

INTERVIEW TIPS

RESUME TIPS

- Prepare your resume and have someone proofread it for any mistakes. This is one of the first impressions future employers will have of you.
- List your references on your resume. Don't say "available upon request". These can be on a separate page from your resume if you run out of space. References should NOT be relatives. Preferred references include a former teacher/counselor, a colleague from a previous job or team you've worked with, and a character reference like a pastor or community leader. List their contact information and relationship to you on the references page.
- Bring several copies of your resume with you. In some cases, you may be interviewed by a panel and not just one person.
- Try to limit your resume to ONE PAGE.

PREPARATIONS FOR INTERVIEWS

- Clean up your social media accounts – this is the FIRST place potential employers will look. Employers see their employees as an investment; they are making sure they aren't hiring anyone who will hurt their company's reputation.
- Study your resume and know what is on there so you can be prepared when they start asking you questions.
- Research the company and, if possibly, the people who will be interviewing you. It helps with engaging and shaping the conversation if you know something about them beforehand.
- Be able to tell your story and explain how you can benefit the company and add to its mission. Be able to answer "Tell me about yourself" in 30 seconds – clearly and concisely – including your strengths and weaknesses.
- BE CONFIDENT! BE COMFORTABLE BRAGGING ABOUT YOURSELF! IF YOU CAN'T SELL YOURSELF, WHO WILL?!
- Practice answering questions and your story in front of an adult. Your teachers or counselors are happy to help you!
- Be prepared to discuss how long you might see yourself in the position, your future ambitions, and length of time you will be in the current area. If you're willing to take additional education to progress in the company, you should let them know.
- Dress professionally and appropriately for the position for which you are interviewing. Make sure no undergarments are visible.
- When it comes to jewelry and accessories, remove all facial piercings and don't go overboard.

THE DAY OF THE INTERVIEW

BEFORE

- Arrive EARLY! (Preferably 15 minutes before your appointment time.)
- Turn off your phone before you get out of the car. You may even consider leaving it in the car.
- Leave your friends/significant other/parents/children at home! If they must accompany you, they do not need to enter the building with you.
- Dispose of any gum, snacks, or beverages.
- The interview starts as soon as you walk into the building. Be nice to everyone! Your future employer may be watching and may ask for their opinions of you as well.

DURING

- Attitude is expressed through body language, as well as verbally.
 - Smile. Make and maintain eye contact.
 - Be confident. Do not look down. Sit up straight.
 - Give a firm handshake. Do not hunch over or cross your arms.
- Talk like you are educated. Use appropriate grammar. Do not say “like” or “um” often.
- Use your manners – say “Yes, Sir/Ma’am.” and “No, Sir/Ma’am.”
- Listen. Answer the questions you have been asked. Have a conversation. Don’t be afraid of silence. It’s ok to think before you respond.
- “I don’t know” is a perfectly acceptable answer to a question.
- Do not speak negatively of former employers.
- Never lie to cover up past mistakes. Give an honest answer to every question. Be honest about your skill set and ability and willingness to learn new tasks.
- Don’t be afraid to brag on yourself and the things you know and have done.
- Use the STAR format – **S**ituation, **T**ask, **A**ction, **R**esult. This will help you “tell a story” and not ramble or get off subject.
- Have a list of questions you want to ask them and make sure you at least ask one of them. It shows you are interested in the position and have done your research.

AT THE END

- If it is a sales position, ASK FOR THE JOB! (Just like when you would be selling on the job...you ask for their business...so ask for the job in the interview!!!)
- Thank them for their time and for considering you for the position.
- If you are currently employed and they offer you the job on the spot and ask when you can start, your response should always be “I will need to give my current employer a 2-weeks’ notice before I can start here.”
- DO NOT ask about the pay, benefits, or time off at the first interview. These topics should only be discussed if the interviewer(s) initiate the conversation regarding these topics.

AFTERWARDS

- Write & mail a handwritten thank you note to the person or people who conducted the interview as soon as you get home. State that you are looking forward to hearing from them about the position.
- If the interviewers indicated a timeframe in which they would notify you about the job, be patient and wait for that time to come. However, it is ok to call and inquire after 3-4 days as passed.