

THE INTERVIEW

The interview serves a two-fold purpose. A student has an opportunity to give personal information directly and to hear first hand about the college. It allows the student to give information not asked for on the application and to discuss unusual circumstances.

Most colleges do not request an interview nor is it an essential factor in the admissions process. However, most admissions personnel do admit that it works in the student's favor by putting a face with the paperwork.

The most important aspect of an interview is to BE YOURSELF!!!

Learn to think about yourself and to present yourself in an organized manner. Don't underrate or exaggerate. Above all be honest.

Some guidelines-

- Think of four adjectives that describe you well.
- Be able to describe your high school to someone who is unfamiliar with it.
- How competitive is the environment? What are some of the topics/ books/special projects required for your classes?
- Have you explored any subject independently?
Have you been challenged to work hard?
- What activities/interests do you pursue outside the classroom? How do you spend summers?
- What do you expect from college?
- What are your reasons for choosing this particular college?

Before the interview, give some thought to what areas you want to cover in the interview. Be your own advocate in a pleasant, positive manner.

Dress does count! The interviewer's first impression is based on how you look. Make a good first impression. Remember, not only do you represent yourself, but you represent Westlake High School. The college's preception of your school is that you should know how to dress appropriately for an interview.

Be Prompt, Be Polite, Don't Quibble or Complain. Accentuate the Positives, Eliminate the Negatives. If delayed, call ahead and explain the circumstances. Have questions ready to ask and make sure the questions are relevant.

When the interview or campus visit is over, reflect how the interview went. If you missed some points, you can follow up with a letter. Remember, not all interviews will be top-notch experiences. You tend to be your own worst critic and interviews can only help you in the admissions process.

Write a Thank You note to the appropriate person after the interview.

Interviewing Tips

1. Be prepared

- Research the company! (www.hovers.com ; www.lib.uwaterloo.ca/society/overview.html). Know what they do, some of the history, etc. NEVER ask, "So, what do you do here?"
- Find a recent article about them to mention. It shows you're interested in them and that you take initiative.
- Take an extra copy of your cover letter and resume. Also take any other portfolio information you wish to share.
- Know the interviewer's name and how to pronounce it.
- Be prepared to discuss your career goals, qualifications, and knowledge of the company.

2. Dress professionally

- Absolutely NO: jeans or shorts; flip flops; visible piercings or tattoos; spaghetti strap, strapless, tank top, low cut, mid-drift, or backless tops. Also watch your perfume/cologne, makeup, and jewelry--- less is more.
- You can never go wrong with conservative black slacks and a button down top (even to a fast food or babysitting interview). For more professional jobs, dress in business casual attire.

3. Be on time

- Be 10-15 minutes early. Sometimes you have to complete an application or other paperwork.

4. Act professionally

- Be nice to whoever you meet. They may be asked of their opinion of you later.
- Never chew gum, eat, drink, or smoke- even if they offer.
- Shake hands firmly (make sure they're dry) and look everyone (especially your interviewer) in the eye.
- Sit naturally and comfortably, without slouching. Maintain eye contact.
- If a question is not clear, ask for clarification or rephrase the question to make sure you understand.
- Do not interrupt.
- Never talk negatively about current/former employers, companies, or careers.
- Give references only when asked for them.
- Never ask about salary/pay on a first interview. If it's not brought up by the second, you may broach the subject.

5. Be gracious

- Always thank the interviewer for their time.
- By the next day, send the interviewer a personal thank you note. Don't be afraid to say you think you would be a great fit for the job/company and would really love to be hired.

Common Interview Questions

- What do you consider to be your greatest strength(s) and weakness (es)?
- How would you describe yourself?
- Can you explain this gap in your employment history?
- Why did you leave your last job? Have you ever been fired or forced to resign?
- Why should I hire you? What makes you qualified for this position?
- What are your long range and short range goals and objectives?
- What do you see yourself doing five years from now? Ten years from now?
- What do you expect to be earning in five years?
- How well do you work with people? Do you prefer working alone or in teams?
- How would you evaluate your ability to deal with conflict?
- How would a good friend describe you?
- Describe the best job you've ever had. Describe the best supervisor you've ever had.
- What qualifications do you have that make you successful in this career?
- What do you think it takes to be successful in a company like ours?
- Do you consider yourself a leader? What are the attributes of a good leader?
- What's the most recent book you've read?
- What two or three accomplishments have given you the most satisfaction? Why?
- How do you work under pressure?
- What's one of the hardest decisions you've ever had to make?
- How well do you adapt to new situations?
- What can you tell us about our company?
- What two or three things are most important to you in your job?
- What major problem have you encountered and how did you deal with it?
- What have you learned from your mistakes?
- What have you accomplished that shows your initiative and willingness to work?
- WHAT QUESTIONS DO YOU HAVE?

College Admittance and Professional Interview Prep Questions

Why are you considering this college?

What makes you think this college and you are right for each other?

Where else have you applied?

Why are you seeking this program of study?

How would you describe yourself to someone who did not know you?

What magazines or newspapers do you like to read?

What books that are not required by your courses have you read recently?

How do you spend a typical afternoon after school? Weekend?

What extracurricular Activities have you found the most satisfying?

If you could talk to anyone living person, whom would it be?

What has been your proudest achievement?

Students should also arrive at the interview prepared to discuss:

- Five Questions that they want to ask during the interview
- Five things they would like the admissions officer or department member to know about them.
- Five

GETTING READY

The commercial says, "You never get a second chance to make a first impression." This is very true. While ability is important in keeping the job once you get it, a negative first impression can stop you from being considered further for a position. The key to a successful interview is presenting yourself in a positive, professional fashion.

APPEARANCE, PERSONALITY, AND MANNERS

Interviewers attach great importance to good grooming and appropriate dress. Your clothing should be conservative and professional. Your shoes should be shined. Hair and nails should be well-groomed and recently trimmed. Go easy on the use of cologne or perfume (you never know what could offend your interviewer).

Interviewers like candidates who are enthusiastic and responsive. Industry research shows that 85% of the reason a person gets a job, keeps it and moves ahead along a career path is people skills. Start and end the interview by letting the interviewer know that you are genuinely interested in the job. Enter and leave with a firm handshake. Try to maintain a steady, natural eye-contact with the interviewer for at least half the interview. Avoid negative nonverbal body language. i.e. excessive blinking, finger-fiddling, fidgeting, etc. Do not chew gum even if the interviewer does. Try to be confident but not arrogant in your attitude.

Interviewers like candidates who are punctual and polite. Be on time, or better yet, be early! If you are late and rushed, neither of you will be at your best. Interviewers like pleasant people. A negative attitude expressed during the first interview may prevent you from actually meeting your potential new boss. Always remember to say "Thank You."

INTERVIEW PREPARATION

1. Know why you are interested in the position.
2. Assess your strengths and weaknesses
3. Assess your major accomplishments
4. Be prepared to discuss your responsibilities
5. Evaluate your skills and experience as they relate to the position requirements
6. Prepare your questions about the position
7. Research the school—know what you are walking into.
8. Make sure you are ready to make a professional presentation—both in appearance and in verbiage
9. Write a good resume which accurately reflects your education and work experience. It should be neat and should not have typing or spelling errors.
10. Compose a thank-you letter which you can send immediately after your interview. Thank the interviewer for the opportunity to interview.

DURING THE INTERVIEW

1. Make sure you understand the questions
2. Respond concisely—don't ramble
3. Avoid "yes" or "no" answers
4. As you answer questions, avoid the use of negative terms
5. Take advantage of the opportunity to sell yourself
6. Answer questions with specific examples—avoid generalities
7. Evaluate the position for which you are interviewing.

REASONS WHY CANDIDATES ARE REJECTED

1. Lack of proper planning—purposes and goals ill defined—needs direction. Has no idea why they pursued this field.
2. Inability to express thoughts clearly and concisely—rambles

3. Inability to discuss achievements
4. Not prepared for the interview—no research on position or the company
5. Unable to explain interest in the position
6. Little interest and enthusiasm—indifferent—bland personality
7. Overbearing—overaggressive—conceited—cocky—aloof—assuming
8. Interested only in a higher grade level or more money
9. Asks few or poor questions about the job—little depth and meaning to questions. Does not talk
10. Makes excuses—evasiveness—hedges on unfavorable factors in record
11. No confidence and poise—fails to look interviewer in the eye—immature—weak handshake
12. Poor personal appearance—sloppy dress—lacks sophistication. Needs haircut or hair is not clean. Fingernails are dirty. Shoes do not match suit. Too much jewelry or cologne

QUESTIONS TO ASK DURING THE INTERVIEW

1. What can I do to be most benefit to your program?
2. What responsibilities would you like this type of student to have/?
3. What are some of the objectives which you would like accomplished by these types of students?
4. Is there any further education you would like me to acquire? I am willing to do so
5. How much orientation and training will be provided?
6. How do you determine work objectives and deadlines?

COMMON "KNOCK-OUT" FACTORS (REJECTION REASONS II)

Below is a list of some of the more common reasons given by interviewers for rejecting candidates:

1. Spelling errors or bad grammar in the resume
2. Inability to express thoughts clearly and concisely, inability to discuss achievements
3. Little interest or enthusiasm—appears bored or indifferent to opportunity
4. Overbearing, over-aggressive or aloof
5. Evasive or vague answers to interviewer questions
6. No self-confidence or poise; fails to look interviewer in the eye
7. Immature or inappropriate behavior (giggling, gum chewing, making wisecracks, appearing to not take the interview seriously, etc.)
10. Poor personal appearance

QUESTIONS TO EXPECT

As a first impression, how you answer a question may be as important as your technical competence. Companies today are looking for well-rounded, business oriented professionals. Give some thought to how you might respond to the following:

1. Tell me about yourself (Creative, analytical, hardworking...)
2. Why are you preparing to leave your present position?
3. What are your career plans/goals?
4. What are your greatest strengths/weaknesses?
6. Recent accomplishments or special projects
7. What outside interests do you have?
8. What do you know about our program?
9. Describe a typical day at your present school.
10. How do you approach problem solving?

ONCE YOU ARE THERE

1. Make sure you understand the question before you answer. Be a good listener; this is one of the easiest ways to impress someone.
2. Respond concisely--don't ramble. Speak clearly and to the point, only giving sufficient detail to evidence your expertise. Stick to topics related to your experience, education or ability.
4. Avoid "yes" and "no" answers. Answer questions, where possible, with specific examples (avoid generalities)
5. Avoid the use of negative terms and don't exaggerate your skills or accomplishments. Stretching the truth is usually detected by the interviewer and can hurt your chances for acceptance..
7. At all times project enthusiasm, confidence and ambition. In addition to those qualities related to your field of study, you would be wise to convey three important personal qualities: sincerity, a dedication to achievement and a high energy level.

Typical Questions To Be Answered During the College Visit

1. Are there adequate facilities for the department of your major interest?
2. Do laboratory facilities appear to be up-to-date and adequate?
3. Do freshmen have opportunities to take courses with the "top" or "major" professors?
4. What is the typical class size? for freshmen? for upperclassmen?
5. Are library facilities sufficient? Would you want to spend a great deal of time there? What are the hours for student use?
6. Does the campus have appeal in general?
7. How near is the campus to the local community? Where is the nearest pizza? Are drugstores convenient?
8. Is the campus clean and orderly? Do student exhibit a pride in the college appearance?
9. What is the condition of the buildings?
10. What are the dormitories like? Must freshmen live in the dorms? May student decorate their rooms? How many to a room or suite? What are the dorm regulations? Are there student facilities in the dorms? Quiet hours?
11. Where are the dining facilities located? Are students required to buy meal contracts? How many meals are served per day?
12. What activities go on at the student union?
13. Are there fraternity/sorority houses? What percent of students belong? What effect do fraternities/sororities have on student life as a whole?
14. Is religious affiliation significant? Are there religious organizations to suit your purposes?
15. Are there good athletic facilities? Intercollegiate athletics? Intramural athletics?
16. What is the relationship between students-faculty-administrators? Do faculty members seem accessible, friendly, helpful?
17. Do the students seem serious about their educational experience? Is there a country club atmosphere? Good balance?
18. What are the financial aid opportunities? Work opportunities?
19. What are the unique programs? Travel abroad programs? Internship or practical work experience in field of interest?
20. What percentage of students go on to graduate study and to which graduate schools? What national recognition have students received?
21. What cultural activities are available on or near the campus? Are speakers, plays, musicians and other artists brought to the campus?
22. Do the majority of students leave the campus on the weekend? What do students do on typical weekends?
23. What clubs and student activity groups are available?
24. What are the traditions of the college?
25. What is the ratio of men to women? Where do the students come from?
26. How do you get there? How far to the nearest bus, plane or train?
27. Are advisors readily available? Is there an organized, professional counseling service for students.
28. What percentage of a freshman class is around to graduate in four years?

Interview and Essay Preparation

Throughout the admissions process, you will constantly be asked to reflect upon yourself and your activities. The following questions are provided to help you begin thinking about your special talents and anything else you especially want the Admissions Committee to know about yourself.

1. Do you have any special interest which you feel is unusual or especially important to you?
2. Other than academics, what do you feel are your own special talents and how have you discovered them?
3. What do you feel are your weaknesses? What especially would you like to correct?
4. What are the qualities you most often admire in other people?
5. Have you been personally responsible for any innovations or constructive ideas adopted by your high school?
6. Do you consider yourself a leader or follower? On what basis?
7. Why do you want to go to college?
8. What is your attitude toward academics? Do you expect it will change in college?
9. What motivates you to learn?
10. Have you gone through a particular experience which has affected your life? Made a special friend? Took an important trip? Had a joyful or sad experience?