

The Interview Jitters!

Got a bad case of the [interview jitters](#)? It's totally normal, and expected, to be a little nervous as you go into a [job interview](#). The best way to handle these nerves is to be prepared. Before you arrive at an interview, do your homework!

Quite frankly, first impressions count, so you'll want to ensure you're putting your best foot forward as soon as you walk into the interview room. You can do this by completing pre-interview homework.

Most companies have an online presence, so it should be relatively easy for you to learn about the company. You should also familiarize yourself with the position for which you are interviewing. If possible, print out a copy of the position description and take it with you to the interview.

Other items that might be worth researching include:

- Background of the company – how long has it been in business, how has the company changed over time, what type of work does it do, where are its offices located, who owns the company or is it publicly traded, what type of people does it hire?
- Position description – what are the knowledge, skills and abilities required for this position, how do your skills match this position, where is the position located, what will be required of you on a daily basis, is there room for growth?
- Corporate culture – this could include items like dress code, work hours, amount of travel required, etc.

During The Interview

Maintain eye contact with the interviewers and use non-verbal cues to acknowledge that you are listening to them. You don't want to get into a staring contest with the interviewer, but be alert and active in the dialogue. It's perfectly acceptable to formulate your thoughts before answering an interview question. A brief pause before speaking is normal, so don't be put off by short silent periods. Interviewers may pause briefly to take notes during the interview. This is also common and shouldn't put you on edge.

Many companies utilize behavioral interview techniques. Behavioral interviewing requires the job candidate to provide a situation and then describe the task that comprised the situation, the actions that were taken and the result or outcome.

Questions may be posed to you in a format of “tell me about a time when...” or “give me an example of a time when...” This allows you to share previous work (paid or volunteer) or classroom experiences and the interviewer is able to ascertain what you learned from the experience. Many companies prefer to use this interviewing technique because it provides information on a candidate that isn’t likely to be included on a résumé.

At the completion of the interview, it is common for the interviewer to ask you if you have any additional questions. Have a few questions prepared in advance. They can be general questions about the work environment and the type of work that the company does or they can be specific to the position for which you are interviewing. Having something prepared is much better than trying to come up with something under pressure and stumbling in front of the interviewer.

Some interviews may include more than one interviewer. If you are a part of a panel interview, speak to all of the interviewers by looking at them while you respond. When the interview concludes, thank each person for their time and close with a firm handshake. It’s also appropriate to ask for their business cards so you can send [a follow-up thank-you letter](#) or e-mail after the interview.