



**Completing the following activity will help you get ready to make a great presentation at a job interview.**

## **Six ways to ‘ace the interview’**

**1. Know yourself.** Before you start job hunting, take some time to *really* look at yourself. The more you know about yourself, the more confident you will be on a job interview. Your job on an interview is to sell yourself, so you need to know what you’re selling. What are your strengths, values, skills and interests? How about you as a person? Employers want to hire students who are honest, smart, friendly, motivated, mature and responsible. Make a list!

### **My skills and interests:**

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### **My strengths:**

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**2. Know your target position and company.** Employers are very impressed with teens who take the time to research the company and have a general understanding of the job position. Go online to check out the company and the skills needed for the type of job you want.

**3. Practice, practice, practice.** Ask someone you’re comfortable with to act as an interviewer. Give him/her a list of questions to ask you (focus on the hard ones). Use a video camera or mirror to monitor your body language. Employers will observe your eye contact, hand gestures and posture while interviewing you and partly base their decision to hire you on the way you carry yourself in an interview.

**4. Make a good first impression.** Remember, you’re making an impression from the minute you walk in the door. Other workers may tell the hiring manager if your behavior before the interview was something to be desired. Also...dress to impress! Style should be conservative, no high fashion. **What *not* to wear:**

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| ✓ Tight or baggy jeans                       | ✓ Low-cut blouses                       |
| ✓ Sweatshirts                                | ✓ Heels more than three inches          |
| ✓ Hats                                       | ✓ Flip flops/slippers (Uggs)            |
| ✓ Excessive jewelry/piercings/makeup/perfume | ✓ Pajamas                               |
| ✓ Short skirts                               | ✓ Stained, wrinkled, or ripped clothing |

**5. Arrive early.** Get there 15 to 20 minutes before your interview. This gives you time to take a few deep breaths to calm your nerves, organize your thoughts and to use the restroom, if needed. Don’t forget to look the interviewer in the eye as you offer your hand. Shake his/her hand firmly but not so that you crush it! Smile! 😊 And offer a friendly greeting such as, Hello Mr. / Ms. \_\_\_\_\_, it’s great to meet you!

**6. Show time!** Be polite. Remain standing until you’re offered a seat. Maintain good posture (don’t slouch). No cell phones, gum, candy or water bottles. Make eye contact during the discussion...show interest and listen carefully (don’t interrupt). Pause and think about the question before you answer. Don’t answer questions with yes/no...offer examples. Don’t talk about salary at the first interview. Always thank the interviewer for the opportunity at the end. Offer a handshake and ask how you should follow up if not offered the position that day.

**See reverse for typical interview questions, and for advice on what to do *after* the interview!**

## Questions that an interviewer may ask



**Tell me something about yourself.** The interviewer wants to know about your education, work experience and personal background. Speak about how these experiences relate to the job. Describe different examples of job- and volunteer-related accomplishments if you can. Feel free to include babysitting, a paper route or general labor jobs. You may not think much of those as qualifications. But, employers see those types of positions as good stepping stones into the working world.

**Why do you want to work for us?** Show some enthusiasm when you answer this question. Describe by example how your skills relate to the position.

**For example:** “I developed great ‘people’ skills when I volunteered as a receptionist at my Mom’s company last summer, and I feel confident that I’ll be able to serve your customers well.”

**Why should I hire you?** State an example and finish with a positive sentence. “After reading the job description, I feel my skills and experiences are a good fit for the position. I have the qualifications you are looking for.”

**Are you involved in extra curricular activities?** The employer wants to know if your work schedule is going to be interrupted because of sports practice, dance, or other activities. Know what hours you’re available to work and prepare to be flexible.

**What are your plans after graduating high school?** This is an employer’s way of finding out if you’re goal oriented.

**Where have you worked in the past?** Speak of positive work experiences. If you don’t have work experience, talk about your accomplishments in school or outside of school. Consider volunteering within your community to gain hands-on experience.

**How would you handle a difficult customer?** The employer wants to know that you have a high level of maturity and would handle this situation well. A good example would be to listen patiently and respectfully to the customer, try to resolve the problem and if you can’t, refer the customer to the supervisor.

**Do you have any questions for me?** Really consider this question carefully...don’t say no. Not asking questions can be interpreted as a lack of interest. There must be *something* you’re wondering about the job...like “can you describe a typical day on the job?” Are you clear on the job responsibilities? If not, ask for clarification.

## Questions you should ask the interviewer

- Is there a job description I can look at?
- How would you describe the job atmosphere here?
- What qualifications does a person need to do well in this job?
- Is there room for advancement in this position?
- Does the person in this position work alone or as part of a team?
- What will my most important duty be?
- Will I be required to wear a uniform?
- How soon will you make a hiring decision?
- If hired, will I report directly to you or someone else?
- How will I be trained for this position?

### After the interview:

Want to stand out from the other teen candidates? Send a written thank-you note to the interviewer as soon as you get home. Let him/her know you appreciated the time they spent with you and the chance to learn more about the job and the company. If you promised to send an additional copy of your resume or references, be sure to enclose that with your note. Keep your note short and be sure to reiterate your understanding of the next step to take.

### Sample thank-you letter:

Date

Dear Mr./Ms: (Last name of hiring manager)

Thank you for taking the time to meet with me today to discuss your part-time customer service position.

As mentioned in our meeting, I have past experience in customer service from my volunteer experience at Sunny Acres Nursing Home, and I believe that I’d be an asset to your company.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

JOHN/JANE JOBSEEKER