

Job Interviews

There are several different types of job interviews. What to expect and how you need to prepare will vary. Here are some examples.

Phone

Instead of inviting candidates in for an interview, many employers will host their first round of interviews over the phone. It is a quick and cost-effective way to whittle down a list of candidates.

Tips: Whilst you won't need to worry about your body language or dress code, a telephone interview will test your social and telephone skills.

Video

Video interviews have grown in popularity over the last few years. It is a quick and easy way to connect employees from across the business to host an interview.

Tips: It is a good idea to prepare for a video interview as you would a face-to-face interview. Dress for the occasion, do your research and remember to think about your body language.

Panel

These face-to-face interviews are most popular with larger companies and will involve a group of interviewers taking turns to ask you their questions. This can feel intimidating so it is vital that you prepare thoroughly in advance.

Tips: Treat all of the people on the panel with equal respect as you may not know who is in charge and who has the final hiring decision. When answering questions, focus on the person questioning you at that time.

One-to-one

One-to-one interviews are slightly less formal than a panel interview but it is still important to prepare well. A one-to-one interview means you are more than likely to be directly questioned by the boss. To stand out, think of some strong questions to ask at the end of the interview.

Tips: Try to build a friendly rapport with the interviewer, whilst keeping it professional. Remember if they like you as a person then you are more likely to be offered the job.



Group

A group interview will involve multiple candidates being interviewed at the same time. It is often used when employers are looking to hire more than one person for a role. This interview style is popular for industries like food service, retail and hospitality.

Tips: Try and include everyone. Whilst your leadership skills are being assessed, it is also important to show the interviewer that you can work well in a team.

Top tips for nailing an interview

- **Be prepared for the question, “What do you know about us?” or “Why do you want to work for us?”**
Research both the company and the wider industry. You should be able to find out information about the company’s history, mission and values, staff, culture and recent successes on their website. If they have a blog and social media presence, that can also be a useful place to look.
- **Be on time.** If your interview is taking place in an unknown area, practise your route to guarantee you don’t get lost.
- **Try to stay calm and relaxed.** If you need to take a moment to think about an answer, then explain that to your interviewers rather than start your answer with “um...”
- **Know your CV.** Your interviewer will prepare their questions based on the information you provided on your CV or application. Remember to be positive about your skills and experiences.
- **Prepare.** Research common job interview questions and practise your answers. This will help you feel more relaxed going into the interview.
- **Practise.** The more familiar interviewing feels to you, the more relaxed you will feel. Meet with mentors, colleagues and friends for mock interviews to gain confidence in answering routine interview questions.
- **Don’t panic.** If you are stuck on how to answer a question, don’t be afraid to stop and think before answering. Take a sip of water if you need to.
- **Plan your outfit.** Make sure your clothes are smart but comfortable. It is always better to be too smart than too casual. If you have purchased a new outfit, consider wearing it before your interview to make sure you feel comfortable.
- **Follow up after the interview.** This should be a short email within 24 hours of your interview to thank the interviewer for their time and to say that you are looking forward to hearing from them.



The STAR method

The STAR interview method is a structured way of answering a behavioural-based interview question by outlining the specific **Situation**, **Task**, **Action** and **Result** of the situation you are describing.

Behavioural-based questions about the way you have handled certain work situations show the interviewer how you might apply your skills and experience to a similar situation in the future.

S: the Situation

Describe the event or situation you were in

Example: Whilst working as a retail assistant, we were faced with hundreds of disgruntled customers as we headed towards the busy Christmas period.

T: the Task

Explain the task you had to complete

Example: To ensure that all the customers left the shop feeling satisfied, I was tasked with reducing the customer queuing time by 30%.

A: the Action

Describe the specific actions you took to complete the task

Example: I effectively supported with the recruitment and training of three new members of staff to support the team. I also instilled an extra queuing line to combat overcrowding.

R: the Result

Close with the result of your efforts

Example: As a result of my actions, we had the most successful Christmas to date.

Activity: Preparing for an interview

To be successful in an interview, it is crucial that you prepare well. Reflecting on the tips and the STAR method, complete this grid with what, how and when you think you should prepare.

When the interview is confirmed	A few days before the interview	The night before the interview

Activity: Mock video interviews

Using the below template answer the questions as if you are being interviewed for your dream job.

Feeling brave? Call a friend and take it in turns to ask each other your questions.

1. Describe what you think you will be doing in this role and what interests you about our organisation.

2. What can you bring to the role from your past experiences and what have been your achievements?

3. Tell me about a time when you had an idea to do something in a different way and think outside of the box.

4. Describe a time when you worked as part of a team.

5. Describe a time when you have had to deal with a difficult situation and what was the outcome?

6. Why do you want to work for us?

7. Describe a time when you showed leadership.

8. Where do you see yourself in five years' time?

9. Do you have any questions for us?