered for the job.
- Determine the next step in the process.
- Let the interviewer know he/she is interested in the position.

Closing the Interview

The interviewer will give you a signal that he or she is ready to close the interview. The signal may be a verbal one, such as:

“I’ve enjoyed talking with you, and we’ll be in touch.”

“We should be making a decision in a few days, thank you for coming in.”

The signal could be a combination of verbal and physical signals. For example, the interviewer may stand up and extend a hand as he or she says, “We’ll be in touch.”



Favorable Interview Indicators

- The interviewer schedules a second appointment.

This usually indicates you are a candidate. You have made it past the first round of screening interviews and are among candidates that will be given serious consideration.

- The interviewer speaks enthusiastically about the position and the company and gives you salary information.

This usually indicates the interviewer is now in the position of salesperson and wants to impress you with the company and the position.

- The interviewer asks for references.

Usually, this means he/she is interested enough in you to want to verify the information about your background and experience.

- The interviewer gives a definite time frame for a final decision and asks you to let him/her know if you receive any other offers.

This usually indicates he/she is interested enough to be worried about the competition. They want you to know they are not just stringing you along.

- The interviewer asks questions that indicate a level of interest, such as:

When would you be able to start?

Are you interested in the position?

How much notice would you need to give your current employer?

Activity: Interview Closing Role Plays

Each person in the group will take turns playing the roles of applicant, interviewer, and observer. The person playing the role of observer will complete the Role Play Observation sheet. Repeat the process until everyone has had an opportunity to play the role of the applicant.

Role Play #1

Applicant Background Information:

You have been interviewing for a position as an assembly operator.

The interviewer seems impressed with your experience as an assembly operator for a circuit board manufacturer and part-time work at one of their competitors while you were attending high school.

You want to know if you have a chance, and you need to give your current employer at least two weeks notice. You would also like to know if the salary is going to be enough to make it worthwhile to change jobs.

Interviewer Background Information:

You like this candidate and are interested in hiring him or her, but cannot make a final decision until you complete interviews later this week.

Ask: What salary would you be looking for?

The pay range for this job is based on experience but higher than assembly type jobs in the area. Share this information with the candidate after he or she commits to an expected salary.

Ask: When would you be available to start work?

You need someone to fill this position right away, but would be willing to wait a week or two for a good candidate.

Stand up and tell the applicant you will be making a decision soon. Extend your hand and thank him or her for coming in.



Role Play Observation Sheet

Did the applicant:	Yes	No
Maintain eye contact with the interviewer?	—	—
Shake the applicant's hand?	—	—
Did the applicant obtain information about:		
• Salary?	—	—
• Chances of being hired?	—	—
• Date when a decision could be expected?	—	—
• Next step in the process?	—	—
Did the applicant leave the interviewer with a favorable impression? Why or why not?	—	—

Role Play #2

Applicant Background Information:

You have been interviewing for about 20 minutes for a job as a quality control specialist with a large supplier of automobile parts.

You completed a training course at the local technical college, and have worked part-time in the quality control department of a food processing plant.

You feel the interview has gone well, but you have not had an opportunity to ask some questions. You are interested in learning more about the working hours, career paths, and you would like additional details about the job responsibilities.

You feel you could do this job, but get the feeling that the interviewer thinks you need more experience.

Interviewer Background Information:

You are impressed with the candidate's professionalism, but concerned that he or she may not have enough experience for this position.

Ask: Do you have any questions for me?

Listen to the applicant's response. Then, say, "Thanks for coming in today, we'll be in touch."



Role Play Observation Sheet

Did the applicant:	Yes	No
Maintain eye contact with the interviewer?	—	—
Shake the applicant's hand?	—	—
Did the applicant obtain information about:		
• Salary?	—	—
• Chances of being hired?	—	—
• Date when a decision could be expected?	—	—
• Next step in the process?	—	—
Did the applicant leave the interviewer with a favorable impression? Why or why not?	—	—

Role Play #3

Applicant Background Information:

You have been interviewing for a position as a maintenance technician in the machine shop of a major heavy equipment manufacturer.

You have been working a series of part-time jobs while earning your GED, and feel like this job could be a good opportunity and a chance to move up.

The interviewer has told you there are a lot of applicants for these jobs. You want to leave the interviewer with a favorable impression and get a definite date when you can expect to hear about a decision.

Interviewer Background Information:

You have two training slots to fill, a maintenance technician for the day shift and a maintenance technician for the night shift.

This candidate is like many of the others you have seen today, but seems ambitious and eager to work.

“We have training classes starting in two weeks. Would you be willing to train at a lower rate of pay for six weeks, if you were hired?”

Listen to the applicant’s response.

Extend your hand and say, “I’ll be in touch.”



Role Play Observation Sheet

Did the applicant:	Yes	No
Maintain eye contact with the interviewer?	—	—
Shake the applicant's hand?	—	—
Did the applicant obtain information about:		
• Salary?	—	—
• Chances of being hired?	—	—
• Date when a decision could be expected?	—	—
• Next step in the process?	—	—
Did the applicant leave the interviewer with a favorable impression? Why or why not?	—	—

[illegible]



Follow-up

After the Interview

The interview is over, and now you walk out of the interviewer's office. You go home or back to work, and that's the end, right? Wrong; not if you want to have the best possible chance to get the job.



Interview Follow-up Steps

The follow-up phase of the interview process is just as important as good interview preparation.

Interview Follow-up Steps

- Send the interviewer a thank-you note or brief follow-up letter.

This can be handwritten and should be brief. You want to thank the interviewer for his or her time and indicate that you are interested in hearing from him or her about the position.

- Assess your performance in the interview.

This is important. Are there things you wish you had handled better during the interview? Are there things you handled very well and want to do again in future interviews?

- Make a list of your interview positives and negatives.

Rehearse ways to respond to questions that you did not handle well during the interview. Note things that got positive responses from the interviewer, so that you can incorporate them into future interviews.

- Select dates when you will call the interviewer to check the status of a decision about the position and mark them on a calendar. Be sure to follow-up and make the calls.
- Send any information, such as names of references, etc., to the interviewer promptly.
- Contact your references to let them know they may get a call from the company.
- File information about the company, the position and your interview notes so you can access them easily.



Activity: Interview Preparation Work Sheet

The “Interview Preparation Work Sheet” on the following pages is a tool to help you prepare for future interviews. Review the entries and complete it now. If you have any questions about how to complete any of the information, ask your instructor for help. Keep the work sheet and refer to it when you are preparing for job interviews.

Interview Preparation Work Sheet

Personal Data

Full Name: _____

Social Security Number: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number(s): _____

References

List the names of three references:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____



Work Experience

Describe your past work experience. Include name of employer, name and phone number of immediate supervisor, dates of employment and descriptions of duties.

Employer: _____

Supervisor: _____ Phone Number: _____

Dates: _____

Duties: _____

Employer: _____

Supervisor: _____ Phone Number: _____

Dates: _____

Duties: _____

Employer: _____

Supervisor: _____ Phone Number: _____

Dates: _____

Duties: _____

Education

Describe your education. Include high school and dates of attendance, skills training or other courses. List any certificates or special licenses.

School: _____

Dates Attended: _____

Diploma/Certificate: _____

Licenses/Certificates: _____

Training/Skills Courses: _____

Name of Course/Date: _____

Name of Course/Date: _____

Name of Course/Date: _____



Summary

As you have seen, the key to successful interviewing involves five phases:

- Preparation
- Rapport building
- Interview
- Closing
- Follow-up

Being a successful applicant does not happen by accident. You must prepare and follow through. The techniques you've learned today will provide you with the skills necessary to be confident for your next interview.

Notes:



Appendix

Sample Job Application

			DATE
NAME (First Middle Last)			
ARE YOU OVER 18 YEARS OF AGE YES NO	SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER	HOME TELEPHONE ()	
RESIDENCE ADDRESS (Street and Number)			(Apt. Number)
(City)	(State)	(Zip)	Since (Month – Year)
PREVIOUS ADDRESS (If in this country) (Street and Number)			(Apt. Number)
(City)	(State)	(Zip)	How Long There?
If your residence at the present and previous address shown does not total at least 5 years, turn the page now and give the previous address (in this country only) under "Supplementary Information."			
POSITION OR EMPLOYMENT DESIRED			
AVAILABLE FOR: ____ Full Time ____ Part Time ____ Temporary		DATE AVAILABLE	
Can you, after employment, submit verification of your legal right to work in the United States ____ Yes ____ No			
SKILLS: (Important, check all items and equipment you can operate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Word Processing/Typing <input type="checkbox"/> Other Keyboard Skills _____ (Describe) <input type="checkbox"/> Dictating/Transcription Machine	<input type="checkbox"/> D.P. Skills <input type="checkbox"/> PC <input type="checkbox"/> Programming <input type="checkbox"/> Ten Key Calculator	<input type="checkbox"/> Software Experience _____ _____ _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ _____ _____
DO YOU HAVE RELATIVES OR FRIENDS WORKING FOR THE COMPANY? (If any please list name and relationship to you)			
HAVE YOU EVER APPLIED TO THIS COMPANY BEFORE?		IF SO, WHEN AND WHERE?	
WHO REFERRED YOU TO THIS COMPANY?			
DID YOU EVER WORK UNDER ANOTHER NAME?		IF YES, PLEASE STATE THE NAME YOU WORKED UNDER.	
IF EMPLOYED, IS YOUR EMPLOYER AWARE THAT YOU ARE CONTEMPLATING CHANGE? ____ Yes ____ No	PLEASE STATE REASON FOR WANTING TO LEAVE PRESENT POSITION	MAY WE CONTACT YOUR CURRENT EMPLOYER ____ Yes ____ No	
GIVE NAMES, ADDRESSES, AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS OF THREE PERSONAL REFERENCES, NOT RELATIVES OR FORMER EMPLOYERS.			
NAME	ADDRESS	CITY/STATE	TELEPHONE NUMBER
1.			
2.			
3.			



Elements of a Resume

1. Header – Name/address/home phone no. (Work phone optional)
2. Objective/Position desired/Employment desired
 - a. Experience (relevant)
 - b. Expertise
 - c. Intangibles
3. Experience/Job History
 - a. Dates/titles/companies
 - b. Scope of company
 - c. Responsibilities
 - d. Accomplishments/contributions
4. Skills and Qualifications
5. Education
 - a. Degree
 - b. Institution
 - c. Date/year (optional)

Optional:

6. Professional
 - a. Related activities
 - b. Professional affiliations
7. Personal
 - a. Related activities
 - b. Community/leadership items
8. Military
 - a. Dates
 - b. Rank/rate
 - c. Field of expertise
 - d. Honorable discharge

Items to Leave Out

- Reasons for leaving
- Salary Data
- Hobbies/social activities
- Negative Information
- "Resume" at top, "References" at bottom
- Gimmicks
- Pictures
- Availability
- Reference data
- Charts/graphs
- Jargon/abbreviations
- Distortions/misrepresentations