



The art of the interview

In this activity you will consider:

- Why employers use interviews
- How to prepare for an interview
- Good responses to common interview questions
- How to improve your interview strategies

The importance of interviews

Very few people enjoy interviews but, unless you are very lucky, they are unavoidable. Interviews may happen face-to-face in a formal setting, in a relaxed conversation, or (increasingly) by video-conference.

Whatever their form, it is very likely that you will experience a number of interviews during your career, both for new positions and also for promotions. Therefore, you need to learn how to make the most of them.

Why interview?

When you apply for work, you are likely to submit an application and your résumé. Surely this is enough information! Why do employers still insist on interviews? Interviews are one of the final stages of the recruitment process. Make a note of a number of things that recruiters can learn from interviews and not from applications and why these are important to the recruitment process.

A recruiter can learn:	This is important because:

Interview purpose and preparation

Remember the purpose of an interview. Interviewers want to:

- Meet prospective candidates to see if they will be a 'good fit'.
- Find out about applicants' interest in the work and their ability to meet requirements.
- Give applicants an opportunity to 'sell' themselves.

Thinking about these three elements, what do you need in order to be prepared for in an interview and how might you prepare? What attributes are sought-after in your field? How do you know? How can you create valid evidence?

What do you need to be prepared for?	How might you do this preparation?

Dealing with interview questions

When it comes to interviews, practice makes perfect. There are some questions that interviewers often ask applicants and you need to be prepared to answer these.

A common question is, “Tell us about a difficult situation you overcame”. How would you answer this?

Your answer:

What would you say?

When you are answering these type of interview questions it is often good to think about the acronym STAR:

- Situation – what was the situation?
- Task – what outcome did you need to achieve?
- Action – what did you do?
- Response – what was the result of your actions?

Thinking about the STAR acronym, how would you respond to the following common interview questions?

Tell us about a significant accomplishment in the past and how you achieved it.	Tell us about a time when you had to deal with a difficult person.
S	S
T	T
A	A
R	R

Digital literacy

It is really common for interviews to be conducted using digital technology. When your interview is not face-to-face or over the phone, there are some extra things to think about! Here are some of them.

1. Do you know how to connect to an online meeting using tools such as Skype, Zoom, or virtual meeting points (VMP)? Check this well in advance and use online help if you need it.
2. Do you know how to check if your speakers and microphone are working correctly? As above, don't leave this to the last minute.
3. Is the interviewer in the same time zone? If not, have you double-checked the time of your interview?
4. What other factors do you need to consider beyond the usual interview preparation, for example:
 - a. Request a test run of the technology well before the scheduled interview, either with the recruiter or (for common programs such as Skype) with family;
 - b. Are you planning to show some things to the panel during your interview? If so, you will need to send these well in advance or be prepared to display them digitally in the online meeting;
5. There are plenty of stories about people who wore their pyjama bottoms and a shirt, thinking that only their top half would be seen only to have to get up to turn a light on or to close a door. Dress appropriately!

Make it count!

The best way to prepare for interviews is to practice. Find an advertisement for a position, volunteer work or some contract work, read about what they are looking for, and then imagine you are an applicant. Get someone to ask you these common interview questions:

- What do you know about the company / client / project?
- Why do you want to work for this company / client / project?
- Why do you think you would be good at the position?
- Where do you see yourself five years from now?
- Why should *you* get the position?
- How will we benefit by your participation at this workplace?
- What do you think are your greatest strengths and weaknesses as a worker?

Adapted from [Australian Blueprint for Career Development](#) Phase 2 (C) Career Building 11.2 – Understand and experience the process of career building. The digital literacy components were developed by Jo Coldwell (Deakin University).