

# TEAMS

Transition Employment Assistance for Military Spouses

## Interview Skills for Military Spouses

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Participant Guide

SEPTEMBER 2021

Transition Employment Assistance for Military Spouses  
(TEAMS)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

Veterans' Employment and Training Services (VETS)

Transition Assistance Program (TAP)



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# Introduction to TEAMS

It is our pleasure to welcome you to the workshops for the Transition Employment Assistance for Military Spouses (TEAMS) initiative. TEAMS was launched in September 2020 by the Department of Labor (DOL) Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS) as a part of the Department of Defense (DoD) Transition Assistance Program (TAP) and is designed specifically for the spouses of transitioning service members.

Whether you are a spouse of a service member who is relocating, retiring, separating or a member of the reserve component that is deactivating, demobilizing, or being released from active-duty orders, this workshop is designed to assist you with finding employment.

Providing employment assistance to transitioning service members and their spouses is part of the mission of DOL VETS TAP. Each year, approximately 90,000 military spouses are impacted by their service member's military transition (DoD 2018 Demographics Profile of the Military Community). While spouses are eligible to attend military TAP briefings and workshops, the majority do not participate for a variety of reasons (DOL VETS TAP Military Spouse Curricula Needs Analysis, 2020).

In early 2020, DOL VETS conducted extensive research to discover what military spouses want and need in both education and delivery methods as well as what employment resources are available and accessible to military spouses.

The research, which spanned 11 reports, five website analyses, over 700 individual military spouse surveys, and dozens of interactions and interviews with military spouse advocacy groups, confirmed a demand for employment related workshops concentrated on the issues encountered by transitioning spouses.

The TEAMS workshops are adapted from the current DOL TAP curriculum that is provided to over 170,000 service members annually.

Thank you for your kind participation and for your support of our nation's service members.

# Introduction



Slide 1

## Objectives

The slide has a yellow background with a pattern of 3D-style arrows pointing right, and a red circle in the bottom right corner. The title 'Objectives' is centered at the top. Below it is a bulleted list of four objectives.

<h2>Objectives</h2> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Understand the importance of researching industries, companies, and job descriptions.</li><li>• Use the STAR method to answer common interview questions.</li><li>• Observe and evaluate interview techniques.</li><li>• Recognize appropriate interview follow-up actions.</li></ul>	
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Slide 2

You've got an interview request! All the hard work you've put into researching careers, getting credentials, completing your resume, finding job postings, networking, applying online, following up... has paid off with an interview request. Congratulations!

While all the work you've done so far has largely been on your timeline (probably all hours of the day), an interview is an event in time involving others with a beginning and an end. Because of these constraints, it is now important for you to focus on making that event a success.

This workshop will provide information and activities you can use to build your interviewing confidence and success.

At the end of this session, you will be able to:

- Understand the importance of researching industries, companies, and job descriptions.
- Use the STAR method to answer common interview questions.
- Observe and evaluate interview techniques.
- Recognize appropriate interview follow-up actions.

## Overview

# Overview

This workshop is divided into three sections.

Before the Interview	During the Interview	After the Interview
		

Slide 3

This workshop is divided into three sections.

- Before the Interview
- During the Interview
- After the Interview

# Section 1: Before the Interview



## Slide 4

You do not get a second chance to make a great first impression, so prepare well for your interview to increase your chances of landing your dream job. Your resume gets you into the interview. A successful interview can get you the job. In this section, you will learn about types of interviews and how research prepares you for a successful interview.

In other TEAMS Workshops, we have discussed the job search principle Think Like an Employer. That principle is helpful to keep in mind as you progress through a job interview. For example: What skills or experience would an employer expect a well-matched candidate to explain during the interview when asked “Why should I hire you?”

Preparing for interview success involves two categories of action: Research and Rehearse.

## Research



Slide 5

### Research the company

Though you researched the company before you applied, take the time to refresh your memory and do additional research. Spend time on the company's website and follow the company on LinkedIn, Twitter, and Facebook.

Learn the history of the company by reviewing information on its website, usually found in a section labeled "About." Search for recent articles about the company and find out about its core missions and values. The more you know, the more comfortable you will be in the interview.

### Research encompasses gaining a thorough knowledge of:

- The employer's industry, including trends and outlook.
- The employer, including history, products/services, leadership, organizational structure, facilities, competitors, and industry position.
- The position of interest, including roles and responsibilities, management, salary range, similar positions in company if applicable, and even what type of attire is expected.

You will use your new-found knowledge to better respond to specific questions that relate to the position. The research will also help guide you to create thoughtful and informational questions to ask during your interview. The best candidate questions come from your research.

## Prepare Materials



### Slide 6

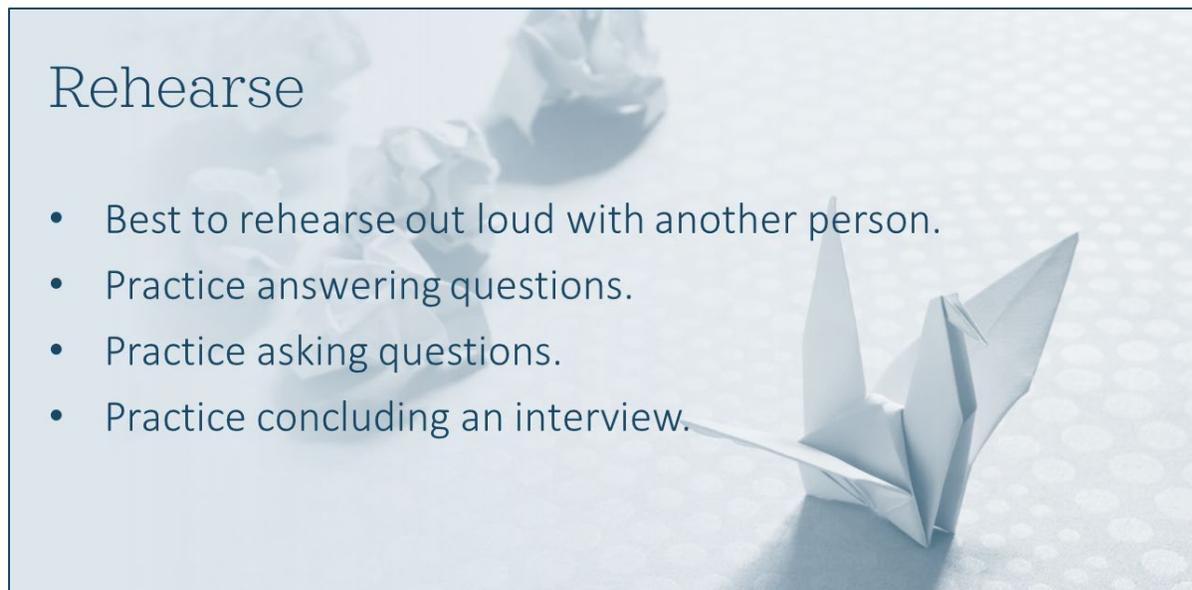
Take several hard copies of your resume to the interview in case there is more than one interviewer. Make sure you have a copy for yourself as well. If appropriate to take notes, have a pen and paper with you. Bring questions you may have gathered. Make sure your materials are tidy; place them in a folder or portfolio to keep them together.

At a minimum, your folder or portfolio should contain:

- Multiple copies of your current resume
- References (confirmed and ready to receive calls or emails about you)
- Copies of appropriate licenses and certifications
- Letters of recommendation (if available)

Think ahead for the interview. If the interviewer may require you to perform a task, ensure you are prepared. For instance, if you are applying for a job as a welder, the interviewer may ask you to demonstrate your skills on the spot. Have your work clothes and tools available at the interview. Other jobs where a demonstration interview might be appropriate include hospitality (restaurant, hotel), graphic design, sales, retail, administrative tasks, training, or writing.

## Rehearse



Slide 7

### **Practice interviewing**

Practice interviewing with your mentor, colleagues, friends, and family. The more you practice answering typical questions and delivering your professional introduction, the more comfortable you will be in the interview.

Practice your responses so you can reply confidently and naturally without sounding rehearsed or mechanical. Do not memorize your answers, as that can trip you up if you forget what you memorized.

### **Rehearsal encompasses:**

- Practice interviewing with another person to gain confidence in building rapport and creating a positive first impression.
- Practice answering, aloud and with another person, a wide variety of questions that might be asked by the employer. You need to practice how you will relate your qualifications to the job requirements.
- Practice asking, out loud and with another person, questions you might have for the employer. You may only get to ask a few questions. Choose which ones are most important for you to have answered.
- Practice concluding an interview to remember all components of the closing.
- Practice with another person how to exit the interview. You want to end on a positive note.

The TEAMS Website Guide has interview resources from CareerOneStop, LinkedIn, and Indeed.



## Remember

Your interview starts the moment you arrive on the company property.

- Arrive 10 – 15 minutes early.
- Turn off your phone.
- Be polite.
- Dress for the occasion.

### Slide 8

Once dressed and prepared, go to the interview. Your interview starts the moment you arrive on the company property.

- Arrive 10-15 minutes early.
- Turn off your phone or any other electronic device that could be distracting.
- Be polite to every person you encounter.
- Dress for the occasion (to include the weather). For example

## Interview Attire

### Interview Attire

- First impressions matter.
- Dress one level above the position for which you are interviewing.
- Dress comfortably. Do not wear clothes that are too tight, too loose, or uncomfortable to sit in.



### Slide 9

First impressions matter. Appropriate attire and grooming are critical. For example, if the company is business casual, wear a suit to the interview. If the company is casual, you may wear business casual to the interview.

Consider the industry norms for dress. A position in a more creative field, such as marketing or information technology, you can wear something casual. While a position in a trade industry you should wear a nice casual shirt/blouse and trousers/skirt and take appropriate work gear with you if the employer has indicated you might be required to demonstrate your skills during the interview.

Ensure you dress one level above the position for which you are interviewing. An executive position or a position in a conservative industry, you should wear more traditional choices like tailor-fit suits and dress shirts/blouses.

Confirm your interview attire fits comfortably and correctly. Do not wear clothes that are too tight, too loose, or uncomfortable to sit in; it will be distracting. You want to make a good first impression during interviews and networking events.

In the Appendix, there are charts explaining business professional and business dress options.

## Section 2: During the Interview



### Slide 10

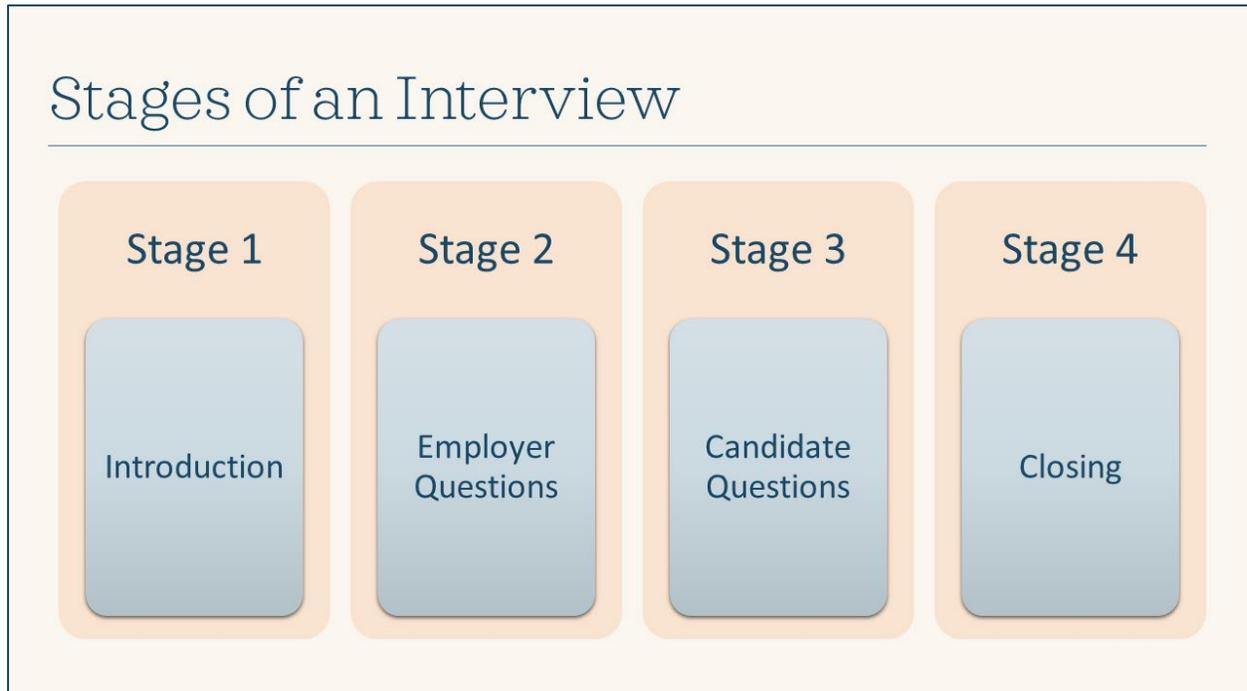
Now that we have reviewed what should be done before an interview, let's discuss what should occur during the interview. Throughout this section, we will discuss the following topics:

- The four stages of an interview.
- The types of questions to expect during an interview.
- How to respond to interview questions.

You also will have the opportunity to participate in some interview activities.

It is important to note that there are different types of interviews such as phone, panel, group, meal, and even video. Later in the workshop, we will discuss additional tips for each of those types of interviews. The following section provides insight into the stages of an interview and how to move through those stages. These stages are consistent across all interview types.

## Stages of an Interview



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Most interviews have four stages. The better you understand each stage and what is expected of you during that stage, the better prepared you will be for your interview.

### Stage 1: Introduction

As the interview begins, remember the following from your interview preparation:

- Research the company/industry in advance so you can ask informed questions about the job and the company.
- Speak clearly and not too fast. The interviewer will assess your communication skills based on how you express yourself.
- Listen carefully to the interviewer. Make sure you answer the question the interviewer is asking.
- Keep your answers concise and complete; approximately two minutes per answer is normal.

## Stage 1: Introduction

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Your goal at this stage is to:

Introduce yourself.

Find common ground.

Project enthusiasm, confidence, and respect.

Build rapport.

Slide 12

Again, first impressions matter. The introduction is your opportunity to set the tone for the interview. Follow these best practices for the introduction stage. Your goal during the introduction is to:

- Introduce yourself to the employer and state for which position you are interviewing.
- For face-to-face interviews, introduce yourself professionally. Follow the employer's lead. If appropriate, offer a firm, whole-hand handshake. Shake hands with both men and women the same way.
- Find common ground. Make appropriate small talk. Avoid topics such as religion, politics, and controversial current events.
- Project enthusiasm, confidence, and respect. Be positive. Your face conveys your attitude and reinforces what you say.
- Build rapport.



## Stage 1: Introduction

- Make eye contact with the interviewer.
- Sit up straight and lean forward toward the interviewer slightly.
- Use natural gestures.
- Pay attention to the nonverbal cues of the interviewer.
- Base small talk on information about the job and the company.

### Slide 13

- Make eye contact with the interviewer. If doing a video interview, regularly look into the camera. Many interviewers use your eye contact to look for enthusiasm, sincerity, and possible inconsistencies in your responses.
- Sit up straight and lean forward toward the interviewer slightly. Good posture will help you listen and reinforce you are interested in the position.
- Use natural gestures. If you normally use your hands to gesture as you talk, do so in the interview. Gestures help you relax and convey enthusiasm.
- Notice the nonverbal cues of the interviewer. The interviewer's facial expressions will let you know how well they are listening. If the interviewer is not attentive, shorten your answers, use an example, or ask a question.

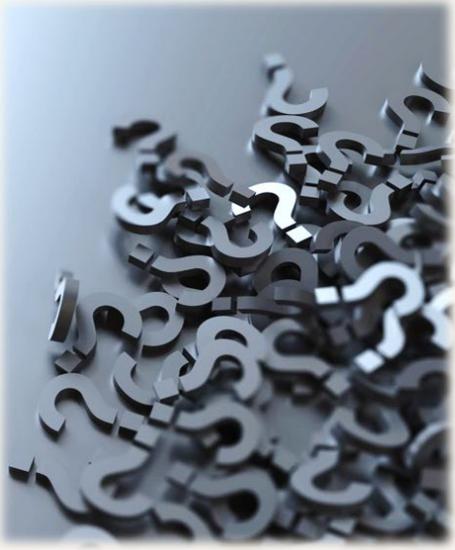
## Stage 2: Employer Questions

### Stage 2: Employer questions

Your goal at this stage is to:

- Sell yourself.
- Address employer concerns
- Use specific, concrete examples to demonstrate your qualifications.

Think like the employer!

A photograph showing a large pile of metallic, three-dimensional dollar signs (\$). The signs are scattered and overlapping, creating a textured, shimmering surface. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the metallic sheen and casting soft shadows.

### Slide 14

The most important part of preparing for an interview is practice. Anticipating what job interview questions may be asked is essential—that way, you can craft your answers well in advance and feel confident in your responses.

In general, employers are looking for answers to three questions:

1. Does the candidate have the skills and abilities to perform the job?
2. Does the candidate possess the attitude and work ethic the employer expects?
3. Will the candidate be a team player and fit into the organization?

Continuing to think like an employer, make sure your responses address the employer's concerns. What will be your "value add" as the employer sees it? What gap in the company's required skillset will you be providing? What level of skill will be good enough to produce a profit for the company? Asking questions like these will help you anticipate the sort of answers an employer wants to hear and help determine if your level of skill and experience is sufficient for the position they are trying to fill.

Most employers ask a standard set of interview questions relating to how your skills, knowledge, training, and work experience fit the job and the company. These questions fall under three categories: traditional, behavioral, and hypothetical/situational.

Traditional questions are broad-based, behavioral questions demonstrate your behavior in past situations, and hypothetical or situational questions reveal how you would handle a specific situation. Interviewers also ask common leadership questions for those seeking management-level positions. Prepare answers to these typical questions to present your strongest skills and qualifications and follow these best practices.

- Think like the employer and respond to questions that the employer asks.
- Keep your answers brief but be certain that you answer the questions thoroughly.
- Think about your answer before you start to speak. It is okay to pause and collect your thoughts and then give your answer. Try to relate your response to the position for which you are applying by using keywords from the job posting.
- Every chance you get, use examples to explain how you would go about doing a job rather than just saying you can do it.
- While it is important not to get too detailed, describe your specific certifications, training, and other specialized experience that will give you an edge over other applicants.
- Improve your chances for success by practicing interview questions.

### Traditional Interview Questions



## Stage 2: Employer questions

### Traditional Interview Questions

- Tell me about yourself.
- Why do you want to work here?
- Can you tell me about the time on your resume when you were not working?

Slide 15

Traditional interview questions are broad-based. Here is a list of several traditional interview questions.

Question	Explanation	Example Response
<p>“Tell me about yourself.”</p>	<p>They will likely start out with a question about you and your background to get to know you.</p> <p>Start out by giving them an overview of your current position or activities, then provide the most important and relevant highlights from your background that make you most qualified for the role.</p>	<p>“I have 4 years of experience as a medical assistant. I enjoyed working in a fast- paced environment where I could provide excellent care to patients.</p> <p>I’ve developed the ability to anticipate roadblocks and create effective alternative plans for patient care.</p> <p>My medical knowledge and technical skills gave me the opportunity to provide training for my department.</p> <p>I would love to continue my passion for training by delivering excellent patient care training to your department.”</p>
<p>“How would you describe yourself?”</p>	<p>When an employer asks you to talk about yourself, they are looking for information about how your qualities and characteristics align with the skills they believe are required to succeed in the role.</p> <p>If possible, include quantifiable results to demonstrate how you use your best attributes to drive success.</p>	<p>“I would describe myself as a highly-motivated and dedicated person.</p> <p>I was taught at a young age not to be afraid of hard work—to always finish what I started.</p> <p>These are my core values, and it is who I am.</p> <p>In all my performance evaluations, I received a superior rating based upon my commitment to accomplishing projects, tasks, and initiatives.</p> <p>I will have the same level of dedication and commitment to this position and company.”</p>

Question	Explanation	Example Response
<p>“What makes you unique?”</p>	<p>Employers often ask this question to identify why you might be more qualified than other candidates they are interviewing.</p> <p>To answer, focus on why hiring you would benefit the employer.</p> <p>Addressing why your background makes you a good fit will let employers know why your traits and qualifications make you well prepared.</p>	<p>“What makes me unique is my experience in leadership as a team leader for 3 years.</p> <p>I have first- hand knowledge of the challenges and opportunities of being a leader, which has equipped me with a balanced perspective of the worker-supervisor relationship.</p> <p>With this knowledge, I can better support my supervisors and colleagues in my role within this organization.”</p>
<p>“Why do you want to work here?”</p>	<p>Employers often ask this question to determine whether you took time to research the company and to learn why you see yourself as a good fit.</p> <p>The best way to prepare for this question is to do your homework and learn about the products, services, mission, history, and culture of this workplace.</p> <p>In your answer, mention the aspects of the company that appeals to you and align with your career goals.</p> <p>Explain why you are looking for these things in an employer.</p>	<p>“I want to work with Cornerstone because your mission of helping individuals with disabilities is inspiring.</p> <p>I am sensitive to the challenges of those with disabilities, and I have always championed disability awareness and respect.</p> <p>Working for an organization that supports my core values is a dream for me.</p> <p>Working here would allow me an opportunity to contribute to a very worthy mission.”</p>
<p>“What interests you about this role?”</p>	<p>Like the previous question, employers often include this question to make sure you understand the role and give you an opportunity to highlight your relevant skills.</p> <p>In addition to thoroughly reading the job description, it can be helpful</p>	<p>“I like to help others. I feel a sense of accomplishment when I have assisted someone through a difficult process.</p> <p>As a team leader, I often helped my fellow staff members navigate the processes for enrolling in company</p>

Question	Explanation	Example Response
	<p>to compare the role requirements against your skills and experience.</p> <p>This is where you can use your transferable skills.</p>	<p>benefits, which helped them, and their family.</p> <p>I believe that same opportunity for helpfulness can be found in this role as a personal banker, because many times individuals are concerned about their finances, but are unaware of the options available to them.”</p>
<p>“Can you tell me more about the time on your resume when you were not working?”</p>	<p>It is reasonable that an employer will notice career gaps on your resume and want to hear more. Be prepared for this question.</p> <p>Explain the time off and, if true, reassure the hiring manager why you won't be doing it again.</p> <p>Share the value you picked up along the way. Highlight new skills you acquired. Emphasize why you are returning to work now.</p> <p>Keep your explanation short. Have a finish line so you don't trail off into embarrassed silence.</p> <p>Be confident.</p> <p>Move on. Don't overshare. If not properly prepared, a moment of panic could lead to you to divulging way too much information.</p>	<p>“Coincident with a move, I decided to take some courses and develop professional interests.</p> <p>During that time, I was involved with several volunteer organizations and stayed informed about the industry. I learned Microsoft programs and became a whiz at Excel. I served as Treasurer of a volunteer non-profit group and found I also enjoy bookkeeping.</p> <p>These skills added to my work experience, make me a strong candidate for your accounting assistant position.</p> <p>I am excited to join a new team and ready to contribute to your organization.”</p>

The next section will provide a simple and common method for organizing your examples and interview answers as we discuss behavioral and hypothetical interview questions.

## The STAR Method

The STAR Method		
<b>Situation</b>		Think of a specific time or circumstance when you used this skill; define the general context of that situation.
<b>Task</b>		Name the key objective you were responsible for in that situation or the challenges/obstacles you had to overcome.
<b>Action</b>		Describe what you did to complete the assigned task; emphasize the skills and resources involved.
<b>Result</b>		Summarize the outcome and how you specifically contributed; describe the improvements and/or benefits.

Slide 16

STAR is an acronym for Situation, Task, Action, and Result. Develop answers to possible examples using the STAR method to respond to interview questions.

- The STAR method is a four-step technique that will help you discuss how you used your skills to achieve goals. It provides a concise narrative that gives a fuller picture of your competencies and how you previously put them into practice.
- Incorporate evidence, specific examples, data, and anecdotes to illustrate your points.
- Use numbers to quantify your accomplishments, where applicable.

The STAR Method		
<b>Situation</b>		Think of a specific time or circumstance when you used this skill; define the general context of that situation.
<b>Task</b>		Name the key objective you were responsible for in that situation or the challenges/obstacles you had to overcome.
<b>Action</b>		Describe what you did to complete the assigned task; emphasize the skills and resources involved.
<b>Result</b>		Summarize the outcome and how you specifically contributed; describe the improvements and/or benefits.

### Behavioral Interview Questions

These questions request descriptions about how you have behaved in past situations and are considered predictors for how you might behave on the job in the future. Behavioral questions are more probing and more specific than traditional interview questions. The best way to answer behavioral questions is by using the STAR method.

## Tell me about a difficult work situation and how you overcame it.



We had a big hurricane last year and most of my department was tasked with the hurricane relief. I was left behind with two other team members to see walk-in patients.



My department was supposed to be back that morning at 10:00 a.m., but their truck broke down.



Our peak time in the clinic was from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., so we were extremely short on staff to handle the walk-in patients. To help as many patients as possible, I created a triage method to assess patients' levels of pain.



Once we identified their levels of pain, we categorized the pain levels and saw the patients with the highest level of pain. I rescheduled the patients with pain levels of 0–3 to a later time to relieve the bottleneck effect in the waiting room.

Slide 17

## Give an example of a goal you didn't meet and how you handled it.



I was working on two major projects with my team and a new opportunity came in. This opportunity was the one I really wanted to work on. Out of excitement—without thinking—I accepted it.



I didn't take into consideration the other two projects that were due soon. Work began to pile up, and I was feeling under the pressure. I had to step back and decided that I had to prioritize.



At the end, I had to let go of the new project because I was not able to complete that project in the fashion that I would have liked. I was disappointed, but I know that was the right thing to do.



This situation definitely taught me the importance of prioritizing and time management.

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Here is a list of some behavioral interview questions.

Question	Explanation	Example Response
<p>“Can you tell me about a difficult work situation and how you overcame it?”</p>	<p>This question is often used to assess how well you perform under pressure, as well as your problem-solving abilities.</p> <p>Keep in mind that stories are more memorable than facts and figures.</p> <p>This is also an excellent opportunity to show your human side and how you are willing to go the extra mile without being asked.</p> <p>Use the STAR method to guide your response.</p>	<p>SITUATION: “We had a big hurricane last year and most of my department was tasked with the hurricane relief. I was left behind with two other team members to see walk-in patients.”</p> <p>TASK: “My department was supposed to be back that morning at 10:00 a.m., but their truck broke down. Our peak time in the clinic was from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., so we were extremely short on staff to handle the walk-in patients.”</p> <p>ACTION: “To help as many patients as possible, I created a triage method to assess patients’ levels of pain. Once we identified their levels of pain, we categorized the pain levels and saw the patients with the highest level of pain.”</p> <p>RESULT: “I rescheduled the patients with pain levels of 0-3 to a later time to relieve the bottleneck effect in the waiting room.”</p>
<p>“Give an example of a goal you didn't meet and how you handled it.”</p>	<p>Employers want to assess how you handle disappointments and how you value personal accountability.</p> <p>Make sure your example shows that you took personal accountability and focused on what you could do differently next time.</p>	<p>TASK: “I was working on two major projects with my team and a new opportunity came in.</p> <p>This opportunity was the one I really wanted to work on. Out of excitement—without thinking—I accepted it.”</p> <p>SITUATION: “I didn’t take into consideration the other two projects that were due soon. Work began to pile up, and I was feeling</p>

Question	Explanation	Example Response
		<p>under the pressure. I had to step back and decided that I had to prioritize.”</p> <p>ACTION: “At the end, I had to let go of the new project because I was not able to complete that project in the fashion that I would have liked. I was disappointed, but I know that was the right thing to do.”</p> <p>RESULT: “This situation definitely taught me the importance of prioritizing and time management.”</p>
<p>“Tell me about a time you needed to get information from someone who wasn’t very responsive.</p> <p>What did you do?”</p>	<p>The employer wants to know how you work in a group setting and how your personality would fit in with their team.</p> <p>You need to give an example that shows that you are persistent and able to follow through but at the same time you are a team player.</p>	<p>TASK: “At the end of the month, I am responsible for submitting our department total customer head count.”</p> <p>SITUATION: “I needed my coworker’s total customer number that he’d seen that month to complete my report. I sent out a reminder email two weeks prior to the deadline, then a gentle follow up email three days later.”</p> <p>ACTION: “When I didn’t get a response from him, I checked in with him personally. I would always try to see if I could assist my coworker because I know sometimes things would fall through the cracks.”</p> <p>RESULT: “He was able to verbally provide the numbers needed to complete the report on time. Our team maintained our 100% on-time reporting.”</p>

## Hypothetical or Situational Interview Questions

Hypothetical questions are the type of interview questions in which the interviewer puts you in an imaginary and experimental situation to assess how you would handle that situation.

### If I hired you today, what would you accomplish first?



If you hired me today, I would be truly honored.



The first thing I will do is understand the organization culture, because every organization has their own special way of doing things. I need time to assess how things are done here and time to build relationships with my team and my supervisor.



I will have a meeting with my supervisor to find out what are the most critical projects that my supervisor wants me to tackle first.



Then I will plan and strategize what is the best way to accomplish that goal.

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### How would you approach a task you've never done before?



In my previous position as Project Support Officer, I was often challenged with new projects requiring me to step outside of my comfort zone.



Because of these opportunities, I developed a systematic approach to each new challenge.



The **first** thing I do is try to collect as much information I can about the tasks to ensure I understand what is needed from me. **Then** I break the tasks down into manageable steps. I would also undertake internet research and consultations with colleagues who had previous experience with the task. **After** I had completed each piece of work, I would always double-check the tasks with my manager to ensure I'm on the right track and to get feedback.



I have received praise from my supervisors as I used this approach in the past.

Slide 20

Here are a few hypothetical/situational interview questions.

Question	Explanation	Example Response
<p>“If I hired you today, what would you accomplish first?”</p>	<p>This question will examine your critical thinking skill and how you will fit in with the organization culture.</p> <p>You want to convey that you will observe your new role and set goals according to what your supervisor wants you to accomplish first.</p>	<p><b>SITUATION:</b> “If you hired me today, I would be truly honored.</p> <p><b>TASK:</b> The first thing I will do is understand the organization culture, because every organization has their own special way of doing things. I need time to assess how things are done here and time to build relationships with my team and my supervisor.</p> <p><b>ACTION:</b> I will have a meeting with my supervisor to find out what are the most critical projects that my supervisor wants me to tackle first.</p> <p><b>PLANNED RESULT:</b> Then I will plan and strategize what is the best way to accomplish that goal.”</p>
<p>“The work quality of one of your staff has dropped off precipitously. What would you do to address the situation?”</p>	<p>This question is to help employers identify your leadership skills.</p> <p>You want to share your leadership skills on how you can resolve the problem and highlight your discipline and problem-solving ability.</p>	<p><b>SITUATION:</b> “I gained a lot of experience leading teams and groups in my past job, and I’ve encountered this situation a few times.”</p> <p><b>TASK:</b> “The key first step to dealing with an underperforming colleague is honest communication. “</p> <p><b>ACTION:</b> “In one of my past experiences, I met with the staff privately, explained my concerns about the quality of his work, and asked him to explain the cause of the problem. My employee said he knew that his work had been subpar lately but was afraid to address the issue with me.”</p> <p><b>RESULT:</b> “We came up with a plan to address his performance and I provided him with the support he needed.”</p>

Question	Explanation	Example Response
<p>“How would you approach a task you’ve never done before?”</p>	<p>Your employer wants to assess whether you have problem-solving skills and whether you can approach new tasks intelligently.</p>	<p><b>SITUATION:</b> “In my previous position as Project Support Officer, I was often challenged with new projects requiring me to step outside of my comfort zone.”</p> <p><b>TASK:</b> “Because of these opportunities, I developed a systematic approach to each new challenge.”</p> <p><b>ACTION:</b> “The first thing I do is try to collect as much information I can about the tasks to ensure I understand what is needed from me. Then I break the tasks down into manageable steps. I would also undertake internet research and consultations with colleagues who had previous experience with the task.</p> <p>After I had completed each piece of work, I would always double-check the tasks with my manager to ensure I’m on the right track and to get feedback.”</p> <p><b>RESULT:</b> “I have received praise from my supervisors as I used this approach in the past.”</p>

**Activity: Interview Questions Practice**

## Slide 21

Interview questions vary depending on the job, but typically, they are open-ended allowing you the opportunity to tailor your answer to the position. Read the following questions and the coaching guidelines in parentheses. Write down your examples using the Situation, Task, Action, Result (STAR) method as much as possible. Later in this workshop, you will compare your answers to the Model Interview, and you will have this information to use during practice sessions after this workshop.

Tell me about yourself. (Your interviewers will likely start out with a question about yourself and your background to get to know you. Start out by giving them an **overview** of your current position or activities, then provide the most important and relevant highlights from your background that make you most qualified for the role.)

What are your greatest strengths? (This question gives you an opportunity to talk about both your technical and soft skills. To answer, share qualities and personal attributes and then relate them back to the role for which you are interviewing.)

What do you consider your most significant challenge? (It can feel awkward to discuss your weaknesses in an environment where you are expected to focus on your accomplishments. However, when answered correctly, sharing your weaknesses can show that you are self-aware and want to continuously get better at your job—traits that are extremely attractive to many employers. Remember to start with the weakness and then discuss the measures you have taken to improve. This way, you are finishing your answer on a positive note.)

Why do you believe you are qualified for this position? (Pick two or three main factors about the job and about you that are most relevant. Discuss with specific details. Select a technical skill, a specific management skill [organizing, staffing, planning] and a personal success story.)

### Stage 3: Candidate Questions

## Stage 3: Candidate questions

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Your goal at this stage is to:

- Demonstrate your interest in the position.
- Obtain answers to any questions you have about the job and company.
- Do not discuss salary or benefits at this point.

#### Slide 22

After asking several questions of you, interviewers usually ask if you have questions for them. Interviewers listen to your answers to determine your level of interest in the job and your knowledge of the company. Your questions provide you with information that will help you decide if it is a good job fit for you.

Interviewers also learn about you, and remember you, by the questions you ask. They respect candidates who think about their choices carefully, and they appreciate knowing you did your homework. Ask two to three questions to gauge the organization's fit to your standards and criteria. Ideally have six to seven questions prepared and be aware of questions not to ask.

**Smart interview questions to ask:**

- After hearing my answers to your questions, do you have any concerns about my ability to do the job?
- If I get this position, what will be most important for me to do to ensure that you and the team are successful?
- What opportunities will I have to learn those skills?
- What are the next steps in the selection process?
  - How soon do you plan to fill this position?
  - Is it okay if I follow up with you next week?
- What are the greatest challenges of this position?
- Would you describe what a typical week on the job consists of?
- Are there any questions to which I did not adequately respond?
- Who is the supervisor for the position?
- What do you expect me to accomplish in the first six months?
- How would you describe the work environment?
- Do your employees work individually or as a team?
- Is this a newly created position or has it existed for some time?
- What further education or training does the company consider important for my future progress?
- What are the department's goals for the year?

**Questions you SHOULD NOT ask during an interview:**

- What is the salary for this position?
- When can I take time off for vacation?
- Can you tell me about your company's benefits?
- Do you offer any flextime options?
- How long will it take to get promoted?

## How to Answer Salary Expectation Questions

Salary questions are tricky since you want to get the highest salary you can without jeopardizing your shot at the job. When a recruiter or hiring manager asks, “What are your salary expectations?” there are a few ways you can answer:

Options	You can say...
<p><b>Delay discussion of salary.</b> Show the interviewer your skills and worth by explaining your accomplishments before discussing salary.</p>	<p>“I’m looking for a competitive package, but I’d like to know a little more about the job requirements first.”</p>
<p><b>Turn the question around on the interviewer.</b> Ask what the range is for the job or ask to hear the interviewer’s best offer.</p>	<p>“I would want a salary that’s consistent with current employees at the same level. What is your pay range for this position based on my skills and experience level?”</p>
<p><b>Provide a range.</b> Give the amount as a range. Keep in mind, however, that the employer may opt for the lower end of your range, so make sure your target number is as close to the bottom number as possible.</p>	<p>“Thank you for asking. Based on my research, an annual salary between \$67,000 and \$72,000 is in line with the industry average and reflects my skills and experience level well. I am, however, flexible and open to hearing about the company’s compensation expectations for this position.”</p>
<p><b>Provide a range – alternate answer.</b></p>	<p>“I am seeking a position that pays between \$75,000 and \$80,000 annually, but I am open to negotiate salary depending on benefits, bonuses, equity, stock options, and other opportunities.”</p>

## Stage 4: Closing

### Stage 4: Closing

<p>Your goal at this stage is to do three things:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Say thank you. Show your appreciation for the opportunity.</li><li>• Confirm your interest in the position.</li><li>• Set a timeline for follow-up.</li></ul>	<p>With this in mind:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Be positive, SMILE!</li><li>• Leave the best possible impression.</li></ul>
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### Slide 23

When they signal the interview is over, end on a positive note. There are three vital things to do in the closing stage of an interview.

First, thank them for the invitation to interview. If you are in a video interview, it is especially important to look into your camera during this stage.

Second, ask for the job. This does not mean you say, “Can I have this job?” Rather it is an opportunity to restate your interest in the position. An example would be, to say, “After learning more about this position and your company, I think I would be an asset and would welcome the opportunity to become a member of your team.”

Finally, set a timeline for follow-up. You can inquire as to the next steps in the process or when might be a good time to follow-up with the company. After leaving, give yourself a deadline for following up with a thank you note or information that was requested of you.

Make a gracious exit, smile and be pleasant, and on your way out, say goodbye to anyone you see who may have helped you.

**Activity: Model Interview with Observer Evaluation**

<h2>Model Interview Observer Evaluation</h2> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Observe an Interview Demonstration.</li><li>• Make notes on the Observer Evaluation form.</li></ul>	
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Slide 24

A mock interview provides you the opportunity to practice difficult questions, develop interview strategies, and improve your communication skills. Being prepared calms your nerves and allows your personality to shine through in the interview.

We will conduct a demonstration interview to model each stage of the interview.

**Activity: Model Interview**

The following roles are:

- The facilitator as Candidate.
- A volunteer participant as Employer.
- Any/all participants as Observer(s).

**The Scenario:** The Candidate is applying for a position as an Office Coordinator for a Real Estate Team. One years' experience with QuickBooks is preferred. Office duties include following up on leads, calling clients, and setting up appointments. Must be proficient in Excel, Outlook, and Word. This job is ideal for someone who is people oriented. This Company describes its culture as Aggressive (competitive and growth-oriented) and Team-oriented (cooperative and collaborative).

The Candidate and Employer will role-play the interview.

Following the responses from the Candidate, participants, acting as Observers, will use the Interview Observer Evaluation form to evaluate the overall interview performance of the Candidate and provide feedback on the quality of the response.

This activity is to establish a baseline in interview performance as you continue to practice all the interview stages after completing the workshop. Located in the Appendix of the Participant Guide are additional interview preparation websites.

### **Model Interview Activity Instructions**

Demonstrate all four stages of an interview. The Employer will be played by a workshop volunteer.

**Set-Up:** All cameras should be turned off except the Employer and Candidate. The Candidate should be ready to answer questions as if in an actual interview. The Employer will follow the below script for questions to pose. Many interviews are scripted so that companies treat every candidate the same and ask the same questions of everyone.

#### **Stage 1 Introduction:**

Employer – “Thank you for joining us today for this interview. How are you doing?”

Candidate – Answers the question.

Employer - “Did you receive all of the information needed from our human resources department?”

Candidate – Answers the question.

#### **Stage 2 Employer Questions:**

Employer – “Tell us about yourself.”

Candidate – Answers the question.

Employer - “Our Office uses QuickBooks, and I didn’t find on your resume any previous experience using QuickBooks. Why do you believe you are qualified for this position?”

Candidate – Answers the question.

Employer - “Our office culture is very competitive and growth-oriented. But we are also team oriented and encourage an atmosphere of cooperation and collaboration. Good employees can take the initiative and get the job done. How would you describe yourself in terms of this statement?”

Candidate – Answers the question.

**Stage 3 Candidate Questions:**

Employer - “Do you have any questions for me?” Role play the answer to their question.

Candidate – Answers the question.

**Stage 4 Closing:**

Employer - “Thank you for joining us today. It was nice to meet you.”

Both - Role play final comments.

Use the evaluation form below as you play the role of an Observer.

Interview Observer Evaluation	Yes	No
<b>Stage 1: Introduction</b>		
Did the candidate introduce him or herself professionally?  Comments:		
Was the interview atmosphere professional?  Comments:		
Was the candidate dressed appropriately?  Comments:		
Did the candidate make eye contact? Or look directly into the camera?  Comments:		
Did the candidate make appropriate small talk?  Comments:		

Interview Observer Evaluation	Yes	No
<b>Stage 2: Employer Questions</b>		
Did the candidate answer the employer’s questions appropriately and adequately?  Comments:		
Did the candidate use the STAR method?  Comments:		
Did the candidate stumble or pause for too long?  Comments:		
Were there questions that the candidate was unable to answer?  Comments:		
<b>Stage3: Candidate Questions</b>		
Did the candidate ask appropriate questions?  Comments:		
<b>Stage4: Closing</b>		
Did the candidate thank the interviewer?  Comments:		
Did the candidate restate their interest in the position or ask for the job?  Comments:		
Did the candidate ask about follow-up or next steps in the hiring process?  Comments:		
Did the candidate graciously exit?  Comments:		

## Individual Interview Practice

- Conduct a mock interview using questions in the appendix for other resources.
- Use the Interview Self-Review Checklist following job interviews.



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### Interview Practice and Evaluation

The more you practice, the more confident you feel. Continue practicing your interview answers. Now that you have written down answers to the interview questions, practice answering them aloud. Use a recording device and answer the way you would in an interview. Listen to your answers. Use the Interview Observer Evaluation form in the Appendix to assess yourself.

Enlist your mentor, friends, or family to do mock interviews with you. Have them play the role of an Employer. Provide them with the job listing you are interviewing for and a copy of your resume. Ask them to use the Interview Observer Evaluation form to assess your mock interview performance.

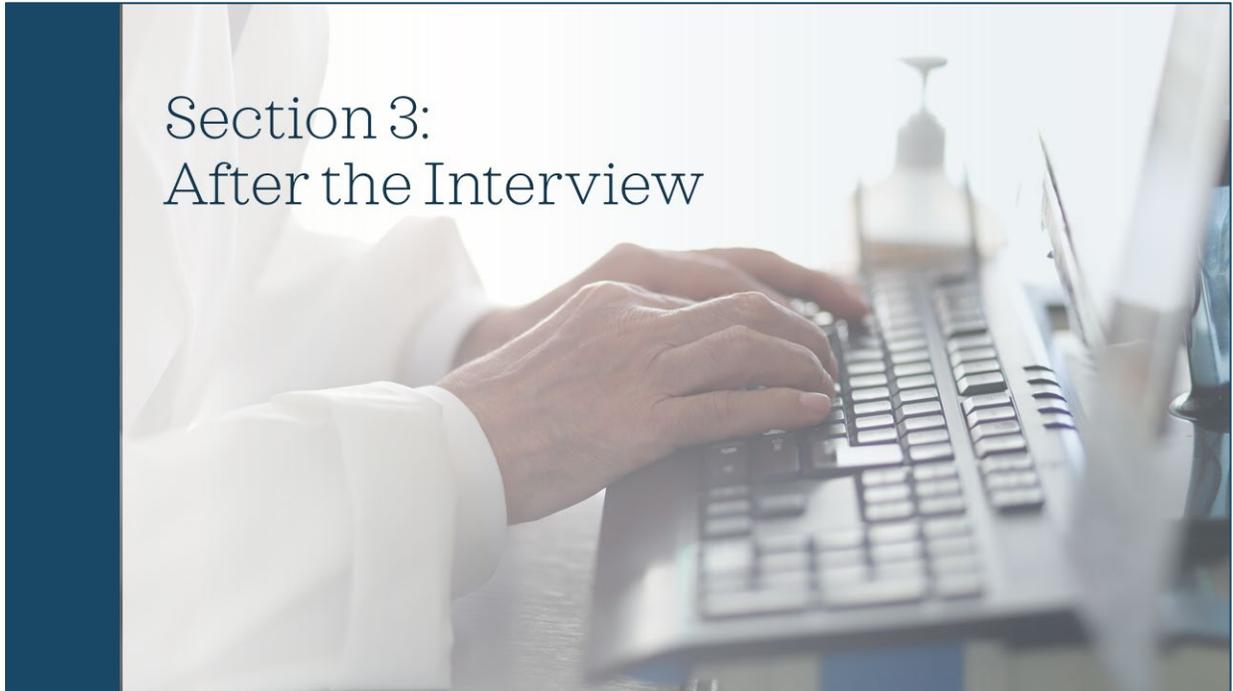
In addition to practicing with your friends, family, and mentors, you can use online simulators. There are a variety of online paid and free interview simulators if interested.

### Post Interview Self-Evaluation

- During your job search, you will want to learn from your job interview experiences and increase chances for success. After each interview, use the post-interview checklist below to keep notes.

Post Interview Checklist	Date of Interview	
Company name:	Date to call back:	
Interviewer's name:	Date of decision:	
Was I on time (10-15 minutes early)?	Yes ____	No ____
Did I dress appropriately?	Yes ____	No ____
Do I need to send additional information?	Yes ____	No ____
Did I bring reference list/letters of recommendation?	Yes ____	No ____
Did I bring appropriate work samples?	Yes ____	No ____
Did I give a positive indication of my interest in the job?	Yes ____	No ____
Did I mention who referred me?	Yes ____	No ____
What was the interviewer's general impression of my resume?		
What did the employer seem particularly interested in?		
What questions did I have the most difficulty answering?		
What questions did I answer most effectively?		
What can I do to improve my performance?		

## Section 3: After the Interview



Slide 26

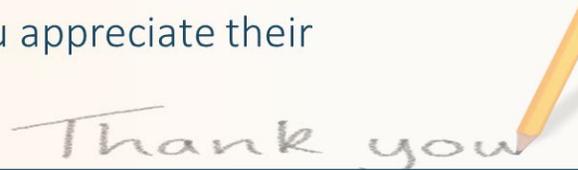
### Follow-Up

Follow up immediately after the interview (the same day) by sending a thank-you email or a handwritten thank-you note to your interviewer(s). It is a good idea to obtain contact information from any interviewer while you are there for an interview so that you will have their names, job titles, and contact information.

The thank-you note gives you the opportunity to briefly add anything you forgot to say in the interview, mention important information discussed in your interview, reinforce your interest in the job, and let interviewers know you appreciate their time. It will also help distinguish you from other candidates. Thank-you notes should be brief and to the point, like these examples:

## Send a Follow-up Letter or Email

- Follow up immediately.
- Thank-you notes should be brief and to the point.
- Add anything you forgot to say in the interview.
- Reinforce important information.
- State your interest in the job.
- Let the interviewers know you appreciate their time.



Thank you

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### After Interview Thank You Examples

#### Thank You Email

Dear Mr. Williams:

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to interview with you yesterday. The information you shared with me about Washington Mutual Bank clarifies the impact of loan officers to your overall mission. I am excited about the possibility of applying my education and experience to this position with your bank. The expansion and public lending plans are especially intriguing, and I look forward to helping the bank enter the new market.

If I can provide you with any additional information, please let me know. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Blair Henderson  
(916) 999-9999

**Thank You Letter**

**Judy R. Smith**  
**110 Logan Street ◦ Los Angeles, CA 95987 ◦ (916) 999-9999 ◦ jrsmith@email.com**

February 2, 20XX

Ms. Martha Anderson, President  
Carrington Cable Corporation  
5555 Cable Boulevard  
Los Angeles, CA 95999

Dear Ms. Anderson:

Thank you for taking the time to interview me this afternoon. The Cable Installer position at CCC really seems like a perfect fit for my skills and experience. I believe that I could be a valuable addition to CCC while you continue to grow your customer base.

I also enjoyed our discussion about local fishing spots, and I am excited to try your suggestions.

Thank you again for your time, and I look forward to hearing from you next Thursday.

Sincerely,

Judy R. Smith

Another opportunity for follow-up occurs if you are advised that you are not selected for the job. Think about sending a note or email expressing that while you are disappointed not to be selected, you are still interested in the company.

## Section 4: Interview Types and Tips



### Slide 28

We have discussed the different stages that all interviews progress through. These stages are universal regardless of the type of interview you may be attending. It is important to know there are different types of interviews and we will present additional tips for success that are unique to the interview type.

For all interview types, there are common tips to remember that we have already discussed, such as:

- Research the company and your interviewer.
- Re-read the job description.
- Review your resume and practice your responses to common interview questions.
- Have questions prepared to ask and be prepared to take notes.
- Plan and ensure that your clothing is clean and pressed the day before.
- Practice proper body language.
- Be prepared to share examples of your work, if needed.

## Types of Interviews



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A company interviews to find the right person for the job; an individual interviews to find the right company and job fit. Employers may conduct interviews in a multi-stage process that occurs in a variety of formats. Interviewing is often a multi-stage and multi-step process that could occur in a variety of different formats. Companies use the following methods to conduct interviews:

- Phone Interviews
- Live Video Interview
- Face-to-Face Interview
- Panel Interview
- Meal Interview
- Group Interview

## Phone Interview

<b>Phone Interview</b>	A phone interview is often the first step in the process. A phone screen can be quick and unscheduled.
<b>Live Video Interview</b>	Live video interviews take place online with the employer and the candidate.
<b>Face-to-Face Interview</b>	A face-to-face interview usually follows a successful phone interview. You meet with one or two people at a time.

### Slide 30

A phone interview is often the first step in the process. Prior to the phone interview, a company or recruiter may call to screen an applicant to verify basic qualifications for the position. A phone interview is typically more in depth, asking traditional interview questions.

### Phone Screening vs. Phone Interview

A phone screening is quick and can be unscheduled and can be as short as 10 minutes. During the call, employers may verify basic qualifications, clarify outstanding application questions, or confirm your continued interest in the position. The goal of this interview is to create a shortlist of qualified candidates. Not every employer conducts a phone screening interview, but if your employer does, this is when it will be determined if you are qualified and will move to the next phase of the hiring process.

If you are driving and receive the call unexpectedly, be sure to stop and give full attention to the call. Multi-tasking is not appropriate during an interview.

A phone interview may be conducted by a recruiter, the hiring manager, or multiple hiring decision-makers. During a phone interview more in-depth traditional interview questions are asked, and you have more of an opportunity to ask questions. Typically, a phone interview is scheduled in advance, often after the phone screening interview, giving you a chance to prepare. A phone interview can last 30 minutes or longer.

**Suggestions to prepare for a successful phone interview:**

- Dress for the interview, as it creates a professional attitude that is not visible but comes through in your manner and voice over the phone.
- Treat the phone interview as you would an in-person interview.
- Be in a quiet place where you can concentrate.
- Confirm your phone has good connection and ample charge.
- Have your company, industry, and job research materials with you.
- Mention your research during the interview to demonstrate your understanding of the business.
- Smile during the call. Feel free to stand up. All these things make a difference in the projection and quality of your voice.
- While you can use notes while in a phone interview, be sure your conversation is natural, not monotone and you are not reading your notes word-for-word.

**Live Video Interview**

Becoming increasingly popular, live video interviews take place online between the employer and the candidate. In a one-way video interview, the employer conducts the interview using an interview website or application by creating a series of questions that job candidates respond to while recording the answers. Use these tips to prepare for a video interview regardless of the format (live or one-way):

- Check your tech to be very familiar with the software settings, webcam, and microphone.
- Dress appropriately from head to toe.
- Have a professional and uncluttered background.
- Have appropriate lighting and do not sit with your back to a window.
- Position the webcam at eye level so you are looking directly at the camera and can address the interviewer.
- Do a trial run with a friend to ensure you can log in and your equipment works.
- When confirming details of the interview, ensure you have a contact phone number for the company should you encounter trouble with the platform.
- Be in a quiet room with no distractions, such as cell phones, clock chimes, pets, children, etc.
- Have an electronic version of your resume available to share via email, screen share or chat during the interview.

## Face-to-Face Interview

A face-to-face interview usually follows a successful phone interview. You meet with one or two people at a time. Interviewers are typically recruiters or hiring managers. Prepare for a successful face-to-face interview with these suggestions:

- Scout the interview location the day before. Anticipate possible delays in traffic.
- Arrive at least 15 minutes early to your interview.

## Panel Interview

<b>Panel Interview</b>	A panel interview involves two or more interviewers sitting on a panel or committee.
<b>Meal Interview</b>	A meal interview is useful for jobs that require client interaction.
<b>Group Interview</b>	Employers typically use this type of interview when staffing numerous job openings at once like hospitality jobs or seasonal retail jobs.

### Slide 31

A panel interview involves two or more interviewers sitting on a panel or committee (somewhat like a promotion board). Interviewers may include HR representatives, hiring managers, and team leads. The candidate answers questions from multiple people on the panel. Follow these guidelines to prepare for a panel or committee interview:

- Monitor your body language and eye contact. Be ready to maintain eye contact with the whole panel, paying slightly more attention to the person who asked the question.
- Bring a copy of your resume for each person on the panel, a notebook, and a pen.
- If applicable, be prepared with professional examples of your work in a presentable folder or portfolio.

**Meal Interview**

A meal interview is useful for jobs that require client interaction. The employer can observe you and evaluate your social skills.

In this casual environment, it is easy to get comfortable, so remember, this is a job interview. Maintain your professionalism. Prepare for a meal interview using these guidelines:

- Carefully select your meal (it should not be too pricey or too messy).
- Avoid ordering alcohol (even if the interviewer orders a drink first).
- Be polite to everyone you encounter, such as the wait staff.
- Practice good manners.

**Group Interview**

A group interview includes multiple candidates. Employers mostly utilize this interview type when staffing numerous job openings at once like hospitality jobs or seasonal retail jobs.

A group interview may serve as a screening for candidates and can be more like a presentation about the company and the challenges of the job. In this case, employers typically call candidates of interest back for a face-to-face or panel interview after the group interview. Follow these tips for a group interview:

- Bring copies of your resume, a notebook, and a pen.
- Treat everyone you encounter with respect.
- The employer may be evaluating how well you interact with others.

# In Conclusion



## Slide 32

Because it involves being evaluated by potential employers, interviews are naturally somewhat stressful events. However, you can greatly minimize the stress and build confidence by doing your research and by rehearsing the entire process. Remember, an employer is showing interest in YOU by deciding to interview you. By doing everything you can to prepare, you will show them that they made the right decision.

**Thank You for Attending**

Thank You  
for Attending

“You miss 100% of the shots you don’t take.”  
--Wayne Gretzky

Feel free to provide any additional thoughts, comments or suggestions  
by email to [milspouse@dol.gov](mailto:milspouse@dol.gov).

## Slide 33

Thank you for your participation and your service. The DOL recognizes your dedication and the sacrifices that you, your service member and your family members make each day to protect and defend our freedom. We are committed to supporting you in your transition and beyond.

Visit <https://www.dol.gov/teamsworkshops> to register for all TEAMS Workshops and download the Website Guide.

Feel free to provide any additional thoughts, comments, or suggestions to DOL TAP directly by emailing them at [MilSpouse@dol.gov](mailto:MilSpouse@dol.gov).

# Appendix

## Interview Attire for Women

Women's Clothing	Business Professional	Business Casual
<b>Suits</b>	<p>A solid or pinstripe suit is best. A conservative pants suit or a skirt with a coordinating solid jacket is appropriate. A one-piece business dress with a matching jacket is also acceptable interview attire.</p> <p>Colors most suitable for an interview include charcoal, gray, black, brown, and navy blue. Jacket should be long sleeve and able to be buttoned. The skirt should be no shorter than 2" above the knee.</p>	<p>Full suit is not daily attire. Can include a coordinated blazer or cardigan sweater, if desired. Dress, skirt, or pants are all acceptable.</p> <p>Colors should be appropriate based on research of the company.</p>
<b>Blouses</b>	Blouse or shell should be solid in color.	Same guidance as business professional.
<b>Accessories</b>	<p>If you carry a briefcase, do not carry a purse. You may want to bring a professional portfolio to hold copies of your resume and take notes.</p> <p>Belts should complement or match the shoes you wear.</p>	Same guidance as business professional.
<b>Jewelry</b>	When it comes to jewelry, less is more. Minimize the number of rings that you wear, possibly only an engagement ring or wedding bands.	Same guidance as business professional.

Women's Clothing	Business Professional	Business Casual
	Wearing a necklace and earrings are acceptable if they are subdued.	
<b>Makeup</b>	Natural is the key word concerning makeup. Your eye makeup, blush, and lipstick should be subtle.	Same guidance as business professional.
<b>Perfume</b>	No perfume or strong-smelling deodorants.	Same guidance as business professional.

## Interview Attire for Men

Men's Clothing	Business Professional	Business Casual
<b>Suits</b>	The best colors for suits are navy, black, and charcoal through light gray.	Full suit is not daily attire. Seasonal sport coat, if desired. Slacks or khakis, but not jeans.
<b>Shirts</b>	Always wear a long-sleeved shirt that is white, cream, or pale blue, preferably a solid color without stripes.	Shirts with open collar such as a golf shirt or button front dress shirt.
<b>Ties</b>	<p>The tie should complement your suit, but not match it. The width of your tie should be between 2¾" and 3 ½". The tie should extend to your trouser belt, the size of the knot should be small. Never wear a bow tie.</p> <p>Bow tie guidance – "So it's better to keep it not-so-extreme and not-unusual during your first impression (your interview). If you're "a bow-tie guy," save the bow tie for week three of your new job. In the meantime, if you</p>	Tie is not daily attire.

Men's Clothing	Business Professional	Business Casual
	<p>must wear a tie to your interview, make sure it's one that can be Half Windsor-ed.”</p> <p>According to Derek Loosvelt, <i>10 Things Men Should Never Wear to an Interview</i>. Note: The shape of the full-Windsor is the same as that of the half-Windsor, but it is just larger than the half-Windsor.</p>	
<b>Shoes</b>	Shoes should be black, burgundy, or brown leather, depending on the color of the suit.	Shoes can be loafers and usually brown, black, or muted colors.
<b>Socks</b>	Socks should complement the suit: blue, black, gray, or brown	Socks are required and often complement the pants.
<b>Accessories</b>	<p>Avoid wearing religious or political insignias.</p> <p>The watch you wear should be plain and simple. Belts should match and complement the shoes you wear.</p> <p>You may want to bring a professional portfolio to hold copies of your resume and to take notes.</p>	Same guidance as business professional.
<b>Jewelry</b>	Minimize your jewelry. A wedding band, a tie tack, and a small pair of cuff links are appropriate.	Same guidance as business professional.
<b>Cologne</b>	Do not wear aftershave, cologne, or strong-smelling deodorants.	Same guidance as business professional.

## More Interview Question Practice

- **Have you ever accomplished something you did not think you could?**

Show you are goal-oriented and have a strong work ethic. Provide a good example of when you overcame difficulties to succeed.

- **What do you like or dislike about your current position?**

Interviewer may be trying to determine your compatibility with the open position. Avoid complaining about your dislikes and keep the answer positive.

- **How do you handle pressure? Do you like or dislike these situations?**

High achievers tend to perform well in high-pressure situations. Conversely, this question also could imply that the position is pressure packed. If you perform well under stress, provide a good example with details that give an overview of the stress situation. Try to relay the situation as a challenge rather than focusing on your ability to handle pressure. The interviewer will see you turn a negative into a positive situation.

- **Good employees can take the initiative and get the job done. Can you describe yourself in terms of this statement?**

A proactive, results-oriented person does not need constant supervision. To convince the interviewer you know how to take the initiative, you must describe a situation in which you were self-motivated. Try to discuss at least one example in depth. Demonstrate a strong work ethic and creativity.

- **What is the most difficult aspect of your career? How would you have done things differently in hindsight?**

This is a question to find out if you are introspective and if you learn from your mistakes. The right answer indicates an open, flexible personality. Do not be afraid to talk about negative results or problem issues, particularly if you have learned from them. Dynamic, high-performance individuals learn from mistakes. End your story on a positive note.

## Additional Common Questions for Management/Leaders

For those seeking management-level positions, the following questions will help you prepare for your interview. These questions are designed to see how well you relate to your peers, as well as those who work for you. Your answer is a great opportunity to speak about your strengths. Ideally, talk about the characteristics that make you an excellent manager.

- **“Describe your process for delegating tasks to your team.”**

This is one of the more popular manager interview questions because, as a manager, delegation is a regular part of the job. Managers who delegate well are more productive, and so are their teams.

- **“How would you handle a project that was running over budget?”**

This question is asked for two reasons: to learn how you handle stress and to understand your budgeting skills. Your interviewer will want to see how you prioritize tasks and which soft skills you use to reign in the cost and make the rest of the project run efficiently.

- **“How do you keep your team motivated?”**

As a leader, your team looks to you set the tone of morale and motivation. In your answer, give specific examples of ways that you provided positive reinforcement to your team, encouraged them to take the initiative, and understood each person’s strengths.

- **“What is your management style?”**

The best answer offers a broad scope rather than a specific answer. In your response, highlight your ability to handle situations and problems as a manager while talking about real experiences. You will need to define what a good manager is and provide an example of how you use that skill as a leader.

- **“How do you support an employee who is not meeting expectations?”**

Interviewers ask this question to determine how you will work with a direct report to guide them back onto the path of success. They will look for methods, such as giving clear feedback to an employee and then jointly developing an action plan that supports meeting future performance goals.

- **Give an example of how you have had to provide negative feedback. What was your approach?**

Interviewers look to see how you deliver feedback to your staff. In your response, include that your feedback was specific and done promptly to address the situation.

- **“Do you consider yourself to be an organized person?”**

Interviewers want to know how you prioritize your time and which tools you use to help you along the way. In your response, share examples of your time-management skills and show off your flexibility.

- **“How would your coworkers describe you? How would your direct reports describe your management style?”**

These questions are designed to see how well you relate to your peers, as well as those who work for you. Your answer is a great opportunity to speak about your strengths. Ideally, talk about the characteristics that make you an excellent manager.

## Evaluation of a Mock Interview

Interview Observer Evaluation	Yes	No
<b>Stage 1: Introduction</b>		
Did the candidate introduce him or herself professionally?  Comments:		
Was the interview atmosphere professional?  Comments:		
Was the candidate dressed appropriately?  Comments:		
Did the candidate make eye contact? Or look directly into the camera?  Comments:		
Did the candidate make appropriate small talk?  Comments:		
<b>Stage 2: Employer Questions</b>		
Did the candidate answer the employer's questions appropriately and adequately?  Comments:		
Did the candidate use the STAR method?  Comments:		
Did the candidate stumble or pause for too long?  Comments:		
Were there questions that the candidate was unable to answer?  Comments:		

Interview Observer Evaluation	Yes	No
<b>Stage3: Candidate Questions</b>		
Did the candidate ask appropriate questions?  Comments:		
<b>Stage4: Closing</b>		
Did the candidate thank the interviewer?  Comments:		
Did the candidate restate their interest in the position or ask for the job?  Comments:		
Did the candidate ask about follow-up or next steps in the hiring process?  Comments:		
Did the candidate graciously exit?  Comments:		