

How to ace your apprenticeship interview

Congrats, you've landed an interview!

Here are some tips about what to do before, during and after to help you conquer the nervous butterflies and really impress your interviewers.

Before the interview

Know the job

Read carefully over the job spec you're applying to. What specific skills or requirements does it ask for? Do you understand what you will learn on the apprenticeship?

Know yourself

Choose your top three skills that match the job advert.

Think about your achievements and experience (from your studies, work experience, volunteering, clubs and more). How do these show that you fit what the job spec is asking for? Gather evidence to show your achievements or skills, like assignments, certificates, projects or reports.

Logistics

Where will it take place? How long will it be? Who is interviewing you?

Research them

Read about the company on their website (especially the "About" and "News" sections) and check their social media. What services or products do they offer? How big is the company and what is their "vibe"? Have they been in the news lately?

When you're asked why you want to work for the company during the interview, be sure to personalise your response. Instead of giving a generic answer, connect your enthusiasm to the specific research you have conducted above. For example, you might say:

"I'm excited to work for [Company name] due to their dedication to [point 1], creative approach to [point 2], and positive work culture showcased by [point 3]."

Social media

While the employer may have already reviewed your CV, they might still check your social media profiles. Ensure your accounts are set to private and avoid posting anything you wouldn't want a potential employer to see.

Skills gap

If you are ever asked about a skill that you do not have you should be honest AND wherever possible, turn that gap into an opportunity.

For example you could answer the following question:

We are going to be using Java. Are you proficient?

"I haven't learned Java yet, but I'm experienced in Python programming. I believe transitioning to another language will be smooth for me. I'm also eager to learn on the job, so it's a win-win."

Before

Potential questions

Make a list of questions the interviewer might ask you and make notes on how you'd answer (remember to refer back to your experience). Search "sample interview questions" for lots of ideas – you can start with a common one, "Tell me about yourself".

Also search the "STAR technique" for answering interview questions. This will help you feel way more confident going into the interview.

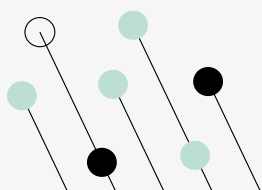
Get ready to go

Ahead of time, choose your outfit, gather anything you need (like a pen and notebook, ID and your portfolio), plan your travel and aim to arrive 15 minutes early so you aren't stressed.

Prepare questions

Examples:

- I'm interested in learning more about [something about the company or what they do]. Could you tell me a little about it?
- What do you see as the most challenging and most rewarding thing about working in this department/company?
- What does success look like for this role?
- How would you describe the work environment?



At the interview

It's okay to be nervous, but your prep will really pay off in the interview! You may want to bring your notes to review while you travel and wait.

Turn phone off

During the interview it is best to turn your phone off, or at least completely silent. Hearing constant notification vibrations during an interview is not only distracting for the interviewer, but for you as well when you're trying to answer questions.

Listen carefully

It's okay to ask for clarification ("Just to clarify, you're asking about...?") or to ask for a quick moment to think about it.

Eye contact

It helps to make a good first impression when you meet the interviewer(s), make eye contact and shake hands confidently. Pay attention to the names of people you're introduced to and try to make eye contact equally with everyone in the interview.

Stay focused

Try to stay focused and on-topic when answering. Be honest if you don't know something. It is okay to say you'd like to learn more about that area.

Answer carefully

Too many people fail interviews because they give one-word answers. These don't work. You may appear uninterested, unenthusiastic, and disconnected. Be friendly and give longer answers where needed.

STAR

Use the star method (situation, task, action, result). This method will help you answer "tell me about a time when..." questions.

Positive attitude

From the minute you walk into reception, make sure you act the part. It only takes 7 seconds to impress, so a positive attitude and confidence is what you need.

Five Don't's

1. Don't fidget
2. Avoid bad body language
3. Don't talk over people
4. Avoid sarcasm
5. Don't forget to breathe

After

Well done – you did it! When you get home, make some quick notes about what you learned and any questions you had trouble with to help you review those for next time.

You should also send a thank-you note to the interviewers – it's a nice extra step that helps you stand out.