

<https://www.themuse.com/advice/the-ultimate-interview-guide-30-prep-tips-for-job-interview-success>

30+ Best Tips on How to Prepare for a Job Interview

By [The Muse Editors](#)

Updated 5/1/2025



Getty Images

Preparing for an interview requires more effort than just Googling a list of [common interview questions](#) (though, yes, you should 100% be ready for those). In today's job market, recruiters are flooded with [resumes](#) and applications within hours of a post going live, so if you manage to land a meeting, it's worth putting in the time to ensure you ace it.

Every company has a different process for interviewing potential candidates—and to some degree, that process is unpredictable. For instance, even if you find a ton of sample interview questions for that specific organization, there's no guarantee you'll be asked the exact same ones.

The goal of interview prep is to learn and practice as much as possible so you can [feel confident](#) and ready for anything (even questions you don't have an answer to, which we'll discuss how to handle later on).

To help you prepare, we compiled a list of our all-time best interview tips—backed by some of the most highly regarded career guides, creators, and advisors out there today. We've got 30 plus tips on this list, so strap in, take some notes, and prepare to nail your interview.

1. Research the company

This is first on the list for a reason: It is the single most important step of the interview prep process. You want to [research everything about the company](#) from as many sources as you can—including their company profile on [The Muse](#), if they have one! Talk to people in your network to find current and previous employees, read current news stories, and spend time on their website.

“I always tell people to read the company website, including their mission, careers page, and case studies. Then, Google the company to see if they've been in the news recently. If you can ask about those things in an interview, that's so impressive to the company,” says Erin McGoff, founder of [AdviceWithErin](#).

By looking at multiple sources, you'll get a broader picture of the organization (along with any negative press), and be ready to talk about why you'd like to work there and what you can do for them.

2. Read the job description carefully

Most organizations use the job description to explain exactly what they're looking for in an applicant—so before your interview, make sure you know said [job description](#) almost by heart.

Internalize its key details and try to incorporate them into your answers. “This not only shows that you're well prepared but also that you're a good cultural fit for the company,” says Christian Lovell, of [Careers by Chris](#).

3. Try out the company's product or service

If the company you're interviewing with sells a product that you can feasibly check out ahead of time, try it before the interview. For a publisher, purchase a few of their magazines or books and give them a read. If you're interviewing for a job in retail, engage with some of the goods they sell.

Whatever role you're applying for, it's likely that part of your job will be creating value for the people who use that product. So, experiencing it for yourself is a smart move. Plus, it'll help show the hiring manager that you're truly interested in the position.

4. Learn about the interviewers

If you can figure out who you'll be speaking to before the interview, you can do some research on them as well. And if your point of contact doesn't mention names, it's totally reasonable to ask for them. Learn about their trajectory at the company and prepare specific questions for them.

During the interview itself, you can ask for details about their role, discuss current events in their field, or bring up a common interest. Just make sure the info you're referencing is in an easily accessible, public spot, like their company bio or LinkedIn profile, so it doesn't come off as creepy.

5. Find out the interview type and prepare accordingly

Depending on what role you're applying for and how far along you are in the process, you might be signing up for a traditional [phone call](#), [video interview](#), or in-person meeting

If the recruiter or HR manager doesn't specify this, feel free to ask. Also note that some companies might have you meet individually with several different people, while others could arrange group sessions or request an [interview presentation](#).

6. Identify your selling points for this job

Even if you're a well-oiled interviewing machine, it's essential to spend time thinking carefully about what skills, accomplishments, and answers will resonate most with your interviewers for this job. Your management abilities? Your creativity? Sam DeMase, founder of [A Power Mood](#), calls these your "superpowers."

"Know your superpowers before you go into any interview, a.k.a. your value propositions, and how to articulate them," says DeMase. "Once I figured out how to do that, interviews became very easy for me because I had the confidence to go in and say exactly what I'm good at. I know how to articulate it and sell it."

7. Be ready to tell the interviewer about yourself

For every interview, you'll want to have an answer to the most asked question ever: "[Tell me about yourself](#)." Your response to this should be tailored to the specific job and company you're interviewing for, and you should know it by heart.

Interviewers almost always ask this question or a similar one—like "[Walk me through your resume](#)"—to start off the conversation, so you want to make sure you're getting started on the right foot.

This is one spot where people tend to ramble, and you want to avoid that at all costs. "Treat interviews like conversations," says Lovell. "You don't want to give a one sentence answer and stare at them, but you also don't want to share your whole life story."

DeMase recommends using her W.A.T. method—which stands for "What you do, your achievements, and tie it into the role"—to answer the "Tell me about yourself" question. "It boils down to a quick elevator pitch," she says. "It's not a whole walkthrough of your resume, and it's not a walkthrough of your last job."

8. Know why you're interested in this position

Hiring managers are looking for people who are passionate about—or at least seem interested in—the role. You will almost certainly be asked "Why are you interested in working here," or "Why are you interested in this role," and similar to the above tip, you should have a go-to pitch.

Get specific. What about the role calls to you? And the company? What aspects of the work feel exciting to you? Being able to communicate this succinctly and with a positive attitude will go a long way.

9. Do some salary research

During the first interview, which is typically a phone screen with a recruiter or someone else in HR, you may be asked about your [salary expectations](#). Most experts will advise against giving a hard number, the reason being that you'll often lowball yourself and providing a specific figure can compromise your negotiating power.

Instead, you could ask about the position's salary range during the interview and then decide if it works for you. But to make an informed decision—that aligns with the market rate for this kind of job—do a bit of salary research ahead of time.

10. Prepare your stories

Most interviewers will ask at least a few [behavioral questions](#), which are questions about how you've acted or would act in certain scenarios. It's unlikely to anticipate every possible situation, so [prepare a few stories](#) from your past work experiences that could be adapted as needed.

DeMase has another method for answering behavioral questions, known as [the "CARE" method](#)—which stands for Context, Action, Result, and Evolution.

"This is the most clutch part of the interview, so you have to be ready with your examples," she says. "That way, when they ask about a time when your client was difficult, a time you disagreed with your boss, or a time you made a mistake, you have those answers ready and you can tell the story in a way that shows what you learned."

11. Familiarize yourself with the STAR method

Another helpful acronym is the popular [STAR method](#) of answering questions—which stands for Situation, Task, Action, Result.

Whenever you're answering interview questions with a story, you want to make sure that the narrative is well-structured and the takeaway is clear. Your goal is to give the interviewer all the context needed to understand what happened while still answering the question clearly and concisely.

An example of the STAR method in practice is:

- **Situation:** Briefly lay out the scenario using just enough detail to make the interviewer understand the stakes and everything else in your answer;
- **Task:** Talk about what was your role in the situation;
- **Action:** Discuss what you did and why;
- **Result:** Tell your interviewer about the outcome and what you learned.

It's worth noting that for some questions you might want to tweak this structure slightly. For example, if you're talking about a [time you demonstrated leadership skills](#), consider defining what leadership means to you before jumping into the situation. But the STAR method will ensure your stories always have a beginning, middle, and end.

13. Or try the PAR method

If the STAR method feels a bit too repetitive in your interviews, Christian Lovell encourages job candidates to try the PAR method—Problem, Action, Result.

“You want things to be as simple and streamlined as possible because everyone has nerves when they're going into an interview,” says Lovell. “Even I still get a little bit nervous!”

The PAR Method breaks down into the following:

- Problem: What was the problem?
- Action: What did you do?
- Result: What was the result?

This is an easy-to-remember structure that succinctly, but completely, answers the interviewer's question.

14. Jot down any important numbers and details you find

While you're doing your interview prep, write down some revenue figures, engagement numbers, budget or team sizes, percentages of time saved, or anything else you can use to communicate your impact in previous roles.

Throwing in some hard numbers when discussing responsibilities and accomplishments can show to a hiring manager that you're good at what you do. Even writing them down on a post-it can serve as a quick reference during the interview.

Read more: [How to Quantify Your Resume Bullets \(When You Don't Work With Numbers\)](#)

15. Brush up on your interview skills

How you respond to interview questions is important, but it's not everything. Hiring managers are also consciously—or subconsciously—picking up on how well you use other skills, such as active listening, small talk, and empathy.

“Recruiters are also looking to see if you're a good fit for the team, and if you are someone that they would want to work with,” says Lovell. “So I tell people to let their personality shine a little bit in their interviews.”

16. Practice—but don't memorize—your answers

Yes, there are many common interview questions to prepare for, but if you memorize them verbatim, your responses may come out sounding robotic. Instead, jot down a few notes or bullet points and keep them on hand for the interview itself. That way, you'll ensure to cover the bases without reading from a script.

Also, practice looking in the mirror and answering them out loud. This prep work will help you clarify your thoughts and make you much more comfortable during the interview.

17. Think about body language

While we may think we're relatively aware of our bodies, it's a good idea to brush up on what certain [body language](#) conveys before an interview. Your posture and stance can communicate a lot—and you want to make sure it's all positive. (For example, sitting with arms and legs crossed sends a message that you are closed-off or feel defensive.)

Think your movements through ahead of time so you're not distracted (or distracting) during the interview. If on video, consider how to show active engagement in that format—putting the Zoom window near the camera to avoid looking away from the interviewer, for example, or making non-verbal gestures to indicate that you're listening without cutting off their microphone.

18. Try some mock interviews

If you have the time, do a few mock interviews with a friend, loved one, or even a career coach. Mock interviews are the best way to practice your tone, body language, and general preparation, plus you'll become much better at answering, "What would you bring to the position?" This will also allow you to iron out the small details, like where you want to put your hands or how you want to sit.

19. Write down questions you'll ask them

Most recruiters will wrap up with the interview asking if you have questions for them, and you should absolutely have at least a few prepared. "I recommend three to five questions—ideally five, in case they answer some of your questions during the interview," says McGoff.

You can start with this [list of interview questions to ask](#), but you should also plan some additional questions. "Make them really specific to the role and company," McGoff adds. "If they had a merger recently, ask how that's affected the culture. You could ask them what workflow systems they use or how they measure performance. Act like it's your first day on the job, and think about what questions you would have."

Also, be sure to ask questions you actually want the answers to. "A big mistake is trying to ask questions that you think the interviewer wants to hear. How can you use that final parting moment as a way to make yourself stand out? Rather than asking a question aimed at trying to seem like the smartest person on earth, I'd recommend showing that you're a curious person who genuinely wants to learn more about a certain area of the company," says Natalie Marie, of [Corporate Natalie](#).

One particular question I love is: 'What would a day-in-my-life look like once I'm onboarded?' Of course this varies by industry, but the final part of an interview is a great way to ask questions that spark an interesting conversation with your interviewer."

20. Plan for what you'll do if you're caught off-guard

You can't prepare for everything, but you can prepare to handle the unexpected—like an [interview question you don't know how to answer](#). Most experts say to keep your cool and not be afraid to take a moment to think.

"Take a moment to think and embrace silence. It's OK to think and even repeat the question out loud," McGoff says. "You can take a sip of water, or say 'that's a great question, let me think

about that for a second.’ If you’ve blanked on the answer, you can even ask to come back to it. If they’re professional, they should be totally fine with that.”

21. Prepare for technical interviews or skill tests

If you’re getting ready for a [technical interview](#) or you’ve been told there will be a skill test, start preparing as early as possible. Working through a prep book or sample questions will not only provide good practice but also put you in the right problem-solving mindset.

Once you’ve prepped for the content of your interview, it’s time to make sure you walk in looking put together and feeling confident.

22. Figure out what to wear

Unless you’re prepping for a phone interview, you’ll need to take your physical appearance into account. “It’s really important to plan what your outfit is going to be, and you want to make sure it’s professional and clean,” McGoff says.

If you aren’t sure what to wear, you can check out a company’s social media or their [Muse profile](#) to see how employees typically dress. Generally, it’s recommended to present yourself a bit more professionally than on a typical workday. For example, for a casual environment, business casual is appropriate for an interview.

23. Look appropriate and professional

When it comes to appearance, the smallest details can make the biggest difference. Ensure your outfit is cleaned, ironed or steamed, and tailored if needed. Polish shoes, check for loose hems, and make sure your fingernails look neat.

Do a little pampering, because looking your best helps you feel your best—and that may mean needing a haircut, shave, or even a new interview outfit. Remember: Confidence in yourself is key to landing a job.

24. Print out copies of your resume

For in-person interviews, bring at least enough copies of your resume for everyone you’re meeting with, plus one. (It never hurts to have a few extra copies, just in case.) However, if you have a phone or video interview it can still be useful to print out a hard copy of your resume so you can refer back to it.

25. Prepare a reference list

It’s always smart to prepare a [reference list](#) before your interview, whether asked for it or not. For each reference, include a name, title, organization, division or department, telephone number, and email address, as well as a sentence briefly explaining the relationship (e.g., “Carlton was my team leader for two years, during which we collaborated on four major product launches”).

For an in-person interview, print out a hard copy, and for any later-round interview, make sure you’re ready to send off the file as soon as asked for it.

26. Test any needed tech

For Zoom and phone interviews, make sure that all the needed hardware, software, and network connections are working as expected. If you can use headphones with a microphone, do so, and ensure they're connected before the interview begins.

"A bad WiFi connection or a distracting background can really hurt your chances, so test that ahead of time," says McGoff.

27. Pack your bag in advance

Whatever purse, backpack, or briefcase you carry should be large enough to hold your everyday essentials, plus interview musts, such as extra resumes and a notepad. We recommend packing a small emergency kit for unexpected situations (think: Band-Aids, a stain stick, an umbrella, and breath mints).

Here's a general checklist of [what to bring to an interview](#) so you're super prepared. And clean out that bag! If you have to dig past candy wrappers, phone chargers, and old receipts to get that resume, you're going to look a little disorganized.

28. Plan how you're getting there

Whether driving or taking public transportation, look up your route ahead of time (including parking if necessary). Buy any needed tickets, add money to your metro card, fill up your gas tank—take care of anything that could slow you down on the way to the interview.

Know how long it should take you to get there and add plenty of extra time for potential traffic or transit delays. And above all, make sure to confirm the location with your point of contact, in case there are multiple offices in the same city.

29. Prepare your environment

For remote interviews, ensure your environment is quiet and free of distractions. Lay out anything you'll need to reference during the interview in front of you, along with a notepad, working pen, and beverage.

"You want a good location that is quiet with a strong WiFi connection and good lighting," says McGoff. For video interviews, you'll also need to pay attention to what's going on behind you, so choose a plain or non-distracting background to sit in front of and make sure your shot is free of clutter and well lit ahead of time.

30. Fill in an interview cheat sheet

Remember study guides in school? An [interview cheat sheet](#) is sort of the same. It's a way to compile all the details you want to remember, jot down notes about what you want to say and ask, and check off all the essentials for the meeting. Print one out for every interview, read it over the morning of, and you'll be good to go!

31. Get a good night's sleep

Don't underestimate the power of a good night of sleep—and likewise, don't underestimate how much a bad night's sleep can impact you. Sleep plays a key role in memory retention and attention span, so you want to clock at least seven to eight hours the night before a big interview. Start winding down for bed earlier than usual, and pack everything so you're ready to go in the morning.

32. Calm your nerves and/or get psyched

Immediately before the interview (or as close to the moment as possible), get yourself in the right headspace. Expect to be nervous and plan ahead of time to use whatever tools you need. These methods are different for everyone, so think through what will be most beneficial and effective for you.

Perhaps you need to do some breathing exercises or give yourself a pep talk in your car. Whatever helps you get prepared to go into the interview confident, calm, positive, and ready to ace it.

"I tell people to put on their favorite song," says DeMase. "Play it through your headphones and crank up the volume—this will help you get into the mindset. You want a song that makes you feel good and confident, that will hype you up before the interview. You can read your notes before going in, but you don't want to be stuck in your head."

Read more: [12 Different Ways to Calm Your Interview Nerves \(Because You've Got This\)](#)

A final word on how to prepare for an interview

Interview preparation takes a good chunk of time and a lot of effort, but it's all in the name of equipping you with the confidence needed to nail all of your interviews. With the right mindset, and these tips in tow, you're well on your way to securing a new job.