Interview Tips

Prepare for the Interview

- Research the position. Find out as much as you can about the position, the activity, it's mission and it's needs, so you can show how your background meets those needs. Check out the activity web site. Talk to people who already work there. If possible, request a copy of the position description from the servicing Human Resources Office.
- Know yourself. Be prepared to speak in-depth about your accomplishments, strengths, and weaknesses. How can you add value to the position?
- Review the common interview questions. You can almost bet on being asked: "Tell me about yourself." Ask yourself, "If I were hiring someone for this position, what would I want to know?" Then answer those questions. Be ready for tough ones. Think of the worst questions you could be asked about your experience and abilities, then prepare positive responses.
- Prepare questions of your own. Interviewers are as interested in your questions as they are in your answers.
    - What are the responsibilities of the position?
    - What kind of projects would I be working on?
    - What are the greatest challenges of this job or position?
    - What qualifications are you looking for?
- Practice. Practice on your family or in front of a mirror.

Make a Good First Impression

- Be punctual. Do whatever it takes to arrive a few minutes early.
- Dress appropriately. Your clothing should be appropriate for the position you're seeking. Make certain your clothing, hair, and fingernails are clean. Avoid excessive make-up, jewelry or cologne.
- Provide a firm handshake. Make eye contact when you shake and give the appearance of confidence as you enter.
- Use positive body language. Send the right message by standing straight, moving confidently, and sitting slightly forward in your chair.

The Interview

- Ask questions. Try to get the interviewer to describe the position and the duties to you early in the interview so that you can apply your background, skills, and accomplishments to the position.
- Project enthusiasm and eye contact. Keep an interested expression by a nod or a gesture in moderation; excessive body movement can distract and annoy the interviewer.
- Listen. Listen carefully and ask questions to probe deeper into what the interviewer is telling you. Most interviewers are delightfully surprised by a question such as, "How could I help you solve the problem you've just described?"
- Use correct grammar and articulate speech. If this is an area where you're weak, work on it.
- Avoid negativity. Don't say negative things about previous jobs or employers. Emphasize the positive if asked.

Closing the Interview

- Clarify. Ask if you should clarify any points or information.
- Thank you. Always thank the interviewer for his or her time and consideration.

Reasons Applicants Are Rejected During An Interview

1. Poor personal appearance.
2. Inability to express him/herself clearly. Poor voice, diction, grammar.
3. Lack of planning for a career; no purpose or goals.
4. Lack of confidence and poise; nervous, ill-at-ease.
5. Overemphasis on salary.
6. Unwilling to start at bottom; expects too much too soon.
7. Makes excuses; evasive; hedges on unfavorable factors in records.
8. Lack of tact. Lack of courtesy; ill-mannered.
9. Condemnation of past employers.
10. Fails to look interviewer in the eye.
11. Indecision. Merely shopping around.
12. Sloppy application.
13. Over-elaboration of details of experience.
14. Wants job only for a short time.
15. Little sense of humor. Cynical.
16. Lack of knowledge of field of specialization.
17. No interest in agency.
18. Emphasis on whom he she knows.
19. Unwillingness to go where the agency sends him/her.

Common Interview Questions

1. What are your long range and short range goals and objectives, when and why did you establish these goals and how are you preparing yourself to achieve them?
2. What specific goals, other than those related to your occupation, have you established for yourself for the next 10 years?
3. What do you see yourself doing 5 years from now?
4. What are your long range career objectives?
5. How do you plan to achieve your career goals?
6. What are the most important rewards you expect in your business/technical career?
7. What do you expect to be earning in 5years?
8. Why did you choose the career for which you are preparing?
9. Which is more important to you, the money or the type of job?
10. What do you consider to be your greatest strengths and weaknesses?
11. How would you describe yourself?
12. What motivates you to put forth your greatest efforts?
13. Why should I hire you?
14. What qualifications do you have that makes you think that you will be successful in business/technical career or in this position?
15. How do you determine or evaluate success?
16. What do you think it takes to be successful in an organization like ours?
17. In what ways do you think you can make a contribution to our organization ?
18. What qualities should a successful manager possess?
19. Describe the relationship that should exist between a supervisor and those reporting to him or her.
20. What two or three accomplishments have given you the most satisfaction? Why?
21. Do you have plans for continued study? An advanced degree?
22. In what kind of work environment are you most comfortable?
23. How do you work under pressure?
24. Why did you decide to seek a position with Department of the Navy?
25. What do you know about the Department of the Navy?
26. What two or three things are most important to you in your job?
27. Are you seeking employment in an activity of a certain size? Why?
28. What criteria are you using to evaluate the organization for which you hope to work?
29. Do you have a geographical preference? Why?
30. Will you relocate? Does relocation bother you?
31. Are you willing to travel?
32. Are you willing to spend at least 6 months as a trainee?
33. Why do you think you might like to live in the community in which our activity is located?
34. What major problem have you encountered and how did you deal with it?
35. What have you learned from your mistakes?

Questions for Recent Graduates

1. How do you think a friend or professor who knows you would describe you?
2. Describe your most rewarding college experience.
3. If you were hiring a graduate for this position, what qualities would you look for?
4. How has your college experience prepared you for a business/technical career?
5. Why did you select your college or university?
6. What led you to choose your field of major study?
7. What college subjects did you like least? Why?
8. If you could do so, how would you plan your academic study differently? Why?
9. What changes would you make in your college or university? Why?
10. What do you really want to do in life?
11. In what part-time or summer jobs have you been most interested? Why?
12. How would you describe the ideal job for you following graduation?
13. What college subjects did you like best? Why?