



# 3 Kitchens

Volunteer • Seek Employment • Become an Entrepreneur

Employability Programme - Skills to Find Work

## 3.4 INTERVIEW TECHNIQUES

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# INTERVIEW TECHNIQUES

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Exercise: Knowledge Test



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# 01 Preparation and Punctuality

# Preparing

Well done on being called for interview! It is a wonderful achievement to get this far..

Preparing for a job interview can be particularly challenging for migrant women, especially if seeking opportunities in a new country with different cultural norms and expectations.

Preparation is key to success. So the first step in preparing for research is to do deeper research.

- Visit the company's website, follow them on social media, and read any recent news articles or press releases.
- Learn about the company's history, mission, values, and the specifics of the job you're applying for.
- Try to understand the company culture and how it operates can help you align your answers to what they are looking for in a candidate.

# Preparing

## Deeper Understanding of the Role

Carefully read the job description again to understand the skills and experiences required. Think about how your background and skills match these requirements and prepare to articulate this fit in your interview.

**Preparation:** List examples from your past work that demonstrate your qualifications for this job.

## Practice Common Interview Questions

Prepare answers for common interview questions such as “Tell me about yourself,” “What are your strengths and weaknesses?” or “Why do you want to work here?”

**Preparation:** Use the STAR method (Situation, Task, Action, Result) to structure your answers clearly and effectively.

# STAR method (Situation, Task, Action, Result)

## 1. Situation

Start your answer by setting the context for your story. Describe the situation and when and where it took place. Make sure it's relevant to the question asked and the job you're applying for. This part sets the stage for your story and should be brief but detailed enough for the interviewer to understand the background.

**Example:** "In my last role as a restaurant manager, we faced a significant challenge when our main supplier failed to deliver key ingredients just before a major holiday weekend."

## 2. Task

Next, explain the task you were responsible for in that situation. What was your role? What were you tasked with achieving? This part of your response should clarify your specific responsibilities and what was expected of you.

**Example:** "I was responsible for ensuring that the kitchen was fully stocked at all times to meet the holiday rush, which was crucial for maintaining our service and reputation."

# STAR method (Situation, Task, Action, Result)

## 3. Action

This is the most important part of your response. Detail the specific actions you took to handle the situation or solve the problem. Focus on what you did, rather than what your team or manager did. Use this opportunity to showcase your skills, problem-solving abilities, and initiative.

**Example:** "I contacted several local suppliers and negotiated quick deliveries of the missing ingredients. I also reorganised staff shifts to prepare for the unexpected influx of work and ensured everyone was briefed on the changes."

## 4. Result

Finally, explain the outcome of your actions. What happened as a result of what you did? It's important to highlight the positive impact of your actions, such as improvements made, problems solved, or what you learned. Whenever possible, quantify your success with numbers.

**Example:** "As a result of these efforts, we were able to serve our full menu throughout the weekend without any delays. Our team managed to handle a record number of customers, and we saw a 20% increase in sales compared to the same holiday the previous year."

# Punctuality

Punctuality is paramount when attending a job interview. Arriving late can cast a negative shadow over your candidacy, potentially raising doubts about your commitment and suitability for the role. An interview is an opportunity to make a strong first impression. Therefore, ensuring you are on time is a fundamental aspect of interview preparation.

Regardless of how well you perform during the interview, being late leaves a negative mark on your record. Even valid reasons like traffic congestion, parking difficulties, or getting lost won't help you in the interviewer's eyes. Other candidates faced the same logistical challenges but managed to arrive on time.





# Punctuality



This first impression is critical in the hiring process. Even if you possess the necessary qualifications and skills, other candidates likely do as well. If an equally qualified candidate made a good first impression by arriving on time, they are more likely to be favoured over you. Timeliness signals professionalism and the ability to manage simple tasks like arriving on time, which are crucial traits for any job.

Moreover, arriving late raises concerns about your future performance. If you can't make it to an interview on time, the interviewer might question your punctuality and efficiency in the workplace. It suggests complacency, such as not anticipating traffic delays or failing to plan your route in advance. Demonstrating the ability to arrive on time shows that you respect the employer's time and the opportunity they are offering.



# Punctuality



Showing up really early with a casual demeanour, such as with coffee in hand and a companion, can also create a negative impression. It suggests a lack of understanding of the professional context and can be perceived as unprofessional. Being slightly early, however, allows you to compose yourself and prepare mentally without the rush and panic of arriving late.

Respect for time is a reflection of your respect for the employer and the job itself. Punctuality communicates responsibility and dedication, critical qualities in any professional setting. Arriving late not only disrupts your composure but also sets a negative tone for the interview, which can be hard to overcome regardless of your qualifications.

In conclusion, being late for a job interview can significantly harm your chances of success. It indicates a lack of seriousness and professionalism that can outweigh even the best interview performance. Therefore, it is always better to plan to arrive a few minutes early, allowing you to be calm and collected, ready to make a positive and lasting impression.

# 5 Tips for Non-Verbal Communication during Job Interviews

# 5 Tips for non-verbal communication during job interviews

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01

Hello there!



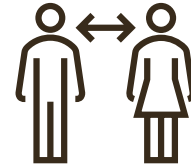
02

Physical care and clothing



03

Be confident!



04

Respect the personal space!



05

Do not exaggerate!



01

## Hello there!

The first impression is important. Very important! So, start your job interview with a confident handshake and nod to your recruiter's colleagues. This will give you an immediate advantage.



02

## Physical care and clothing

It may sound obvious, but make sure you are looking good and clean. A suitable candidate takes good care of himself or herself. Start thinking about your 'stage outfit' a few days before your interview. This way you will have enough time to shine on stage without any additional stress. Choose an outfit that looks good, corresponds to the dress code of the employer, and makes you feel good.



03

## Be confident!

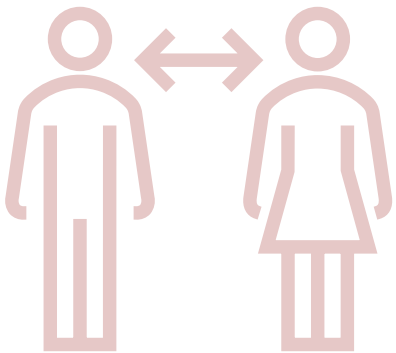
During your job interview try to sit upright with your back against the backrest of your seat. And try to make direct eye contact. Do not stare or look around all the time. Make sure you give the impression that you are alert and interested. Do not sit out the entire job interview in the same position. This will harm the quality of the interview and it will hurt your back! You can easily change your position by, for example, tilting your head to the right. Through this small movement you will subconsciously look dependable and professional.



04

## Respect the personal space!

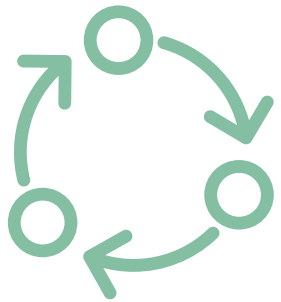
Respect the 'personal space' of the recruiter. You do not need to convince the recruiter by leaning as close as possible against him or her. Make sure you are not sitting or standing closer than 1 m and not more than 3 metres away from your recruiter.





## Do not exaggerate!

Ensure a balance between subtle movements and a 'stiff' posture. Try not to continuously wave your arms and hands throughout the job interview. This is perceived as disturbing. The same applies to someone who is not moving at all. 'Mirroring' is a natural way of moving which lets you gain the trust of your recruiter. By imitating the movement of your recruiter in a subtle and natural manner (crossing legs, arms on the table, and hand under the head...) you will indicate that you agree with the recruiter. This way you can make a subconscious 'connection'.



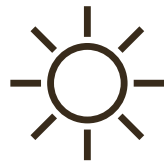
# 03 5 Tips for Verbal Communication during Job Interviews

# 5 Tips for verbal communication during job interviews



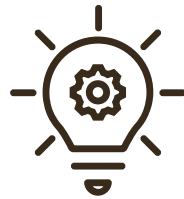
**01**

The voice



**02**

Always look on the bright side of life



**03**

Beware!  
You know more than your recruiter.



**04**

Do you have any questions for us?



**05**

Thank you!



01

## ‘The voice’

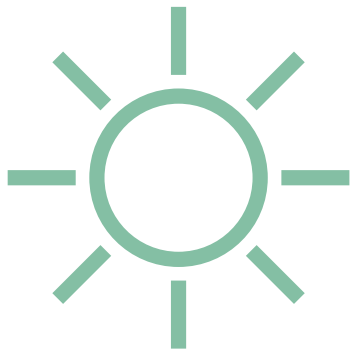
Speak with a clear volume and take care of your pronunciation, intonation, and rhythm. Provide variety in your intonation and speak in a calm manner. Concentrate on your breathing while speaking. This avoids a hasty impression.

Further, avoid filler words, such as ‘yes,’ ‘uhm’ and ‘so,’ and definitely don’t sigh after a question. Use short and simple sentences, finish your sentences and stick to the structure of the job interview.

02

## Always look on the bright side

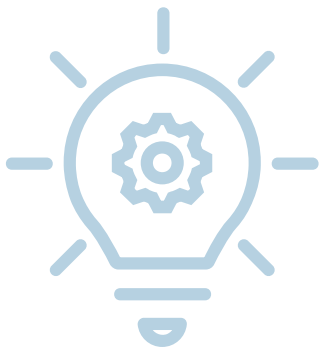
Try be positive when telling your story. Don't tell just what went wrong in previous experiences, but also discuss how you solved issues and which lessons you learned while doing so. Back to the STAR technique. Always be honest in your answers and always emphasise the positive!



## Beware! You know more than your recruiter

Remember that the recruiter may not have the same background as you. He or she is may not have the same knowledge and experience.

Provide thorough answers but avoid the small technical details. Distinguish between main and side issues. If something is not clear, then the recruiter will ask additional questions.



## Do you have any questions for us?

Yes, of course, you have questions! Prepare some interesting questions about the company and your specific position prior to the job interview. This will emphasise your interest in the company in your position.

Try to avoid open questions and questions to which you could find the answer on the website or somewhere else. Also provide example answers. This way, you can make it easier for the recruiter, and you can highlight your vision.



05

## Thank you!

Thank the recruiter for the invitation and his or her time and walk out in a decent way. Be aware that you may still be watched, so keep your dance of joy or your frustrations for a later time.





# 04 Sample Interview Questions

# Sample Interview Questions

Although there is no set format that every job interview will follow, there are some questions that you can almost guarantee will crop up. Here is a list of the most common questions and a guide to the kind of answers your interviewer wants to hear:

1. About You
2. About your skills
3. The employer / job
4. Your work history
5. Team Work
6. Your personality and interests
7. Unusual questions
8. Closing Question



# About You

Typical questions an interviewer might ask:

## What are your goals? or Where do you see yourself in five years' time?

This is your chance to show how enthusiastic you are to get on. (You should avoid sounding too aggressive and over-ambitious: *'I want to become managing director in three years'.*) Avoid sounding unenthusiastic and passive: *'I'm not sure - I'll see how it goes'.*

To avoid this, you could talk in terms of short-term and long-term goals. Remember you are at the interview for that particular job - so your short-term goal should be to get that job for the time being.

# About You

Typical questions an interviewer might ask:

Talk about the kind of job you'd eventually like to do and the various steps you will need to get there, relating this in some way back to the position you're interviewing for. Show the employer you have ambition, and that you have the determination to make the most of every job you have to get where you want to be.

## What the interviewer really wants to know: How ambitious are you?

### Good answer

'My immediate aim is to get a trainee chef position, then to work through NVQs level 2 and 3 to become a qualified chef.'



# About Your Skills

Typical questions  
an interviewer  
might ask:

## What are your strengths?

Pick the three biggest attributes that you think will get you the job and give examples of how you have used these strengths in a work situation.

They could be tangible skills, such as proficiency in a particular computer language, or intangible skills such as good people-skills.

If you're not sure where to start, take a look at the job description. There is usually a section listing candidate requirements, which should give you an idea of what they are looking for.

# About Your Skills

Typical questions an interviewer might ask:

## What are your weaknesses?

The dreaded question, which is best handled by picking something that you have made positive steps to redress. For example, if your IT ability is not at the level, it could be, state it as a weakness but tell the interviewer about training courses or time spent outside work hours you have used to improve your skills.

Your initiative could actually be perceived as a strength. On no accounts say *“I don’t have any weaknesses”*, your interviewer won’t believe you, or *“I have a tendency to work too hard”*, which is seen as avoiding the question.

# About Your Skills

Typical questions an interviewer might ask:

If you're asked about weaknesses, don't list many - only mention one! Choose a minor flaw that isn't essential to the job. Turn it into a positive, such as how you've worked on the weakness. Or you could present it as an opportunity for development.

## Good answer



**Strengths:** *'I'm a good organiser, and I plan everything in detail. I showed this when I was given a new project, and I had to get it up and running from scratch.'*

**Weaknesses:** *'Sometimes I'm too enthusiastic when working on a new project. But I've learned to adjust to everyone else's pace, and not go charging ahead.'*

# About Your Skills

Typical questions an interviewer might ask:

## Why should we hire you? or What can you do for us that other candidates can't?

What makes you special and where do your major strengths lie? You should be able to find out what they are looking for from the job description. *“I have a unique combination of strong technical skills and the ability to build long-term customer relationships”* is a good opening sentence, which can then lead onto a more specific example of something you have done so far in your career.

State your biggest achievement and the benefit it made to the business, then finish with *“Given the opportunity, I could bring this success to your company.”*



# About Your Skills

Typical questions  
an interviewer  
might ask:

**What would your colleagues and friends consider as your best qualities?**

*What the interviewer really wants to know: can you do the job?*

Know your strengths, and mention ones that are relevant to the job you're being interviewed for. It's important to quote examples of when you used the skills; it's not enough to just say you have the skills.

# About Your Skills

Typical questions an interviewer might ask:

## Typical strengths employers look for are:

- **Communication** - the ability to get on with a wide range of people
- **Team working** - the ability to be an effective team leader or team member
- **IT skills** - most jobs these days need some IT skills
- **Good attitude** - hard worker, honest, polite, co-operative
- **Problem solving** - using your initiative to identify solutions
- **Enthusiasm** - employers like someone positive
- **Quick learner** - so you can take on new tasks
- **Determination** - shows you are focused on achieving goals
- **Flexibility** - doing a variety of tasks to achieve a common goal.

# The Employer / Job

Typical questions  
an interviewer  
might ask:

## Why do you want to work here?

The interviewer is listening for an answer that indicates you've given this some thought. If you've prepared for the interview properly, you should have a good inside knowledge of the company's values, mission statement, development plans and products.

Use this information to describe how your goals and ambition matches their company ethos and how you would relish the opportunity to work for them. Never utter the phrase "I just need a job."

# The Employer / Job

Typical questions  
an interviewer  
might ask:

What do you know about our company?

Do you know what we do?

Why have you chosen to apply to this company?

The interviewer wants to know you've done your homework and that you know about the organisation and its aims. They want to know you've thought it through and you've chosen to apply to them for a good reason. Show your knowledge of the company by having some facts and figures at the ready, such as:

- the size of the organization
- what the product or service is
- latest developments in the sector
- the history, goals, image and philosophy of the employer.

# The Employer / Job

Typical questions an interviewer might ask:

## What can you do for us that someone else can't?

When talking about why you want to work for the employer, focus on what you can do for them, not on what they can do for you.

### Good answer



*'Smith's is a respected firm with a reputation for high quality work, and I'd like to be part of that success. The quality of my work is important to me, so I feel I'd be at the right place. I've also heard you invest in your staff by training and developing them.'*

# The Employer / Job

Typical questions  
an interviewer  
might ask:

## What are three positive things your last boss would say about you?

This is a great time to brag about yourself through someone else's words. Try to include one thing that shows your ability to do the job, one thing that shows your commitment to the work, and one thing that shows you are a good person to have in a team. For example, *"My boss has told me that I am the best designer he has ever had. He knows he can always rely on me, and he likes my sense of humour."*

# The Employer / Job

Typical questions  
an interviewer  
might ask:

## What salary are you seeking?

You can prepare for this by knowing the value of someone with your skills. Try not to give any specific numbers in the heat of the moment – it could put you in a poor position when negotiating later on. Your interviewer will understand if you don't want to discuss this until you are offered the job.

If they have provided a guideline salary with the job description, you could mention this and say it's around the same area you're looking for.

# The Employer / Job

Typical questions an interviewer might ask:

## What do you think the main challenges will be?

The interviewer wants to know if you fully understand what the job will involve. They want to know why you think you'd be good at it, and how you'd approach it if they offer you the job. To answer this question well, make sure you read the job description thoroughly and research how the organisation operates.

### Good answer

*'The main task is to supervise a team of chefs to ensure they maintain high standards. It's my responsibility to motivate them and pass on my experiences to enable them to achieve more.'*





# Your Work History

Typical questions an interviewer might ask:

- What motivates you?
- Which tasks do you get the most satisfaction from?
- What the interviewer really wants to know: What makes you tick?
- By finding out what motivates you, the interviewer can find out which environment you'll perform well in. Try to think of examples of when a work task excited you.

## Good answer



*'I like problem solving - that point you reach in a project where you come up against something unexpected, and you have to think creatively to come up with a solution.'*

# Team Work

Typical questions an interviewer might ask:

- What makes a good team?
- What makes a good team member?
- What makes a good team leader?
- What the interviewer really wants to know: Can you operate effectively in a team?
- Employers value team-working very highly. They want to know you can work effectively in a team, whatever your role within it is.

## Good answer



*'A good team needs to have clear objectives and goals, and procedures to work towards these. Each person needs to be clear what their role is, and what is expected of them. There needs to be openness and trust, and clear communication.'*

# Your Personality & Interests

Typical  
questions an  
interviewer  
might ask:

- What was the last film you saw or the last book you read?
- How would you describe yourself?
- How would your friends describe you?
- What the interviewer really wants to know:  
Are you a well-rounded individual?

By asking personality questions, the employer wants to know how well you know yourself - how self-aware you are. Having self-awareness means you can look at yourself critically, and know what you're good at and where you could improve.

# Your Personality & Interests

Typical questions an interviewer might ask:

When choosing examples of interests to mention, try to choose a wide range to show you're well balanced. However, when quoting films or books, choose classic or mainstream ones rather than obscure or extreme ones.

Some employers will expect you to know about current affairs and popular culture - jobs in the media, for example.

## Good answer



*'In my personal life I'm always organising everybody. People look to me for ideas and plans - I guess in some ways that shows I'm a natural leader.'*

# Unusual Questions

Typical questions an interviewer might ask:

- If you were a biscuit, what type of biscuit would you be?
- If you were an animal, what type of animal would you be?
- What the interviewer really wants to know: Can you think on the spot and come up with a sensible answer?

You probably won't have prepared for this, so the interviewer is seeing if you can think on your feet. Take your time over this question, and think of something that generally reflects you, but also has positives you could apply to the world of work. There is no 'good answer' but just be prepared for this sort of question.

# Closing Question

Typical questions an interviewer might ask:

## Do you have any questions for us?

You should always have some questions for your interviewer to demonstrate your interest in the position. Prepare a minimum of five questions, some which will give you more information about the job, and some which look deeper into the culture and goals of the company.

### Some suggestions:

- What will the main tasks and responsibilities be in this job?
- What would I do in the first day/week/month/year?
- What the interviewer really wants to know: Do you know what the job's all about

# 01

## Exercise: Knowledge Test – Interview Technique

# Exercise 1: Knowledge Test – Interview Technique

01. What role does eye contact play in effective communication during an interview?
02. How can your posture during an interview impact the way you're perceived by an interviewer?
03. How can your tone of voice and vocal pitch affect the way your message is received?
04. How does your personal space play a role in non-verbal communication?
05. What role does appearance (clothing, hygiene) play in non-verbal communication?
06. Why is active listening important?
07. Why is it important to avoid filler words like 'uhm', or 'like' during an interview?
08. How does asking thoughtful, prepared questions impact verbal communication during an interview?





# 3 Kitchens

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## 3.3 INTERVIEW TECHNIQUES

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