



GRADUATE INTERVIEW GUIDE

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RESEARCH

The part you play in the interview begins long before the interview itself. It is vital you prepare.

RESEARCH THE COMPANY:

Think about it like this – if the interviewer exhibited a good knowledge of your background and asked questions about the experience you have had, how would you feel? Show your potential employer you are genuinely interested in them, find out about the company, all the vital statistics of course but also whether they've been in the news lately or what they're currently working on. Use the company website, social media channels as well as general web searching to find out as much as you can.

RESEARCH THE ROLE:

During your interview, it's advisable to have questions about the role, it's certainly better than just assuming you know it all, but make sure you have the best understanding possible about what you'd be doing. Be prepared to answer the interviewer's questions about your understanding of the job.

RESEARCH YOURSELF:

Okay that may sound odd but think about it – have you thought about how your application or CV looks from a third party perspective? Might there be any questions about why you have a gap in your employment history? May they want you to elaborate on something you've said? Make sure you have answers ready. Also – since you've researched the role, be confident articulating how it is that you match the requirements of the job.

RESEARCH THE INTERVIEW:

Simple stuff: Do you know where it is and do you know how best to get there? If you're driving do you know where you can park? Do you know how long the journey takes? If you're taking public transport have you got tickets booked? Where do you need to go once you arrive?

Don't just assume you know how the interview will go either – do you know who you're meeting and what they do? Why not check them out on LinkedIn? Is it just a face-to-face conversation or will there be any tests?

If you want to know anything else but they haven't provided the info and you can't find it then don't hesitate to just ask them. They won't object to you being keen and interested. If you can't find out in advance, prepare a list of questions to ask at the interview.

GET READY

First things first – don't be late. In fact, be early and arrive at least ten minutes before your interview. This isn't just about showing that you are punctual but it will also give you some time to relax.

How do you look?! Do you look presentable? You may not be wearing a suit and tie every day in your job but would this be the most appropriate attire for an interview? It almost always will be, but either way you're always better off overdressed than underdressed!

Smile! (And the rest.) Body language is really important because it says things that you can't articulate. This is why being relaxed helps. Be positive, smile and greet your interviewer with a convincing handshake.

DURING THE INTERVIEW

If you've done everything above then you're already in a great situation so don't lose that positive momentum and make the most of the opportunity in front of you!

An easy start – keep up the positive image, this isn't difficult but it is effective. Sit up straight, match the interviewer's body language if you can but don't do anything negative like cross your arms, look to the floor or avoid eye contact.

Answer their questions fully. You've done your preparation so you're ready to do this. Avoid a yes or no response like the plague! This is your only real opportunity to tell this person who you are so make sure you really sell yourself. After all you know what to say!

Ask questions – and don't feel like you have to wait till they ask if you have any. If your question is relevant to what you're discussing then go ahead and ask. They will see that you are genuinely interested in them and it will help the conversation to flow.

WHAT MIGHT YOU WANT TO ASK?

As discussed, go with the flow – if the conversation leads to a question then feel free to ask it – but even if it doesn't, they will almost certainly ask what you want to know. Hopefully you actually do have some questions but if you are stuck what are some good things to ask?

- ⇒ What is the typical career path of someone in this role? – This shows that you are looking to the future and are taking the prospect of working with them seriously.
- ⇒ What have your experiences been working here? What have you most enjoyed? – Ask a question about the interviewer. People like to talk about themselves and they will feel like you are really interested in understanding what it's like working at the company.
- ⇒ Do you have any reservations about me? – Confront this, there may not be any and we certainly hope not, but they may be honest and ask you and it will give you an invaluable opportunity to respond.
- ⇒ What is the next stage of the application process? – This may sound presumptive but it shows you are invested in this opportunity, so seek to understand what you should expect next.
- ⇒ Salary. It's perfectly reasonable to ask about salary but it is quite off-putting if you concentrate on it too much so don't labour the point.

WHAT MIGHT THEY ASK YOU?

There may be questions that you can't predict or that are specific to the company, so they may ask you a very technical question or what your thoughts are about something they are doing. Other than this, what are the typical questions that you may be asked?

- ⇒ **WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN 5 YEARS' TIME?** – What? You're not a mind reader, how should you know? Well they aren't looking for an accurate prediction, rather this is an opportunity to demonstrate that you have a plan that involves working here so prepare beforehand by thinking how that might look.
- ⇒ **WHAT DO YOU THINK YOUR WEAKNESSES ARE?** – Two things. Firstly don't say anything that is integral to the role. You've done your research so you know what these requirements are. Secondly don't give a cheesy response like 'some people say I pay too much attention to detail.' Instead, use this as an opportunity to explain why a weakness of yours will be improved by this job: for example, do they offer training?
- ⇒ **WHY DO YOU WANT TO WORK HERE?** – Be really explicit about this and showcase your understanding of the employer. Don't give them a gushing speech about how great they are but reference some things you understand about their company and explain how these things would be of benefit to you – hence your attraction to the role.

Don't try to remember answers word-for-word, you will slip up and lose your train of thought – not to mention give yourself too much to remember.

AND FINALLY...

Reaffirm to the interviewer how interested you are in working with them. Thank them for their time and let them know you look forward to hearing from them. If it seems appropriate then the following morning you may wish to follow up with a brief email saying much the same.

RESEARCH:

- ☐ The company – know what they do, what have they done lately?
- ☐ The role – be able to demonstrate an understanding of the responsibilities of the role.
- ☐ Yourself - you should be completely comfortable articulating how your skills are
- ☐ relevant. The interview – don't get caught out! Know what to expect on the day.

GET READY:

- ☐ Arrive 10 minutes early and relax!
- ☐ Be dressed for the occasion – smart business attire is usually best.
- ☐ Smile! Utilise positive body language and practice that handshake!

DURING THE INTERVIEW:

- ☐ Maintain the good body language – try to match the interviewer if you can!
- ☐ Give full answers. Avoid a yes/no response!
- ☐ Ask questions!

Q&A:

- ☐ Prepare some meaningful questions that you want to know the answer to.
- ☐ Be ready for what they might ask you.

DON'T FORGET!

Repeat that you are interested in the role and thank the interviewer for their time.
If it seems appropriate then email them the following day saying the same.