



Hints and Tips for the perfect interview



Once you get invited to an interview it is your opportunity to showcase yourself to the employer. It pays to be well prepared and it's normal to feel nervous. This guide provides some helpful hints on how to prepare for the big day and how to act during the interview to help you do your best.

Before the interview

Find out what your interview will involve

Find out if the interview will involve any kind of test or presentation so you can prepare effectively. You can also research the people who will be interviewing you.

Plan your journey

Make sure you have the correct address and plan how you will get there. Consider doing a trial run if necessary and check that the location will be accessible for you long term.

Understand the job role

Make sure that you understand the job role, the Apprenticeship and the qualifications that you will be studying towards.

Research the company

Find out key facts about them. What makes this company appealing to you? Why do you want to work for them?



Prepare your answers

Prepare your answers to commonly asked questions by picking out the key skills from the job description and thinking about how you have demonstrated these in the past.

Prepare responses for competency based questions, where you are asked to give an example how you have carried out a particular skill. You could think of an example from previous job roles, school or college.

You should also plan some questions to ask the interviewer, for example you could ask what a typical day is like or what opportunities there are for progression or further training.

Plan your outfit

Make sure that you plan what you are going to wear for your interview. You should be dressed smartly and tidily in business wear with smart shoes not trainers.

Be on time

Arrive 10 minutes early but if you are going to be late make sure you phone ahead to let the interviewer know.



During the interview



First impressions

Create a positive first impression with a firm handshake, eye contact and a smile.

Be polite, friendly and try to relax.



Responding to questions

Take a moment to consider your answers, make sure that they are relevant to what you are being asked. If you aren't sure or if you get put off by a difficult question you can always ask them to repeat the question and ask for more information.

Take your time and don't panic!



Leave a good impression

Thank the interviewers for taking the time to meet you and make sure you leave knowing what the next stage is – when will you receive feedback for your interview?

Try to conclude on a positive note. This could be as simple as saying, *"I look forward to hearing from you"*.

After the interview

If your interview was arranged by a training provider or agency contact them to give them feedback. They will want to know how the interview went as well as what you think about the company and job role.

Reflect and consider if you feel that the role and the company is for you.

Assessment days and tests

You might be invited to attend an assessment day or to carry out some tests before or after attending an interview. These are different ways of assessing your skills so the employer can find out your strengths and see if you will be the right fit for the job.

Assessment days

Assessment days are way of assessing you in a more practical environment. You are likely to carry out a variety of group and individual activities.

On an assessment day you need to make sure that you stay professional throughout the day including on breaks and lunch. Chances are you will be assessed at all times.

Try and relax, the employer wants to see your personality shine through and engage with other members of the group. Assessment days also give you the opportunity to talk with the employer and staff members to find out if the job is right for you.

Tests

You may be asked to complete tests online before an interview or during your interview. These might include literacy, numeracy or ICT. They are not meant to intimidate you but they give employers a snapshot of your skills. If possible try to carry out some practice tests beforehand.

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