

## Interviews

Simply stated, a job interview's purpose is to introduce the job seeker to the potential employer. It is meant to give the company a glance at you and you a glance at the company.

## Most interview questions can be grouped into five categories

### You and Your Skills

- Tell me (us) about yourself?
- What do you consider your most valuable skill?
- What are your strengths? What challenges you on a professional level?
- Why should we hire you?
- What words would describe you best?
- What specific experience do you have in this field?
- Describe your skills and abilities and how they relate to the job you are being interviewed for.

### Your Commitment to the Job

- What are your long range goals?
- Are you thinking of going back to school or to college?
- Why have you changed jobs so many times?
- Do you think you are overqualified?
- If you have changed jobs many times, explain why you felt it was necessary and emphasize that you expect to stay longer in this job (if that's true).
- If you do seem overqualified for the position, stress your adaptability and flexibility.

### Your Ability to Fulfil Specific Requirements

- How do you respond to instruction and suggestions for improvement?

## Interview Tips

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- Would you relocate? Take retraining?
- Do you prefer to work with others or by yourself?
- Can you work under pressure?
- Do you like routine work?
- What kind of boss do you prefer?
- What salary are you looking for?
- If the interviewer asks you about your preferences or ability to cope with certain types of situations, the job likely involves similar circumstances.

### Your Interest in the Job and the Company

- What is it about our company that interests you?
- What is your understanding of this position and the company?
- What do you know about our company?
- Why do you want to work for our company?
- Let the employer know that what you are looking for in a job, matches what this company is offering. Validate this statement with examples of how your skills and experiences would benefit the company.

### Previous Employment

- Why did you leave your last job?
- Why do you want to leave your present job?
- What was most rewarding about your last job?
- What was your last employer's opinion of you?
- What is your opinion of your boss/previous employer?

Focus on the positive - your desire to learn new skills, assume more responsibility, seek new opportunities, grow and develop.

## Interview Tips

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### Know Your Rights

- Generally, questions pertaining to race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, age, record of offences, marital status, family status and disability are prohibited by law.

#### However there are exceptions

- It is worthwhile to say that questions about the above raises the issue of the interviewer's need for more information about a person's suitability for a job. It may be beneficial to ask the employer to re-phrase the question or clarify the purpose of the question.
- If you are asked a question that lacks clear purpose, it is important to know your rights, and to answer the question in such a way as to ensure that the subject would not affect your ability to carry out your professional responsibilities.

#### For more information contact:

Ontario Human Rights Commission  
1-800-668-3946  
[www.ohrc.on.ca](http://www.ohrc.on.ca)

Source: Job Seekers' Handbook, An Introductory Guide to Finding Work by Information and Development Marketing Career and Labour Market Information, Alberta Advanced Education and Career Development, p 65-68

### Pre-Interview Preparation Techniques

#### Research the Company

Go to the library, go online, call the company, and talk to people.

#### Research the Job

If you don't know what the job is all about, talk to someone who does. Talk to people with similar jobs at other companies, find out what they do, their likes and dislikes of the job, and what their company pay range is for that position. This will enable you to compare the position you may be offered to similar positions at other companies and respond knowledgeably to the interviewer's questions.

#### Know Yourself

Think of your strengths in terms of what the company needs. Emphasize the strengths that the company is looking for.

## Interview Tips

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### **Know What You Want to Ask**

It is perfectly acceptable to refer to a list of prepared questions during the interview. This demonstrates that you are organized and professional.

### **Practice!**

Face your fears. Think of the difficult questions employers are known to ask. Prepare well for those, because they are likely to be brought up in the interview. Remember to remain positive.

### **Take Care of Details**

Plan your attire ahead of time, place things to bring in the car or by the door and arrive early.

*Excerpts from "10 Minute Guide to Job Interviews", by Dana Morgan*