

College Interview Tips

The interview is not an adversarial situation. Admissions folks want to like you, have you like them and like their school. Treat the interview as a conversation. Don't just give yes and no answers. It's O.K. to ask questions. It shows interest in the college and what the admission officer has to say. Have a positive attitude. Smile and maintain eye contact. It is all right to take a moment to think about an answer before replying. Some people feel uncomfortable about talking of their achievements but it is not boastful to talk about them. Highlight the good things from your academic past and put a positive spin on your background. Never memorize your answers by rote. Rehearse for the interview with family, friends or a coach so that you can answer in a spontaneous natural fashion and let your personality shine through.

Practice your handshake. When you meet the interviewer you should introduce yourself, shake hands and smile. Make sure that you have a good handshake by getting feedback about your handshake from relatives and friends.

Keep up on current events. Read a newspaper to keep informed. The interviewer may ask you your opinion about a current event.

Never refuse an interview. Your refusal will usually be noted.

DON'T EVER BRING A PARENT INTO THE INTERVIEW. It will make you look as if you can't think or listen on your own.

Do your research about the college. Not looking as if you are interested in the college is a huge mistake and if you haven't done any research you will look disinterested. You will almost certainly be asked why you are interested in the college and what sparked your interest in it. Do not say anything negative about the college. Never tell a school it's your safety.

Prepare some questions to ask the interviewer. Ask questions that show your interest in the college. Have them prepared beforehand. Don't ask questions that could easily be answered by looking at the college brochures, course catalogue or their website because that will make you look as if you have not done your homework.

Prepare for common interview questions. Prepare by thinking about your answers to common interview questions and by rehearsing for the interview with family, friends or an interview coach. Do not memorize these answers by rote.

Review your essay because you might be asked questions about it in the interview to break the ice.

Wear what you would wear to dinner at a good restaurant. Do not wear jeans or baseball caps. Avoid lots of jewelry, makeup and perfume. Don't chew gum! Don't swear!

Take any documents you might need such as test scores and a copy of your high school transcript.

Arrive on time! Plan to be there waiting 15 minutes before the interview.

Make eye contact with the interviewer. A surprising number of candidates do not look the interviewer in the eye!

Regard the interview as a CONVERSATION. Making it into a conversation means feeling free to ask the interviewer something that relates to the answer you have just given. Example: If an interviewer asks, "Why did you choose Florida University?" reply to her question and then say: "What do you think draws students here?" This sort of question exchange builds rapport because you are engaging the interviewer in a conversation instead of just waiting for the interviewer to ask you the next question on the list.

Don't try and sneak test scores into the conversation. One of the most boring and predictable things you can do in an interview is try to sneak in your SAT scores. Some students will use any and every annoying tactic to get in a mention of how great their scores were. It is very irritating to the interviewer when candidates try to contrive their answers so that their test scores can be mentioned. It sounds false and makes the interviewer feel as if the candidate is not interested in having a real conversation.

Always follow up with a thank you note to the interviewer. After you leave the interview, jot down something that you discussed so that you can mention it later in the thank you letter.

For interview coaching in Pittsburgh call (412) 478-6785 Practice makes perfect! Schedule a **coaching session** with Sally Chopping to practice your interviewing techniques.

RESOURCE:

<http://www.actingforbusiness.com/interview/JobInterviewtips/college/collegeinterviewtips.htm>