
UNIT 3 PREPARING FOR INTERVIEWS

Structure

- 3.0 Objectives
- 3.1 Warm up
- 3.2 Reading
- 3.3 Listening
- 3.4 Writing
- 3.5 Speaking
- 3.6 Grammar & Vocabulary
- 3.7 Answers



3.0 OBJECTIVES

In this unit you will learn about:

- How to prepare for a job interview
- the systematic step wise approach to preparation
- the importance of first impressions
- body language during interviews
- the type of questions to expect
- the type of questions you should ask
- useful vocabulary for talking about yourself at an interview
- Grammar : verbs



3.1 WARM UP

The excitement and panic of the first interview!

It is common to feel both happy and nervous about your first interview, or for that matter, about any job interview

Thinking about which job you should apply for, looking for job advertisements and writing out your CV and application forms takes up a lot of your time. And then you also know that not every job application meets with success. So getting a telephone call, letter or email inviting you to an interview is

What will happen at the interview?

Who will interview me?

What will they ask me?

How should I dress?

wonderful news, though it can sometimes take you by surprise. All this while

you were in a period of uncertainty, and all of a sudden you need to go for a real job interview.

Here are some questions that may race through your mind at such a time:

These can make you feel anxious. The only way to deal with this situation is to prepare for your interview. There are many things you can do by way of preparation that can help you to develop your interview skills and do well at the interview.

3.2 READING

Preparing for the Interview

If you are anxious about your interview, remember that you have climbed one step higher towards your goal by being called for an interview. You have been short-listed from amongst all applicants. That should give you some comfort and confidence.



Check Your Progress 1

Here is a checklist of things you should do while preparing for a job interview. Do you agree with this list? How important are all these points? Think about them and then match your thoughts with what is given in the text that follows:

1. Collect all your relevant documents together.
2. Be sure about the location of the interview.
3. Organize your travel arrangements.
4. Decide what you are going to wear for the interview.
5. Study your CV and job application.
6. Find out as much as you can about the job and the company.
7. Prepare some questions that you would like to ask.
8. Prepare answers to some interview questions that you may be asked and practice the answers.
9. Work on a positive first impression.

Now read the text given below. Each paragraph carries an alphabet before it. Match the checklist with the appropriate paragraph. Check your answers with the key.

Preparing for a Job

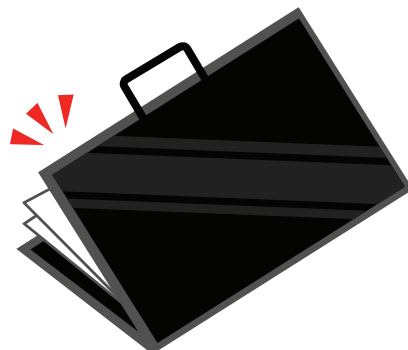
A. You have already provided some basic information about yourself in your CV and job application. At the job interview the panel wants to confirm the claims that you have made about yourself and find out some more information about you. The first thing you must ensure is that you have prepared yourself to explain and justify all claims that you have made in your CV and job application. Therefore, you must study both these documents carefully before the interview.



B. Check exactly when and where your interview is to be held. This may seem very obvious but some applicants arrive at the venue late. They either miss the interview or create a very poor first impression. Even if you arrive just in time you can be in trouble. You could be tired, thirsty, out of breath because you have climbed the stairs too fast or come running into the venue. The ideal thing to do is, find out about the venue well in advance. Preferably visit the location before the actual date of the interview, so that you know exactly where it is and how much time it takes to travel to the place. Also this will help you to decide about the best way to travel to the place and enable you to make the necessary arrangements.



C. Make sure all your paperwork is in order. You will be surprised at the amount of papers you would have collected in your run-up to the interview. This could include interview information provided by the company, your own CV and application, your interview research notes, travel information and tickets if you are going out of town for the interview. It is advisable to make a separate file or folder in which you put away all your interview related paperwork safely. Also ensure that you have your portfolio ready. This will



carry papers that show evidence of your education, experience and achievements so far. If you are organized you may feel in better control of the situation and can prevent the last minute hunt for papers and documents.

D. Some job advertisements are very elaborate and tell you a lot about the company and the job you are applying for. Make sure you study the job advertisement carefully again, before the interview. You must not embarrass yourself by being unable to answer any question that is asked based on the advert. More importantly you must not ask for any information which is already given in the advertisement. Besides,

on your own initiative you should find out as much as you can about the company where you are applying. It is very easy to get information about companies on the web through company websites, career websites etc. If you are well informed about the company you also prove that you are genuinely interested in it.

E. An important part of interview preparation is what you wear to the interview. This should not be neglected as people see you before they actually talk to you and how you look is important. You must look smart and professional. This creates a good impression and makes you feel confident. It is good to be formally dressed for an interview. Jeans and T shirts should be avoided for sure. At the same time do not wear anything too tight or uncomfortable.



F. Interviewers take into account many things when forming an opinion regarding your suitability for the job. This includes your qualifications, how well you answer the questions that you are asked and what they think of you as a person. However, first impressions are very important. Your dress, the way you carry yourself, the tone of your voice as well as your first handshake or namaste speak a lot about you. In other words, your body language is very important. A good first impression creates a favourable framework for the remainder of the interview.

G. One of the key concerns you are likely to have before a job interview is what kind of questions you will be asked. Hence it is worthwhile to spend time on understanding and thinking about interview questions. This can help you to deal comfortably with a wide variety of topics and question types. This does not mean you should learn off the answers by heart. This preparation is meant to ensure that you have the right information in your mind that you can draw from when you are asked a question. Rattling off memorized answers would work negatively for you and give the impression that you are speaking without any understanding of what you are saying. The speaking section of this unit will deal with question types and how to answer questions effectively.

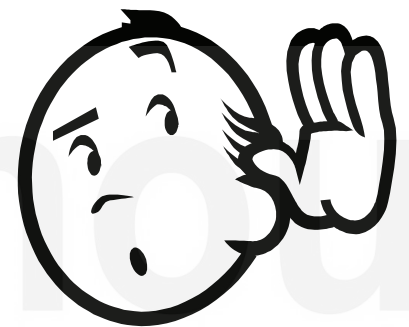


H. Apart from preparing to answer questions you also need to be ready with a few questions to ask the interview panel. An old Chinese proverb states ‘One who does not ask a question remains a fool forever’. This might be true for an interview. A few well prepared questions show the interviewer that you are a serious applicant for the job. Your questions can be based on something that you have read about their future plans. You could also have questions about the job itself or about opportunities for advancement in the future.



3.3 LISTENING

Listen to an expert talking about the importance of body language at an interview and then answer the questions given below. Listen to the audio as many times as you need to.



Complete the given sentences on the basis of what the speaker says about body language:

1. It is important to pay attention to body language because.....
2. The two major benefits of a good posture are:
 - i)
 - ii)
3. Eye contact helps you to
4. The handshake is your first connection with the interviewer.
5. Three important elements of body language are:
 - i).....
 - ii).....
 - iii).....
6. A comfortable sitting position described by the speaker is.....
7. Appropriate hand movements are important because they help you to.....
8. You can learn about suitable hand movements by watching

9. Name at least 3 negative gestures that the speaker talks about:

i).....

ii).....

iii).....

10. Stress and anxiety can make you indulge in negative movements like..... and

3.4 WRITING

Standing out from the Crowd

Another important aspect of preparation for your job interview is to stand out as an individual; to be able to convince an employer that you are the right person for the job. After all there are many applicants for a job and you need to be able to stand out in the crowd of applicants. In other words you need the confidence to sell yourself.

You can do this by:

- being clear about yourself
- letting the company know what you can offer to them
- communicating all of this effectively to the interview panel

How can you accomplish this? You can do so by identifying your key skills and achievements before the interview. You need to take active steps to present yourself in the best possible manner.

By way of preparation to achieve these goals pick up your pen and paper and:

1. Make a list of your strong points

To help you here is a list of qualities to get you started. You should be able to add some more of your own to them. Also remember that you will need to illustrate these with the help of examples from your personal experience.

- hard working
- reliable
- determined
- organized and systematic
- enthusiastic
- quick learner
- flexible



Preparing for a Job

- self-motivated
 - proactive
 -
2. Once you have made a list of your qualities think of situations when you demonstrated these qualities. These would be your achievements.
 3. Now make a list of the skills that you believe you possess. Here are some clues to help you:
 - I T
 - Team working
 - Leadership
 - Research
 - Written communication for example writing reports, letters
 - Oral communication – giving presentations
 - Time management
 - Problem solving
 - Any other
 4. Think of tasks or jobs you have done well where you used these skills.

All of this preparation will help you to stand out at a job interview and help convince your prospective employer that you are the right candidate for the job.

3.5 SPEAKING

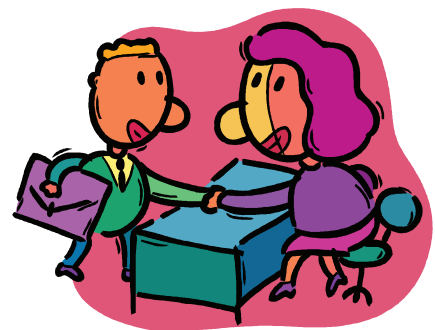
Check Your Progress 3

It is important to make an estimate of the type of questions you may be asked at a job interview so that you can think of possible answers in advance. In fact you should practice your answers with your study partner or before friends or members of the family who can give you an honest feedback.

Here is a list of questions to help you:

Personal

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. How would you describe yourself?
3. Do you have any hobbies? What do you do in your spare time?



Education

1. Why did you choose to study this particular course / subject?
2. What were your favorite classes/activities at school?

Job

1. Why did you apply for this job?
2. Why do you want to work for us?

Strengths

1. What are your three greatest strengths?
2. What can you contribute to our organization?
3. What are your strong points and how have they helped you to succeed?

Success / Achievement

1. What does success mean to you?
2. What is your greatest achievement so far?

Career Goals

1. Where do you want to be 5 years from now in your career?
2. What are your long term career goals?

After you have attempted the answers take a look at the clues given in the key. In case of difficulty, first look at the clues and then attempt to answer the questions. Remember that these questions are about YOU and therefore what goes into the answer must be about you and not memorized from elsewhere. The clues and samples are only meant to help you to prepare suitable answers, not to give you correct answers.

3.6 GRAMMAR & VOCABULARY



Check your progress 4 (A)

The first impression you make on the interviewer can have a great impact on the rest of the interview. When you speak, your language must be correct and appropriate. Let's practice grammar by looking at some of the questions that you could be asked at the beginning of an interview.

Complete the answers by filling up the gaps from words given in the box:

feel	studying	talk	like
	am	buy	I'm
find	make	speak	
work	live	listen	
play	visit	tell	
solve	need		

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1. How do you do?

Ans: fine. Thank you.

2. Where do you live?

Ans: I in Mirzapur.

3. What are you doing these days?

Ans: I'm in B Com Final Year.

4. What are your hobbies?

Ans: I to play cricket in my spare time.

5. How often do you play cricket?

Ans: I cricket once in a week.

6. Do you have any work experience?

Ans: Yes. I part time as a salesperson in a department store.

7. Tell us something about your work?

Ans: I need to to the customers who the store to our products. I also them what they want to know or where to what they are looking for. Sometimes, I also to their complaints and try to their problems.

8. What are the skills you need to use at work?

Ans: I good conversation skills to customers happy and satisfied.

9. What would you say is your main strength?

I a good listener. I also very politely with customers.

Check Your Progress 4 (B)

Combine the words given in the table below to make word partnerships which can be used to describe yourself and your work:

1	hard	A	going
2	well	B	competent
3	easy	C	conscious
4	highly	D	working
5	pro	E	disciplined
6	self	F	motivated

7	socially	G	mannered
8	good	H	spoken
9	time	I	humoured
10	soft	J	active

3.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check your progress 1

1. – C
2. – B
3. – B
4. – E
5. – A
6. – D
7. – H
8. – G
9. – F

Tape script

Listen to an expert talking about the importance of body language at an interview.

Your body language at an interview is about the non-verbal messages that you send out during the interview. These can sometimes be more powerful than what you speak. It is therefore important to be aware of how you appear to other people. Remember that an interviewer is likely to develop a first impression of you even before you speak.

You can create a good impression by standing up straight and tall. A good posture not only makes you look confident but also improves the quality and tone of your voice. You must also face the interviewer and make eye contact. These help you to establish a visual connection with the interviewer. A good firm handshake enables you to make the right physical connection and shows that you are confident. Doing this with a genuine smile lifts your face and creates a good first impression.

Body language can help you to communicate positive messages. This includes the way you sit, your facial expressions and your hand movements. So sit right back in the chair and not at the edge of it. Take a few moments to get comfortable. You could cross your legs at the ankle if you wish. Also clasp your hands loosely in your lap. You should lean forward occasionally to

answer a question. If you are very anxious, sitting comfortably can help you to relax. Try to keep your facial muscles relaxed and smile occasionally. The interview is a serious affair and hence a grin would be inappropriate. Also look at the interviewers occasionally. Eye contact is important whereas looking at the floor is negative. Hand movements can help you to emphasize a point, liven up what you speak and help you to appear more confident and relaxed. Watching TV presenters or teachers could give you clues on the use of hand movements! Remember never to point your finger to an interviewer.

Just as there are gestures that you must be aware of, there are also gestures that you must avoid. Do not use distracting body language or gestures that cause the listener to stop listening to what you are saying. These can be unconscious habits and you may be unaware of them. Some distracting gestures are: fiddling with your earring or ear, turning the ring on your finger, flicking your hair back, fiddling with a button or anything else lying in front of you or tapping a pen. There is also negative body language that arises out of stress or anxiety which includes crossing and uncrossing your legs or arms, foot tapping, drumming your fingers, cracking knuckles or shifting around in your chair. Do not grip the sides of the chair, clasp your hands behind your head or tip your chair back. These are all negative movements.

The key is to observe your own body language carefully and to practice positive gestures, while avoiding negative ones.

Check Your Progress 2

Complete the given sentences on the basis of what the speaker says about body language:

1. It is important to pay attention to body language because **it sends out powerful non-verbal messages.**
2. The two major benefits of a good posture are:
 - a. **it shows confidence**
 - b. **improves the quality and tone of your voice**
3. Eye contact helps you to **make a visual connection with the interviewer.**
4. The handshake is your first **physical** connection with the interviewer.
5. Three important elements of body language are:
 - i) **posture**
 - ii) **facial expressions**
 - iii) **hand movements**
6. A comfortable sitting position described by the speaker is to **sit back comfortably in your chair.**
7. Appropriate hand movements are important because they help you to **emphasize a point, liven up what you speak and make you appear more confident and relaxed.**

8. You can learn about suitable hand movements by watching **TV presenters or teachers.**
9. Name at least 3 negative gestures that the speaker talks about:
 - i) **fiddling with your earring or ear, , flicking your hair back,**
 - ii) **turning the ring on your finger**
 - iii) **fiddling with a button or anything else lying in front of you or tapping a pen**
10. Stress and anxiety can make you indulge in negative movements like **foot tapping and cracking knuckles.**

You may find additional alternatives given in the tape script for some of the questions asked. These would also be correct as answers.

Check Your Progress 3

Personal

1. Tell me about yourself.

This appears to be a really easy question – after all you know more about yourself than anyone else! However, this is a broad based and open ended question. You must decide just where to begin and what to say about yourself.

It is a good idea to stay focused and to highlight a few key points that you want the interviewer to know about you. Try to keep the information as relevant as possible to the job. A minute should be sufficient for this.

Here is an example:

I have just completed my B Com with Computer Applications and I am looking for my first regular job. I am interested in becoming an accounting technician. I have done a summer job with a local agency to get some experience in this area. I really enjoyed learning about different aspects of accountancy procedures made possible by the use of IT. I also realized that I have the right kind of skills for this type of work. I wish to take up further studies in IT aided Accountancy as a part time course in order to increase my knowledge about the field.

2. How would you describe yourself?

In response to this question you would talk about the kind of person you are. Talk about your interests and hobbies. This is an opportunity for you to highlight your qualities as well as skills and abilities. Don't forget to give examples.

Education

1. Why did you choose to study this particular course / subject?

Preparing for a Job

Here you must give reasons for the choice of your subject or course and be able to talk about the relevance of your studies to your job. You could base your answer on:

- what interested you about the course / subject – eg. key topics
- what you have learned – subject knowledge, projects, practical tasks
- any important skills you acquired – communication, computing, team working
- how all this relates to the job you are being interviewed for

Job

1. Why did you apply for this job?

The interviewer wants to know whether you understand what the job is really about. They may also want to know what makes you suitable for this particular kind of work. This is a chance for you to highlight those of your skills that match the company's requirement. Also mention your qualification and experience and its relevance to the job.

- state the aspects of the job that interest you
- your key skills
- any relevant knowledge / experience that you have

2. Why do you want to work for us?

To be able to answer this question appropriately you should have done some research beforehand. You can get a lot of information about companies on their websites. Give some specific reasons that show your knowledge of the company.

- you could give a brief overview of information gathered as well as the source – website, brochure
- some positive features of the company you liked – work culture, training opportunities, the kind of products it makes
- why you would be suited to the company - talk about your own qualities and skills for eg. hardworking, team worker, advanced computing skills, quick grasp of new technology

Strengths

1) What are your three greatest strengths?

Highlight strengths that relate to the job. Also give examples of occasions where you have displayed these strengths.

For example:

- good at getting along with people
- working under pressure
- managing time

Career Goals

1. Where do you want to be 5 years from now in your career?

Here the interviewer may want to get an idea of whether you plan to stay with the company for a reasonable length of time or not. They would also want to see whether your career goals fit in with the company. You could talk about

- the skills you want to develop on the job
- completion of an additional training / qualifications along with your job
- taking on more responsibility
- specializing in any specific area of your work so that you become an expert in that area in a few years' time

2. What are your long term career goals?

You should be able to differentiate between your short term goals – what you want to achieve in the near future and your long term goals – what you wish to achieve in the distant future. For example, you may want to work for a company at the moment and then later set up your own company, agency or consultancy.

Check your progress 4 (A)

1. I'm
2. live
3. studying
4. like
5. play
6. work
7. talk, visit, buy, tell, find, listen, solve
8. need, make, feel
9. am, speak

Check your progress 4 (B)

Combine the words given in the table below to make word partnerships which can be used to describe you and your work

1	hard	D	working
2	well	G	mannered
3	easy	A	going
4	highly	F	motivated
5	pro	J	active
6	self	E	disciplined / motivated
7	socially	B	competent
8	good	I	humoured
9	time	C	conscious
10	soft	H	spoken