

# Interviews for Young People

## A) Yourself:

- You need to look smart of course.
- Turn up FIVE minutes before the interview: no sooner and no later.
- Be polite to any staff you may meet before the interview.
- NO mannerisms and/or nervous movements of any part of the body.
- Look the interviewer(s) in the eye, not necessarily ALL the time but MOST of the time.
- Smile a few times at the right moment.
- Be confident. If you are not, pretend that you are.

## B) In general:

The interviewer ...

- ... is looking for POTENTIAL; he or she knows you have little or no experience of work.
- ... would like to see some experience of SOME kind of activity involving interaction with people: a club, sports team: anything. He/she needs to have an idea of how you might interact with their existing staff.
- ... does not want to see someone miserable; who wants to hire a frightened rabbit?
- ... wants to see some indication of AMBITION and CURIOSITY.
- ... wants to see someone who can COMMUNICATE and seems able to learn.
- ... re communication, LISTEN carefully and respond precisely and concisely.

## C) During the interview:

- ... empathize with the interviewer; try to understand what they want (see above)
- ... tell the truth, but be economical with negative bits of it
- ... try to highlight your strong points when you can

## D) The Interview itself needs to be prepared; you may face some difficult questions. There are certain “classic” interview questions which you CAN prepare for:

- 1) **Tell me about yourself:** The interviewer already knows your name, where you live and which school you are in, so do not repeat any of those in your answer. Do not give detailed personal information (family, home etc).

The interviewer is assessing your ability to provide relevant answers, to see how well you are able to respond to the question about how suited you are for the job. Give:

- a brief statement of your experience which is relevant to the position you are being interviewed for
- a brief statement of the characteristics and traits that will allow you to be an asset in the organization
- a brief statement about your best accomplishments so far.

- 2) **What motivates you?** Your answer should be focussed on the motivation you have to make sure that you perform the job to the best of your ability. For example, if you are being interviewed as an intern, your answer should include the fact that you are driven to acquire new knowledge and to be part of a team that displays team spirit and team responsibility.

Do not refer in your answer to liking the hours offered or working in a fun environment. This may be the case but you can only enjoy these perks after you get the job!

- 3) **What are you passionate about?** This is an easy question for you to get right because the question provides you with an opportunity to show the interviewer that you can be dedicated and are prepared to work hard for a cause or in a hobby. In turn, you should show the interviewer that you are prepared to be equally as dedicated to the job and how your work ethics will reflect the effort you have put in so far with the hobby.

- 4) **Tell me about your past experiences:** Here, the interviewer is trying to get an idea of your skills and attitude towards work. If you have never “worked” in this context, refer to another social situation you have participated in.

Focus on showing the interviewer that you are prepared to work hard and that you have the necessary skills for the position. For example, you can tell the interviewer that your volunteering experience in a charity-owned thrift shop has prepared you to interact and deal with different types of individuals, and this has allowed you to develop customer service skills.

**5) What were the problems or challenges you faced?** Here, the interviewer wants to assess your problem-solving abilities in a work environment. Prepare your answer by picking on one or two problems you have faced in the past and analysing what you did in your attempt to solve the issue. Include in the answer lessons you have learnt from each problem or challenges you have faced and how they apply to the job you are interviewing for

**E) A few other questions and sample answers:**

**1) Why are you looking for a job?**

- I am thinking of a career in this field and it would be good get experience at the entry level and see what professionals in this field do in their positions.
- I like to work with people and this job will help me develop my skills in communicating with customers.
- I think I'd enjoy a job in marketing or communications and I'll develop those skills in this customer service job.
- I like to work with my hands and this job will let me develop those skills.
- I would like to work so that I can earn some spending money. I appreciate my parent's help, but I'd like to have a little more money to spend on my own.
- Ever since I could remember, I have looked forward to the day I was old enough to get a job. I cannot wait to start earning my own money so that I can save up for something special, like a car.
- Since I will be a senior in high school in September, I am starting to save for the books, supplies, and extra spending money I will need for college.
- I am looking for a job because I am trying to save money to pay for a trip that my best friend that I would like to take over winter break or when my work schedule permits.

**2) Why should we hire you?**

- I am eager to be one of your best employees, and I hope to work for you for a long period of time. The experience I will gain here is invaluable and once the summer is over, I hope we can arrange a schedule that allows me to continue working throughout the school year.
- I appreciate the investment your company would make in me, and I look forward to learning what you can teach me so that I can make a positive contribution. My achievements in school and my after-school activities show that I am responsible, trust-worthy, and a quick learner. I know that I can put these skills to good use working for you at your company.
- The investment your company will be making in me will not be going to waste. I am already familiar with this market and feel training will not take the amount of time anticipated. I am ready to start as soon as you need me and I look forward to working with a team who shares the same goal as me.

**3) What do you know about our company? -> "Errm ....." is not going to cut the mustard!**

**4) Why are you interested in working for our company?**

- am a frequent customer of your store, so I've gotten to know your company well and appreciate your products and the environment that you've created here. It's important for me to work someplace that I admire, and I know that I would be proud to work here.
- I would love to work for your company because I have a passion for clothing and design and I plan to study fashion merchandising in college.
- I try to keep myself up to date with the latest styles and trends. I feel working for you would enable me to put my passion to good use, and allow me to share it with your customers. I am also looking forward to the real world experience I would get from working in your shop.
- The number one reason I am interested in working with your company is because your company works directly with children.
- I love spending time with kids and I think they enjoy spending time with me. Working in your afterschool program would be rewarding and a lot of fun!

**5) What do you think it takes to be successful in this position?**

- I think like, in most jobs, to succeed in this position I'll have to be hardworking, responsible, trustworthy, and a good team member.
- I feel it is important to believe what I am doing is meaningful and that I can make a difference. Keeping these two things in mind only motivates me to work harder.
- When working with children, it is important to always make them feel like they are special. To be successful in this position, I will be energetic, creative, and understanding of the various needs of the all the children.

## 6) How has school prepared you for working at our company?

- At school, I have to meet daily deadlines, set goals for myself in a variety of subjects and activities, and accomplish them. I believe these experiences will translate to the workplace and will prepare me to excel at your company. At school, I also work with my peers and teachers every day so I know how to work in teams and with a manager.
- I understand the importance of being on time and working within specific blocks of time.
- One of the most useful skills I gained from my school experience was learning how to plan, execute, and complete quality work within the time period given. I feel my strong time-management skills have prepared for the position you are looking fill.
- I have taken a number of computer skills classes in school and so learned many different ways to utilize the technology the computer has to offer. I am proficient in Microsoft Office software, comfortable doing in-depth research using the Internet and I have become familiar with many different types of graphic design software. All these computer skills have prepared me to work for your company.

## 7) How would you describe your ability to work as a team member?

I have had many experiences working in a team as a member of my high school athletic program. As a member of my sports team, I understand what it means to be a part of something larger than yourself and how to work with a group to accomplish a shared goal. As captain of the debate team, I acquired many different team building skills. I learned how critical it is to make every member of the team feel important, included, and motivated to be the best team we could possibly be. I learned more than I ever expected to when I joined my school's soccer team. As a team, we did things beyond the playing fields like fundraising and volunteer work. It was amazing what we were able to accomplish, as a team, both on and off the field.

## 8) Tell me about a major problem you recently handled:

I had a major paper due for my biology class. It was an extensive research project and accounted for a big part of my grade. I was almost finished and was just writing the conclusion when a thunderstorm hit and the power went out. My professor has a strict lateness policy and accepts no excuses, so I knew I had to hand it in the next morning on time or I'd fail the assignment. I used my phone to look up coffee shops that were open all night and that had wireless internet. I did backup my work frequently, so I only lost about a page and a half. I was able to go to the coffee shop, rewrite the sections of the paper I lost, add in my sources and proofread it. I handed it in the next morning on time, and ended up getting an 'A' on the paper and in the class.

*In this example, the candidate shows that he is prepared; he regularly backs up his work, so that shows he is careful and conscientious. When the power went out, he thought to look up area locations where he could work, demonstrating quick thinking and resourcefulness when faced with a problem. He found a way to get the work done and met the deadline, without sacrificing quality. It is an impressive reply.*

## 9) Finally .....

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- What are your strengths and weaknesses?</li><li>- Why are you interested in working for us?</li><li>- Where do you see yourself in five years? Ten years?</li><li>- What can you offer us that someone else can not?</li><li>- Tell me about an accomplishment you are most proud of.</li><li>- Tell me about a time you made a mistake.</li><li>- How did you hear about this position?</li><li>- What would you look to accomplish in the first 30 days/60 days/90 days on the job?</li><li>- Tell me how you handled a difficult situation.</li><li>- Why should we hire you?</li><li>- Why are you looking for a job?</li><li>- Would you work holidays/weekends?</li><li>- How would you deal with an angry or irate customer?</li><li>- Give a time when you went above and beyond the requirements for a project.</li><li>- Who are our competitors?</li><li>- What was your biggest failure?</li><li>- What motivates you? - What's your availability?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Tell me about a time when you disagreed with an employer or teacher.</li><li>- How do you handle pressure?</li><li>- What are your career goals?</li><li>- What gets you up in the morning?</li><li>- What would your current boss/teacher say about you?</li><li>- If I called your boss right now and asked him what is an area that you could improve on, what would he say?</li><li>- Are you a leader or a follower?</li><li>- What was the last book you've read for fun?</li><li>- What are your hobbies?</li><li>- What is your favourite website?</li><li>- What makes you uncomfortable?</li><li>- What are some of your leadership experiences?</li><li>- What do you like the most and least about working in this industry?</li><li>- Would you work 40+ hours a week?</li><li>- What questions haven't I asked you?</li><li>- What questions do you have for me?</li></ul>
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