



Interview Tips for High School Students

Everyone will go through an interview at some point in high school. Whether it's for a job, a class exercise at school or when you apply to college, knowing how to put your best foot forward during an interview is an important life skill to have. Check out the tips below to help you do your best in your next interview.

- 1. Arrive early.** At least 15 minutes in advance is a good rule of thumb. If you've never been to the interview location before, think about driving there during a trial run to make sure you don't get lost and can anticipate any traffic issues. Being late to an interview is a huge mistake! It can send the message to the interviewer that you don't care and that you think your time is more valuable than theirs.
- 2. Make a good first impression.** Putting the effort into dressing nicely shows that you are taking the interview seriously. An employer may be especially concerned with your appearance if you will be in a customer contact position as a server, store clerk, receptionist or front desk worker. See the Dress for Success tips on kygoestocollege.com for ways you can look your best.
- 3. Bring a notepad.** Having something to jot down questions that may occur to you during the interview can not only be handy, but it also shows that you put some thought into preparation. You can also write down questions you want to ask or points you want to make on your behalf. If you are forgetful or bad with names, making a note of the interviewer's name is also a good idea so you can thank them properly at the end.
- 4. Be personable.** The receptionist or person that greets you when you arrive to the interview may not be the person you are there to meet. However, the interviewer will likely ask them about their impressions of you. Be mindful of things like sitting up straight, making eye contact, smiling and making small talk. You want everyone you meet to tell the interviewer that they like your personality and that you would fit in.
- 5. Silence your phone,** and put it out of sight for the duration of the interview. Resist the temptation to take a peek at any time before, during or after the meeting, when you are in view of the interviewer or someone who may report back to the interviewer. Employers in particular are very concerned about losing productivity among young employees who are constantly checking their phones.
- 6. Introduce yourself.** Use a firm (not weak and not crushing) handshake, a nice smile and eye contact. Even if you have spoken on the phone or via text or email, introduce yourself if this is the first time you are meeting face-to-face. Always address the interviewer as Mr. or Ms., unless they explicitly ask you to call them by their first name.
- 7. Be positive.** Don't just think positive, but exude positive energy and enthusiasm throughout your interview. The interviewer knows you may not have all the answers, but a good attitude and

positive energy can make up for what you don't know. When sitting, avoid slouching and lean slightly forward, like you are eager to hear the next thing that the interviewer has to say.

8. Research and practice. Research common interview questions and practice answering them with a friend or family member so you can speak confidently during your interview. For instance, most interviewers will ask what you are good at and may even ask you to describe situations when you have used your strengths to accomplish a goal. Research the organization too (employer, college, etc.) and know at least some basic information about the place where you are interviewing.

9. Express your interest. If it's a job interview, be prepared to say why you are interested in the job, even if you aren't asked. Employers want to hire employees who are interested in the work they will be doing. The same goes for college interviews. If you don't seem interested in their school, they may not want to admit you, even if you have all the qualifications.

10. Ask questions. Most interviewers will end by asking if you have any questions, and you want to have some questions prepared. Depending on the type of interview, you may ask about things like work schedule, training, campus life or when you might hear if you got the position or go accepted to the school. Finish with a strong handshake and express your interest one last time.

11. Always send a thank you. Sending a thank you note after the interview is good way to show your appreciation for the interviewer's time and reinforce your interest. A written card is nice if you have good handwriting, but email is also acceptable. Send the thank you note as soon as possible after the interview. This highlights your punctuality and keeps you fresh in the interviewer's mind.