

## Keys To A Successful Interview

1. When you call your employer to set up and confirm the interview time and date, practice how to talk on the phone with your employer. Use a script. Introduce yourself. Explain that you are a student taking a Career and Work Exploration class and you would like to speak to \_\_\_\_\_ (the person on your placement record—you received this with the employer’s phone number). Your teacher can help you to write up this script.
2. Arrive 10 to 15 minutes early for your interview.
3. Dress appropriately for the situation. You have information about this on your placement record. If you are unsure, ask your teacher. It is better to be dressed more formally than required than it is to be dressed too casually.
4. Do your best to anticipate the kinds of questions that will be asked. For the most part, employers use the questions that we give them. Practice your answers to these questions. Some employers might not use the questions we give them, so you will want to do some research on the kinds of questions that might be asked. You can check the following websites for sample questions:
  - a. <http://www.nextsteps.org/interview/index.html>
  - b. [http://www.cdm.uwaterloo.ca/step4\\_4.asp](http://www.cdm.uwaterloo.ca/step4_4.asp)
  - c. [http://www.quintcareers.com/interview\\_questions.html](http://www.quintcareers.com/interview_questions.html)
  - d. [http://www.quintcareers.com/behavioral\\_interviewing.html](http://www.quintcareers.com/behavioral_interviewing.html)
5. Speak clearly.
6. Avoid space filler kinds of words such as “like, um, ah, you know,” etc. It is better to have a pause and some silence rather than trying to fill the silence with sounds and words that do not add to the interview and help you.
7. Leave your cell phone in your vehicle or at home. Taking a call or answering a text is highly inappropriate during the interview. It is equally disrespectful and rude for your phone to ring or vibrate during an interview.
8. Bring a copy of your resume with you, and provide one for your employer. Traditionally when people apply for jobs, they send their resume ahead of time. This is set up a bit differently, and you need to bring two copies of your resume with you. Know your resume well. Be able to provide details for things that you have stated in your resume. Bring a clipboard with you. This can hold your resume and cover letter, and it can be a place where you write down questions you may have or information your employer may provide.
9. Be as specific as you can be when you are describing situations that you are asked to explain. If you are told to describe something like a problem you solved and how it worked out, use specific and detailed examples of your experiences. Paint a clear and vivid picture for the interviewer.

10. If you do not know the answer to a question, tell the truth. You can use a situation like this as an opportunity to explain your willingness to learn about something new. If you did not hear or understand the question, ask for it to be repeated or explained further. It is wiser to ask for clarification than to answer inappropriately or wrong. Sometimes, if the question phrased differently, you will understand it better.
11. Read the evaluation that your employer is going to use to describe how well you did during the interview. If you know how you will be evaluated, you will be able to do well at the interview.
12. Eating, drinking anything other than water, and chewing gum is unacceptable.
13. When you are finished the interview, thank and firmly shake hands with the employer.
14. Reflect on your answers after the interview. Think about the questions you were asked, what you felt you answered well, and what you felt you did not answer as well as you could have. There are reflection handouts to guide you in this process. Your CWEX teacher can provide some for you. They are also on the school division website.
15. Ask questions at the interview. If you need to know things about the business or the job, ask. This list of items you need to know might be numerous, depending on the job you have. Here are some samples to consider:
  - a. What are the day to day expectations and responsibilities of this position?
  - b. What would make a person an excellent employee in this job?
  - c. What is the one thing that I could do on the job that would benefit you the most?
  - d. What will my typical day be like?
  - e. What is the most challenging part of the job?
16. Use resources to help you. There are hundreds of websites that are designed to allow you to find great pieces of information about performing well in an interview. Here are a few:

<http://www.careerservices.uwaterloo.ca/resources/InterviewSkills.pdf>

<http://jobsearch.about.com/od/interviews/tp/jobinterviewtips.htm>

<http://www.nextsteps.org/interview/intques.html>

[http://www.cdm.uwaterloo.ca/step4\\_4.asp](http://www.cdm.uwaterloo.ca/step4_4.asp)

<http://www.cdm.uwaterloo.ca/Interview%20Quiz/Interview.htm>

<https://www.careercruising.com/>

Remember that unless you say or do something terribly wrong in the interview, you already have this job. It's not like other jobs you will try to get in the future where the job interview is likely the main way for an employer to choose an employee. Thus, you can use this interview as practice. Prepare for it properly and thoroughly, and you will be successful.

One last note: Remember that your employer (not necessarily this one, but future ones) will probably search your name on the internet. If you put anything on Facebook or any other social media, if you have a website or contribute to a website, assume that everything that you put on the internet, regardless of whether you delete it later, is on FOREVER. This keeps many people from being hired every day.