

INTERVIEWING

Career Planning

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A dynamic resume will gain you an interview but only a great interview will land you the job.

⇒ THE NATURE OF AN INTERVIEW ⇐

An interview is a mutual problem-solving session, not a game to be won or lost. As you are interviewed, you should be interviewing as well. You want to secure a job that matches your interests, abilities and values. Be honest, be considerate and be yourself.

Some interviews are structured with pre-determined questions while others are more informal and discussion-oriented. It is not wise to take a real job interview just for practice. The Career Planning Office conducts **mock interviews** for students seeking to become more confident with the interviewing process

⇒ TYPES OF INTERVIEWS ⇐

1) **Telephone Interviews.** Screening interviews are often done by phone. You should always be prepared in the event you are interviewed via telephone. Be sure the phone number on your resume will be in effect during the months of your job search. If your phone number changes after submitting your resume, call the company and update your information.

Tips for the telephone interview:

- Keep a copy of your resume, telephone contact sheet and cover letter near the phone. Prepare questions you would like to ask the potential employer and any notes that will assist you.
- Be sure to have a professional sounding message on your answering machine. The prospective employer will not appreciate humorous or obnoxious messages and may eliminate you from the list of candidates.
- If getting a phone message is a problem, contact a phone company for information about an independent voice mail account which will assure you of getting and retrieving all your messages. Also, you will not be caught off guard as you will have to return their call, which will give you the opportunity to prepare.
- Know and consider time zones. If you applied for a job in California, for example, you can expect a call during their business hours which will extend 3 hours beyond business hours in New York.
- Be sure to get the name, title and the company of the caller. If you are unsure, say something like "I'm sorry, could you please repeat your name?". If it is not the person to whom you sent your cover letter, ask for their mailing address and phone number at the end of the interview. It is proper etiquette to send a thank-you letter to your interviewer within a week after the interview. You may end the interview with, "If I have any further questions, may I call you?". If yes, "What would be the best time to reach you?".
- The same basic interview techniques apply in a phone interview as in a face-to-face interview. Be seated as you would in a face-to-face interview and follow proper posture guidelines; it can improve your concentration.

2) **Screening Interview.** This is an initial interview where the interviewer has been assigned to do a large number of interviews. The interviewer is seldom the person who would be your supervisor, if you were hired. The purpose of this interview is to reduce the number of candidates to a manageable number to be interviewed by the person(s) with hiring authority. While the interviewer is looking for candidates who match specified needs, s/he is also looking for reasons to eliminate candidates (lack of professional appearance, poor communication skills, etc.).

3) **On-Site Interview.** The number of candidates has been reduced, though not to the final two or three. This interview is usually done at the employer's location, and the candidate will often be taken around to several people for interviews. After this stage of the interview process, more candidates will be eliminated.

4) **Hiring Interview.** The interview process has eliminated all but a final two or three candidates. In this interview the supervisor of the job being filled will usually be the primary interviewer, though others may be involved. The decision to offer the job is made when this round has been completed, usually after a final review with most of those who have interviewed the candidates. If you are not offered the position after this interview, you will probably be notified within several days. If you are the first choice for the job, notification will likely come quickly. If you are acceptable, but not the first choice, you may not hear right away; the employer will want to keep you on hold until they get a "yes" or "no" from the candidate(s) chosen ahead of you.

5) **Job Fair Interview.** The interviews vary in length. The interview may be a 2-3 minute one as you present your resume to a company representative, a 5-10 minute mini-interview at the employer's booth or a full interview conducted in another area of the job fair site. Obtain information on the set-up of the fair and on companies attending from the school or agency sponsoring the fair. Be prepared by developing a short "personal commercial message", writing a dynamic resume and polishing your interviewing skills.

6) **Combination Interviews.** It is helpful to look at interview types 1, 2, and 3 above as phases of one overall interview process rather than separate interviews. Cost, time or staff factors often cause the three interviews to be combined. Sometimes 1 and 2 are done at the same time and sometimes 2 and 3 are combined. In a small business, the General Manager or Owner might even go through all three steps in one sitting.

7) **Committee Interviews.** Most interviews are one-to-one, though you may meet individually with a number of people in the same organization. However, committee interviews have become prominent in some fields, especially education. Teachers, parents and sometimes students may join the principal or superintendent in the screening, follow-up or hiring interview. Whatever the career, there are some things to consider in this situation:

- One or two interviewers may dominate the question-asking process.
- Some members of the committee haven't much experience interviewing.
- Some in the committee may not have questions prepared to ask you or may be hesitant to ask questions.
- It may not be the person asking most of the questions who will most strongly influence the hiring decision.
- Be sure to make eye contact with everyone in the committee, not only the one asking the question.

⇒ WHERE INTERVIEWS ARE HELD ⇐

Individual, face-to-face interviews are usually held at the employer's location or at job fairs. Occasionally, they may be held on college campuses. Sometimes, time or other factors (size of the company, the need to meet with an official who can't be scheduled any other way, etc.) result in airport meeting rooms, hotel conference rooms/lobbies, or restaurants being used for interviews.

Telephone interviews are most common where great distances and travel expenses are involved. However, the economy of a phone call is tempting in many circumstances and nearby employers may also use this method. Telephone interviews are sometimes held outside of the normal business hours.

⇒ BEFORE THE INTERVIEW ⇐

- Learn as much as possible about the employer: their services or products, the types of jobs they have, number of employees, their parent or subsidiary organizations, annual sales, etc. Use the Career Planning library and the Internet to find employer information.
- Review your abilities and the benefits you bring to this employer. Study your resume, as you will be asked questions based on the information contained in it.
- Bring extra copies of your resume and supporting documents. Several people may interview you and some may not have a copy. **BE PREPARED.**
- Bring a small notebook and pen or pencil. You need to know the names and titles of interviewers to send them thank-you letters following the interview.
- If you have a portfolio, be sure to organize it, highlighting the skills you have that the employer is seeking.
- Know where and when the interview will be held. Check out the route and available parking. Arrive 10-15 minutes early.

⇒ DRESS FOR INTERVIEW SUCCESS ←

“Dress as though you mean business.” Show respect for the job and present yourself as a professional employee. The way you dress says a lot about you and gives the interviewer an initial impression that will carry over into the interview. Make sure your attire is not a distraction.

Your personal appearance includes things other than your attire. Neatness, personal hygiene and good grooming are a part of it, but your posture and facial expressions contribute as well. A bland, uninterested expression, slouching posture and poor eye contact can contribute to an impression of poor appearance.

General Guidelines for successful interview attire:

Men and Women:

- A conservative two-piece business suit (gray or dark blue) is best
- A conservative shirt/blouse
- Clean, polished conservative shoes
- Well-groomed hairstyle
- Clean, trimmed fingernails
- Minimal use of cologne or perfume - don't have your cologne enter the room before you do!
- Empty your pockets of jingling change (or your leftovers from lunch!)
- No gum or cigarettes or lingering tobacco odor
- Small briefcase or portfolio case
- No visible tattoos
- Avoid displaying your jewelry in unusual body piercing

Women:

- If you use nail polish, use either clear or a conservative color
- Minimal use of makeup
- Keep jewelry to a minimum
- High heels are discouraged
- Conservative hosiery at or near skin color
- Be sure your skirt is a comfortable length when you are seated

Men:

- A single-breasted suit presents a more professional appearance
- Dark socks and dark, lace-up shoes are best
- Facial hair is possibly a negative in some fields, but if you do have facial hair be sure it is neatly trimmed

- Conservative color/pattern tie

⇒ WHAT THE INTERVIEWER EVALUATES ⇐

- **Your ability to learn.** Can you learn the procedures and vocabulary of the job quickly and well? How much will it cost to train you in time, money and supervision?
- **Your ability to accomplish tasks.** How well will you be able to perform the job?
- **How well you will work with other employees.** Will you be a valuable part of the team? Will the other employees accept you? Will you be a positive factor within the team? Remember, the company or school district is looking for someone who will fit in.
- **How good an employee you will be.** Will you be dependable? Will you follow directions? Do you have a positive attitude? Are you motivated - will you do more work than assigned and do it better than the minimum quality standard?
- **What kind of future resource you will be.** Can the organization train and develop you for higher responsibility in coming years?
- **How well you will handle a sudden change in plans.** What if you were asked to drop a long-term project before completion to begin a new assignment? Are you able to be flexible in scheduling, to handle stress?
- **How well you communicate in written form and orally.** Can you effectively write reports and other correspondences? How well can you convey information and ideas to individuals and during presentations?
- **Your creativity and enthusiasm.** What new ideas will you bring to the company or school district?

⇒ NON-VERBAL BEHAVIOR & BODY LANGUAGE ⇐

Enter the room for an interview with a friendly, positive attitude. Take a few deep breaths and relax. If you are too nervous it will be evident and you will find it difficult to focus on the questions asked.

Once you are in the room, **establish and maintain eye contact** with your interviewer(s). Your posture is important. **Sit upright or lean slightly toward the interviewer.** Do not lean back. If you have a choice between a soft, low chair or a straight-backed, firm one choose the firm one, it will make it easier to maintain correct posture. If you're at a table it may be comfortable to lean your forearms on it. That's fine. The overall consideration is that your posture does two things: (1) physically assists your listening effectiveness, and (2) it demonstrates respect for, and interest in, the interviewer. Body language says a lot!

Confidence and enthusiasm are contagious.

If you follow the suggestions above, you will have a pleasant, informative, effective interview.

⇒ ESTABLISHING GOALS ⇐

Of all weaknesses cited by interviewers of candidates, number 1 is: The **candidate does not have clear career goals.**

Although the "goals" part of the interview is often short and may be confined to one question, don't underestimate it! It can have a major impact on the hiring decision.

For an entry-level job, goals will show your immediate worth to the organization. Your long-range goals show your value in future positions of responsibility, your long-range potential.

Q: "What are your long range goals? Where do you see yourself within the company in 5 or 10 years?"

A: "I especially enjoy goal-setting and can see myself being responsible for a specific area as a manager.

I enjoy teamwork and supervision and see myself as an effective team leader. Writing also interests

me and I would really enjoy producing a project manual or preparing reports.....etc.”

⇒ ANSWERING INTERVIEW QUESTIONS ⇐

There is only one question you really answer in an interview: “How can you be of value to us?”

No matter what question is asked, place this imaginary ending on it:

“Now answer that question in a way that shows how you can be of value to us.”

Q: “Tell me something about yourself.”

A: “Well, I was born in a log cabin under a full moon....” No good. Interesting, but it doesn’t answer the real question.

A: “I’m an English major and I’ll be graduating this May...” Still no good. They have your resume and they can read.

A: “I especially enjoy teamwork situations-during high school and college I was involved in many activities, including.....” (briefly describe the skills you obtained from being part of these “teams”) Now you’re getting somewhere! You are answering the real question. Interpret your background by telling the interviewer things about you that can benefit their company. Just as you do with a resume, present benefits and abilities.

Interpret your experience. The interviewer doesn’t want a history-give them benefits and abilities. Your experience can relate in one or more of the following three ways. Examples of each, applied to a teacher candidate:

Function. If you instructed new employees at a fast food restaurant, this function is related to “teaching”. You would only describe that part of the experience.

EXAMPLE: “I was responsible for designing and creating all materials for the new employee training program at Burger King. First, I wrote a lesson plan and used that to create a training manual using my computer. The plan was based on using role playing and interactive exercises. I instructed the new employees for four hours during which time they were educated on equipment and positive customer service.”

Population. Perhaps you supervised high school students during a summer work project clearing nature trails. No teaching was involved, but the “youth work” or “supervising students” part of the job is related. Your work involved the same population you’ll have in school. Describe how you motivated these students, enforced rules, etc.

EXAMPLE: “Motivating teenagers was one of the most challenging jobs I have ever done and this summer that job was made even more difficult by the extreme heat and insects. I decided that this had to be a fun and positive experience, so I developed a game with different prizes for different criteria throughout the day such as the employee with the best attitude, the one who cleared the most brush each day, etc.”

Subject matter. You were an office clerk in a school superintendent’s office during a summer. No students were present and you were not teaching. However, the “school administration” or “office experience” part of the job shows how well you can work within the school organization. You would only discuss your accuracy and promptness in writing reports, your appreciation of record keeping as a part of the teaching job, etc.

EXAMPLE: “I thoroughly enjoyed my summer job working for Superintendent Jones...it gave me some hands-on administration experience. One of my main responsibilities was to compile statistical grade reports with narratives for all students in Suburbia High School. I used a spreadsheet program to keep

all records which had to be completely accurate or else a student would receive an incorrect grade report.

The entire experience helped to refine my time management, accuracy and record keeping skills. I have also gained a new insight into the challenges of administrative work and managing details.”

Questions about your strengths:

Q: “What are your greatest strengths?” “What characteristics of yours do you feel will be most beneficial in this job?”

A: “I especially enjoy meeting time deadlines. When I was writing for the college newspaper, I met all deadlines while maintaining excellent quality in the articles. It was part of the satisfaction for me and I see it as an interesting aspect of this job.”

Study your own resume and understand it. Think about why you’ve chosen this career. Be prepared to discuss one or more of your strengths and give evidence with your claim.

Questions about your Weaknesses:

Q: “What is your greatest weakness?” “What characteristics of your personality or job performance do you feel need improvement?”

Think. Why are you interviewing for this type of work? If you’ve chosen your career well, it’s because your weaknesses apply to other jobs, not his one. Your strengths are here, your weaknesses elsewhere. Here’s an example of an answer for someone interviewing for a teaching position:

A: “I’ve been working on improving my computer skills. Recently I completed a microcomputer applications class and feel confident working with database, word-processing and spreadsheet software. I am also learning several graphics programs and PowerPoint and hope to have the opportunity to incorporate this knowledge into projects with my students.”

Questions about past employers or co-workers:

Your last employer may have been Attila the Hun, and the interview asks:

Q: “How did you like working for your last employer/supervisor?”

A: “People like that should be locked up!”

NO. Not a good answer, even though it may be true. Your interviewer will identify with your last employer before (s)he will identify with you; they share the role of employer. You will probably be eliminated from further consideration.

A: “Well, he was a very assertive supervisor and I learned a lot about that style of management.”

This is a much better answer and the attitude demonstrated by your answer may be more important than the answer itself. **BE POSITIVE.** Never criticize a past employer or co-worker.

Avoid Indecision

A computer related example of a type of question that everyone in every field may get in some form:

Q: “I see that you have coursework in both scientific and business applications. Which do you prefer?”

A: “Well, I’m not sure yet but I’ll know when I have some experience.”

NO. With this answer, it is unlikely that you will get the experience at this company’s expense. You’ve put the interviewer in a tough situation. If they hire you and you’re assigned to one of these areas, you may not be effective and they will have failed to hire the person they needed.

A: “I enjoy both scientific and business applications. I find that each has a special appeal and if I could, I’d be involved in both scientific and business applications. I expect that you may have a need for one or the other, and I’m sure I would be effective with whichever assignment I was given.”

Now you’ve given the interviewer a better chance to fill his or her staffing responsibility!

Sample Interview Questions

Interviewers may ask questions similar to those listed below but worded in a variety of ways.

ABOUT YOU.....

1. What would you like to tell me about yourself?
2. Why do you want to work for this company/school?
3. What do you know about our organization?
4. What would you consider an ideal job?
5. Why did you choose to major in _____?
6. In which activities did you participate in college?
7. In what ways do you feel you can make a contribution to our organization?
8. What is your greatest strength?
9. In which areas do you feel you need improvement? What steps are you taking to improve?
10. If we were to ask friends and co-workers about you, what would they say are your three outstanding characteristics? How would you be described by professors? Past employers?
11. How do you deal with stress? Describe a high pressure situation you’ve experienced and how you handled it.
12. What is the toughest decision you’ve had to make?
13. What do you feel will be your greatest challenge if you were hired for this position?
14. What are your career goals five years from now? Ten years?
15. What plans do you have to further improve your professional skills?
16. What qualities do you prefer in a supervisor? Co-workers?
17. How do you handle disagreements with co-workers? Supervisors?
18. What are your interests outside of work?
19. Why should we hire you?
20. What is the toughest decision you’ve had to make?
21. What jobs have you had? What skills did you learn?

ABOUT YOUR EDUCATION....

1. Why did you choose this major? College?
2. Which subjects did you enjoy the most? Least? Find most difficult?
3. If you were to start all over, what changes would you make in your education? Explain.
4. Do you feel your grades are a good indication of your ability?
5. Did you change majors while in college? Why?
6. Did you participate in extra-curricular or community activities? Which activities? What did you gain from these experiences?
7. What did you enjoy most about your college experience? Least?

ABOUT EXPERIENCE....

1. What accomplishment(s) have given you the greatest satisfaction? Why?
2. How has your experience prepared you for this career?
3. Describe your most rewarding job experience.
4. What is the most difficult job you’ve ever performed?

5. What job(s) have you enjoyed the most? Explain.
6. What qualities do you find most effective in a supervisor?
7. Have you had any volunteer experiences that are related to this career? Explain.
8. In fellow employees, what qualities do you appreciate most? Least?

ABOUT YOUR CAREER GOALS....

1. What are your career goals? Do you view this position as fulfilling those goals? Explain.
2. Where do you see yourself five years from now? Ten Years?
3. Which type of position interests you most?
4. How would you describe your ideal job?
5. What qualifications do you have that make you feel you will be successful in this position?
6. What is most important to you in a job?
7. What interests you about our product or service?
8. What would constitute a challenging job for you?
9. If you were free to choose any position in our company, which would you choose? Why?
10. What are the most important rewards you expect from your career?
11. Describe the relationship that should exist between you and your supervisor.
12. What is your preferred work environment?
13. What are your salary expectations?

There will most likely be **situational questions**. Your answers will be very important. These questions would most often begin with: “What would you do if.....” Cite examples from your work or volunteer experiences. You will also be asked questions relating specifically to your knowledge of the job area for which you are applying.

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR TEACHERS

The school districts are looking for people who will be a good match for their school and community. School districts will focus on your philosophy of education and how well it matches their philosophy. You will be assessed on your ability to plan, to set goals and objectives for students, classroom management techniques and how well you work with the other teachers, parents and community members.

Be prepared by researching the school district in which you are interviewing. Resources are available in the Career Planning Office Library as well as on-line.

1. How would you improve the behavior of a student who presents behaviors unacceptable in the classroom?
2. Why did you choose to become a teacher?
3. What qualities describe a good teacher?
4. What did you enjoy most about your student teaching experience? Least?
5. What situation did you find most difficult in your student teaching?
6. If I were to observe you teaching, what would a typical lesson look like?
7. If money were no object, what would your classroom look like?
8. What was the most important thing you learned from your sponsor teacher?
9. How did you and your sponsor teacher(s) set up a plan for classroom instruction?
10. In which areas do you feel the need for professional growth?
11. What role do you feel parents should play in their child’s education?
12. How would you involve parents of your students?
13. What do you know about our school and why do you want to teach here?
14. What is your attitude about grading? Discipline? Planning?
15. How would you establish rules for the classroom? How would you deal with a student who refused to do the assigned work? A student who repeatedly violated classroom rules?
16. How do you motivate students?

17. How would you handle a class with mixed levels of abilities?
18. What can you offer the community and school outside of the classroom?
19. Have you ever been involved in team teaching? Multi-age classroom? Explain.
20. What do you feel a teacher's role should be with other faculty members?
21. How do you develop a lesson plan? Give examples.
22. What is your management style? How do you interact with the students?
23. What approach would you use with a parent whose son/daughter consistently fails to do assigned work or follow class rules?

⇒ **LEGAL AND ILLEGAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS** ⇐

We do not expect employers to knowingly ask illegal questions. However, employers' understanding of the laws and administrative rulings may vary. It is important to understand what is legal. For further information you may contact: **New York State Division of Human Rights**, 100 New Street, Syracuse, NY 13202, 315/428-4633.

This is a summary of **major laws and guidelines** related to legal/illegal questions that are asked before an individual is employed:

Bona Fide Occupational Qualifications (BFOQ). An employer must be able to show that the qualification, whether sex, age, race, religion, color or national origin, or other factors, really is necessary for the performance of the job for which the candidate is applying. For example, sex may be a BFOQ in the hiring of an actress or model. Religion may be a BFOQ for some positions in an organization sponsored by a religious group. However, it is important to note that the term has been narrowly construed by the EEOC and the courts. An employer has to be sure that any qualifications are significantly related to job performance.

The **New York State Human Rights Law** prohibits pre-employment and certain other inquiries about race, creed, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, marital status, or arrest records, unless based upon a BFOQ or other exception. In the course of processing complaints and conducting investigations under this law, the Division of Human Rights has ruled certain inquiries to be legal and others to be illegal. The law expressly prohibits employers and employment agencies from asking certain questions, either in an application form or in a personal interview, before selecting an employee or apprentice.

The following chart lists the most frequently applicable rulings made by the Division of Human Rights:

	Legal Questions	Illegal Questions
Birthplace/ Citizenship	"If hired, can you show evidence of being legally allowed to work in the U.S.?"	"Where were you born?" "What is your native language?"
Sex/Family Status	May ask for name and address of parent, if candidate is a minor.	"With whom do you live?" or any questions which would indicate whether the candidate is male or female, married, etc.
Race	Almost nothing is legal, until after the candidate is hired.	"What is your racial/ethnic group?" or anything dealing with color.
Age	May verify that candidate meets minimum requirements such as "Are you 18 or older?"	"How old are you?" or "When did you finish high school?"
Military	May ask about job-related skills acquired	Questions dealing with dates of military

Service	during military service.	service and type of discharge.
Names	“To help check prior employment, list any other names you used.”	“What was your maiden name?”
National Origin	“These positions require language skills. What languages do you speak?”	“How did you acquire your language skills?” What language did your family speak?” Any inquiry into ancestry, parentage, nationality of candidate, parent or spouse.
Physical Characteristics(exception: Performing Arts)	May require a photo only after hiring.	“Please submit a recent photo with your application.”
Religion	May tell the candidates the hours when they	“Do you belong to a church?” “What is Your would be required to work. religion?”
Criminal Record	“You will not be barred from employment on the basis of your answer, but have you ever been convicted of a felony?”	“Have you ever been arrested? or “Have you ever been in trouble with the law?”
Physical Condition	“If hired, you will have to pass a physical based on actual job requirements.”	“What is your physical condition?” “Do you have any disabilities?”
Memberships	“Please list all job-related organizations to which you belong.” You do not need to list any which indicate your race, religion, sex, or other personal characteristics.”	“Please list all the organizations to which you belong.”

Answering Illegal Questions

How do you answer (or not answer) illegal questions asked by the interviewer?

If you are asked an illegal question you have three choices:

1. You could put concern for your privacy and ethics aside and answer the question. This will probably make you feel uncomfortable (or angry) but you may still be a candidate in the running for the position, depending on your answer.
2. You could refuse to answer, and tell the interviewer that you know that question is illegal. This could make you feel better but chances are you will still be unemployed when the hiring is done.
3. Or you could **answer the legitimate concern that probably lies behind the illegal question.** This should keep you in the pool of candidates while maintaining your privacy.

Q: “Do you plan to have any children?”

A: “I plan to pursue a career whether or not I decide to raise a family.”

This question, illegal in many states, reflects the employer’s concern about the length of time the candidate might remain on the job. The candidate’s answer ignores the inappropriate question but answers the interviewer’s concern.

Q: “I see you’re engaged. Will your fiancé mind you travelling, often for several days at a time?”

A: “Travelling is one aspect of the job I’m looking forward to and I’m very anxious to begin.”

Once again, the interviewer’s question is ignored but his concern about travelling is answered.

Q: “What is your general health?”

A: “I’d be happy to take a pre-employment exam by your company physician. I’m sure I can handle all aspects of this position.”

The interviewer is often trying to uncover possible health problems ranging from AIDS to drug addiction. Your answer should relieve the employer’s concerns without directly answering this question.

⇒ ASKING QUESTIONS AT THE INTERVIEW ⇐

A candidate really interested in the position will ask questions. BE PREPARED.

Ask questions that relate to what you can do for the employer (as opposed to what they can do for you, such as salary, benefits, etc.).

Q: “Does the company help pay for graduate work?”

NO. Not a good question. It sounds like you simply want them to pay for your education.

Q: “I intend to keep current in my field. I believe it’s the only way to stay on the cutting edge and be the greatest value to the company. If I find training or course work that will help me stay current, will the company help make this possible?”

This is a much better answer. You are saying how you want to be of continuing value to them.

Consider literature you’ve read about the employer, comments made during the interview, and what points would you really like clarified (company locations, typical assignments and amounts of customer contacts). Teachers can ask questions about discipline systems currently used, class size, involvement with the community and about policies regarding homework, parent contact, etc.

At the end of the interview, ask when they expect to be making their hiring decision. Then, if you don’t hear from them within the time they project, you will feel more comfortable calling to check your status.

⇒ SALARY DISCUSSION ⇐

The right time to discuss salary is after the employer has decided to hire but before the hiring is finalized. If they ask your salary requirements or expectation before they make an actual offer, it’s too early. Here are a few suggestions if they ask:

Q: “What salary expectations do you have?”

A: “I expect that you have a salary range in mind, and I’m sure that within that range we’ll be able to find an amount acceptable to both of us. What interests me is this job and doing it well and I’m certainly interested in my future here after I’ve proven myself. I would be interested in knowing the type of income potential for someone who’s been with you a year and has performed well.”

A: “I’m confident that the starting salary will work out, but my real concern is with some specifics of the job that aren’t yet clear to me. For example, you mentioned travel”, etc.....

The employer often knows more about the right starting salary than you do and they know the local cost of living, how long it should take before your first raise, and about how much the raise will be. What they really want to know is whether or not you have a figure set in your mind that will cause you to accept or decline, or

may cause them to drop you from consideration. **BE PREPARED.** You should research the range of salary for that position in similar geographic locations and expect the offer to fall in that range. You can locate salary information on the internet and career books in the Career Planning library.

When a starting salary is offered, you will need to review it with your requirements. If the offer is too low you can always say no, or come back later (go home and plan your counter-proposal carefully) with a statement of how much you want to work for them, but you can't find a way to fit the salary into your budget. Would they please consider a level of _____ (salary you will need to take the job)? Emphasize how much you want the job, and that you sincerely hope they will give you this opportunity to produce results for them.

⇒ THANK-YOU LETTERS ⇐

Within one week of the interview, send a thank-you letter to the interviewer(s).

(See the Career Planning Letter Writing Guide for assistance.)

Notes you made following the interview about significant issues you discussed can be referenced in your thank-you letter. Send each interviewer a letter. If several met with you only briefly, you can send one letter to the person who introduced you, and ask them to express your thanks to the other people by name.

If you are not chosen for the job, we advise that you send another thank-you letter to say once again that you appreciate being considered for the job and thank them for allowing you to interview. Let them know that you would like to be considered for any future openings. You never know when another position will become available and this letter will help you to keep the doors open.

⇒ KEEPING RECORDS ⇐

You should not take notes during an interview, unless the interviewer recommends a particular book to read or someone in particular to call. In that case, jot it down and return to maintaining eye contact.

As soon as you leave the interview, find a place to sit down and make notes. However informally you do this at the interview site, re-write it later in clear, legible form. You should plan on having a number of interviews or contacts before your job is secured. You will need to keep your contacts organized if you want to keep on top of your search. Develop your own method - use the one shown here.

Maintain a log of all interviews and correspondences you send to prospective employers. You can use cards or standard notebook paper, but be sure that your records are in a form that can easily be kept by the phone or taken home on break or on a trip for easy reference.

Employer:	Name of the organization. Address (Make notes on directions to the building, where to park and how to get to the office where the interview will be held.) Phone and Fax numbers
	Ask for this information if it isn't given to you. Usually a business card will have all the information you need.
Contact Person:	Name and title of the person(s) who interviewed you. (For example: John Marsh, General Manager)
Date/Nature:	Record the date and nature of each contact. Example; 1. 6/23/99 - Returned phone call from John Marsh. Be at his office in Room 214 at 9:00 a.m. on Wednesday, June 29th.

<p>Robertson use</p>	<p>2. 6/29/99 - Interview with John Marsh, Mary Smith (Regional Sales Manager), Carol (Plant Manager) at John Marsh's office. Make notes on the content of the interview to use for your thank-you letter and for any future reference.</p> <p>Example: Talked about the move to Baltimore. They need help in getting production supervisors-most current supervisors won't move there and they are looking for me to start here and get trained. If I do well, I may be assigned to train new employees in Baltimore. Carol is worried about my lack of experience. Will know results of interview process by 7/5.</p> <p>Action: Describe what you did, but number the action to correspond with the contact date. In the examples, number 1 needs no follow-up. Number 2 required a thank-you letter.</p>
<p>Follow-Up</p>	<p>What you'll need to do in the future. Put the date first so a glance will alert you.</p>
<p>List</p>	<p>Example: 7/6. 2. Call Marsh if no word on results of interview. Best to reach him before 9 a.m.</p>

⇒ **“REJECTION” REASONS** ⇐

Employers have many reasons for rejecting an applicant. The list below is based on reports from over 150 large corporations, all with long-established hiring programs and extensive experience. It also applies to school systems, social service agencies and all types of employers.

1. Poor personal appearance or lack of personal hygiene (dress, nails, hair, shoes, teeth, clothing, etc.)
2. Lack of interest and enthusiasm; passive and indifferent
3. Over-emphasis on money; interested only in the best dollar offer
4. Condemnation of past employers or co-workers
5. Failure to look at the interviewer when speaking and listening
6. Limp, weak handshake
7. Unwillingness to relocate (Note: this is typical of large, multi-location corporations. However, over-emphasis on wanting to relocate may be seen as a lack of commitment to a particular locality and can work against you in some cases, such as a smaller employer who wants some assurance that you'll stay in their location.)
8. Late for interview (unless you were detained by circumstances beyond your control AND you telephoned to advise the employer of this)
9. Failure to express appreciation for interviewer's time
10. Failure to ask questions about the job
11. Indefinite responses to questions
12. Overbearing, over aggressive, conceited, superior, “know-it-all” attitude
13. Inability to express self clearly; poor voice projection, diction, grammar
14. Lack of planning for a career; no purpose and goals
15. Lack of confidence and poise; nervous, ill at ease
16. Failure to participate in activities (school, community, etc.)
17. Unwilling to start at the bottom; expects too much too soon
18. Makes excuses; evasive; can't explain unfavorable factors in your record
19. Lack of tact, maturity and/or courtesy
20. Lack of social skills
21. Indecision; allowed others to make decisions for you
22. Sloppy application form
23. Candidate was “shopping around” with no real interest in the career or organization
24. Wants job for only a short time

25. Cynical
26. Low moral standards
27. Lazy
28. Displays intolerance or strong prejudices
29. Narrow interests
30. Inability to take criticism or suggestions
31. High pressure type
32. Lack of information on the organization
33. Lingering tobacco or alcohol odor

**TO REDUCE INTERVIEW STRESS:
PREPARE, RESEARCH, REVIEW, PRACTICE
& FOLLOW THROUGH!**