

# **Interview Skills**

# The Five Pillars of Effective Interview Skills

1



## Body Language Skills

Your non-verbal cues speak before you do.

Posture, eye contact, gestures, and facial expressions show confidence and honesty.

2



## Preparation Before the Interview

Strong preparation builds self-assurance.

Research, rehearse, and organize to enter with clarity and calm.

3



## Creating a Great First Impression

The first few seconds set the tone.

Dress well, greet confidently, and project positive energy.

4



## Conduct During the Interview

Professionalism and composure define your performance.

Listen actively, answer clearly, and demonstrate respect and enthusiasm.

5



## After the Interview

Your professionalism continues even after you leave the room.

Send a thank-you note, stay patient, and maintain polite follow-up communication.

# Body Language

- Body language is a form of **non-verbal communication** that conveys thoughts and emotions without words.
- It includes **posture, gestures, facial expressions, eye contact, and body movements.**
- In interviews and workplaces, **your body often speaks louder than your words.**
- Understanding and controlling your body language helps you project **confidence, honesty, and professionalism.**

## Common nonverbal mistakes made at a job interview

From a survey of 2000 bosses

21%

Playing with hair or touching face

47%

Having little or no knowledge of the company is the most common mistake job seekers make during interviews

Failure to make eye contact

67%

Lack of smile

38%

Bad posture

33%

Crossing arms over their chest

21%

Using too many hand gestures

9%

Handshake that is too weak

26%

Fidgeting too much

33%

In a survey of 2000 bosses claimed that they know within the first 90 seconds of an interview whether **they will hire someone**

33%



The average length of an interview is approximately 40 minutes

Statistics show that when meeting new people the impact is:

7%

From what we **actually say**

38%

The quality of our **voice grammar and overall confidence**

55%

The way we **dress, act and walk through the door**

**Clothes**

Bright colors are a turnoff

70%

Employers claiming they don't want applicants to be **fashionable or trendy**.

65%

Of bosses said **clothes could be the deciding factor** between two similar candidates.



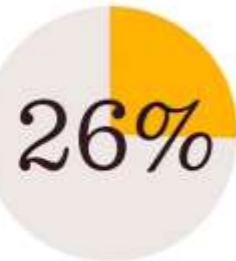
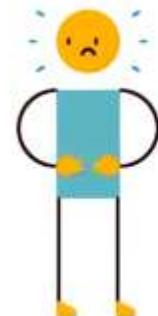
# The power of body language



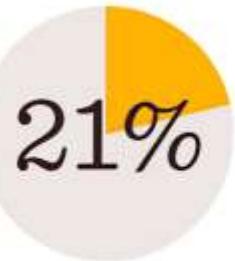
Employer surveys conducted by Career Builder and Adecco suggest that every little thing you're doing with your eyes, hands and body during an interview could be sending out signals about you that you're completely unaware of.



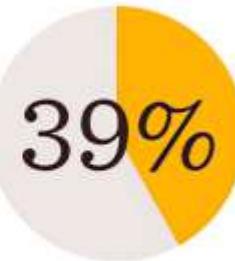
OF HIRING MANAGERS  
CITE **LACK OF EYE  
CONTACT** AS THE  
BIGGEST MISTAKE  
CANDIDATES MAKE.<sup>1</sup>



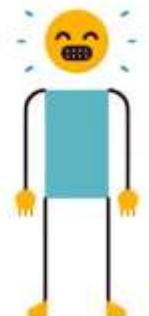
OF APPLICANTS IN  
AN INTERVIEW GET  
REJECTED BECAUSE  
THEY **FIDGET TOO  
MUCH**.<sup>2</sup>



OF INTERVIEWERS WILL  
REJECT CANDIDATES  
WHO GIVE A **WEAK  
HANDSHAKE**.<sup>1</sup>



OF INTERVIEWERS  
ARE PUT OFF IF A  
CANDIDATE FAILS  
TO SMILE.<sup>1</sup>



# Key Components of Body Language

## 1. Posture

The way you sit or stand communicates your confidence, energy, and openness.

**Positive posture:** Sit upright with relaxed shoulders, feet flat on the floor, and slight forward lean to show interest.

**Avoid:** Slouching, leaning back too much, or crossing arms (signals disinterest or defensiveness).

*Tip:* Practice your sitting posture before the interview mirror yourself from the side view.

## 2. Eye Contact

Your eyes convey attention, confidence, and respect.

**Positive behavior:** Maintain steady eye contact for 3–5 seconds at a time before briefly looking away.

**Avoid:** Constant staring (can feel aggressive) or looking down (may seem insecure).

*Tip:* If nervous, focus on the interviewer's eyebrows or nose bridge—it feels natural without being intense.

## 3. Facial Expressions

Your face reflects your emotions even before you speak.

**Positive behavior:** Keep a calm, pleasant expression and smile naturally when greeting or agreeing.

**Avoid:** Frowning, raised eyebrows, or blank looks—they can signal disapproval or disinterest.

*Tip:* A slight smile during introductions helps establish warmth instantly.

# Key Components of Body Language

## 4. Gestures

Hand and arm movements add clarity and emphasis to your words.

**Positive behavior:** Use open-hand gestures at chest level to appear transparent and enthusiastic.

**Avoid:** Over-gesturing, finger-pointing, or fidgeting with objects—they distract the listener.

*Tip:* Keep your hands visible—hidden hands can subconsciously reduce trust.

## 5. Personal Appearance

The way you dress, groom, and accessorize shapes first impressions.

**Positive behavior:** Choose neat, professional, and context-appropriate attire; ensure clean shoes, nails, and hair.

**Avoid:** Overly casual clothing, strong perfumes, or flashy accessories.

*Tip:* Dress slightly above the company's average dress code—it signals effort and respect.

## 6. Space (Proximity)

The distance you maintain shows comfort level and respect for boundaries.

**Positive behavior:** Maintain about an arm's length in professional settings.

**Avoid:** Standing too close (feels intrusive) or too far (feels disengaged).

*Tip:* Mirror the interviewer's distance subtly—it builds comfort naturally.

# Key Components of Body Language

## 7. Touch (Handshake)

The first physical interaction sets the tone of professionalism.

**Positive behavior:** Offer a firm, dry handshake lasting about two seconds while maintaining eye contact.

**Avoid:** Limp, sweaty, or overly forceful grips.

*Tip:* If culturally appropriate, wait for the interviewer to initiate before extending your hand.

## 8. Tone of Voice

The tone, pitch, and pace of your speech convey confidence, enthusiasm, and clarity.

**Positive behavior:** Speak at a moderate pace, clearly and confidently, with slight variations in tone to sound natural and engaging.

**Avoid:** Speaking too fast, too softly, or in a flat monotone. Don't overemphasize words, raise your pitch too high, or use fillers like "umm" or "like."

*Tip:* Record and listen to yourself practice — notice where your tone sounds most confident and calm.\*

# Body Language Signals

## Positive Signals

Leaning forward = shows **interest and engagement**

Smiling = creates a **friendly and approachable** impression

Nodding = shows **attentiveness and agreement**

Eye contact = signals **confidence and focus**

Open palms = conveys **honesty and openness**

Relaxed shoulders = looks **calm and confident**

## Negative Signals

Crossed arms = appears **defensive or closed off**

Fidgeting hands or tapping feet = seems **nervous or impatient**

Lack of eye contact = may appear **untrustworthy or unsure**

Leaning back = shows **discomfort or disinterest**

Pointing or clenched fists = perceived as **aggressive**

Tensed shoulders = indicates **stress or anxiety**

# Body Language Tips

**01**

Smile and make eye contact

**02**

Keep your upper body open

**03**

Minimize fidgeting and nervous movements

**04**

Practice active listening

**05**

Practice a firm handshake

**06**

Keep your head and chin level

**07**

Speak slowly and clearly

**08**

Mirror your body language to the interviewer's

# Preparation Before the Interview

## 1. Research the Organization

Understand the company's **mission, products, and culture.**

Review their website, LinkedIn page, and recent news.

**Tip:** Know who their clients or competitors are—it shows genuine interest.

## 2. Know the Job Role

Study the **job description** carefully.

Match your **skills and achievements** to the role's requirements.

**Tip:** Prepare 2–3 examples from your experience that fit the role.

## 3. Practice Common Questions

Rehearse answers to typical questions like:

“Tell me about yourself,” or “Why should we hire you?”

**Tip:** Use the **STAR method** (Situation, Task, Action, Result) for structured answers.

# Preparation Before the Interview

## 4. Plan Your Outfit

Dress professionally and appropriately for the company culture.

**Tip:** When unsure, dress slightly more formal than expected.

## 5. Organize Your Documents

Keep printed copies of your **CV, certificates, and references.**

Arrange them neatly in a folder.

**Tip:** Carry an extra copy, you may meet more than one interviewer.

## 6. Prepare Yourself Mentally

Get enough sleep, eat light, and stay hydrated.

Visualize a confident and calm version of yourself.

**Tip:** Arrive at least **10–15 minutes early** to settle in.

# Creating a Good First Impression

## 1. Be Punctual

Arrive **10–15 minutes early** to show reliability and respect for time.

**Avoid:** Arriving too early or too late; both can create awkwardness.

## 2. Dress Professionally

Match your attire to the company's culture while keeping it clean and neat.

**Tip:** Neutral colors, polished shoes, and simple accessories reflect professionalism.

## 3. Greet with Confidence

Smile genuinely, make eye contact, and offer a polite "Good morning/afternoon."

If appropriate, return the interviewer's handshake firmly.

**Avoid:** Weak greetings or avoiding eye contact.

# Creating a Good First Impression

## 4. Positive Body Language

Maintain upright posture and open gestures.

Keep your hands visible and movements natural.

**Avoid:** Crossing arms or fidgeting with belongings.

## 5. Control Your Nerves

Take slow breaths before entering the room.

Focus on the conversation, not on your anxiety.

**Tip:** Remind yourself that the interviewer wants to find the *right fit*, not perfection.

## 6. Show Enthusiasm

Let your tone and expressions show genuine interest in the role.

Listen actively and nod to show engagement.

**Avoid:** Speaking too softly or sounding overly rehearsed.

# During the Interview

## 1. Wait for Cues

Let the interviewer invite you to sit and indicate where.

**Avoid:** Sitting without being asked or choosing your own seat prematurely.

## 2. Be Attentive and Present

Listen carefully to each question before responding.

Maintain natural eye contact and nod to show engagement.

**Avoid:** Interrupting or drifting off mentally.

## 3. Communicate Clearly

Keep answers **concise, relevant, and honest.**

Use the **STAR method** (Situation, Task, Action, Result) for behavioral questions.

**Tip:** Give specific examples that demonstrate your skills or values.

# During the Interview

## 4. Manage Your Body Language

Sit upright with relaxed shoulders and hands visible.

Use open gestures and moderate movements.

**Avoid:** Fidgeting, crossing arms, or touching your face excessively.

## 5. Stay Professional and Polite

Use respectful language ("Yes, certainly," "I'd be glad to explain").

**Avoid:** Overly casual phrases, slang, or negative remarks about past employers.

## 6. Handle Stressful Questions Gracefully

Take a short pause before answering challenging questions.

*Tip:* If unsure, say "That's an interesting question. Let me think about it for a moment."

**Avoid:** Rushing into unclear or defensive answers.

# During the Interview

## 7. Ask Insightful Questions

Prepare 1–2 thoughtful questions for the end (e.g., “What does success look like in this role?”).

**Avoid:** Asking about salary or perks too early.

## 3. Do Not Interrupt the Interviewer

Allow the interviewer to **finish speaking completely** before you respond.

Interruptions can come across as disrespectful or impatient.

**Tip:** If you have something important to add, note it mentally and wait for the right moment.

# What Not to Say in Job Interviews

## And What to Say Instead

**✗ Don't say:** "I don't have questions"

**?** **Why:** That's a big missed opportunity - and a red flag in terms of your curiosity

**✓ Say:** "What would success look like in the first 6 months of this role?"

**✗ Don't say:** "I don't know much about your company"

**?** **Why:** Suggests a lack of preparation and interest in the role

**✓ Say:** "I've researched the company and I'm particularly impressed with X - I'd love to hear your perspective on it"

**✗ Don't say:** "I don't have weaknesses"

**?** **Why:** This seems arrogant and like you lack self-awareness

**✓ Say:** "I've been working to improve on X recently, and after taking Y steps I've grown substantially"

**✗ Don't say:** "I was fired from my previous role"

**?** **Why:** Fair or not, being fired carries a stigma

**✓ Say:** "My previous role ended unexpectedly, but it gave me the chance to reflect and strengthen my skills in X"

**✗ Don't say:** "I'm looking for any job right now"

**?** **Why:** Seems desperate, rather than genuinely interested

**✓ Say:** "I'm looking to use XYZ strengths, and I'm excited about how this role aligns"



**✗ Don't say:** "I hated my last boss"

**?** **Why:** Never bash a former boss to a future boss

**✓ Say:** "I learned a lot in my previous job, especially about X, but I'm excited for a new challenge now"

**✗ Don't say:** "How much does this job pay?"

**?** **Why:** You can get this answered without sounding like you care more about pay than the role itself

**✓ Say:** "I'm excited about this, and I'd love to understand the comp range to ensure it fits my expectations"

**✗ Don't say:** "I know I'm underqualified, but..."

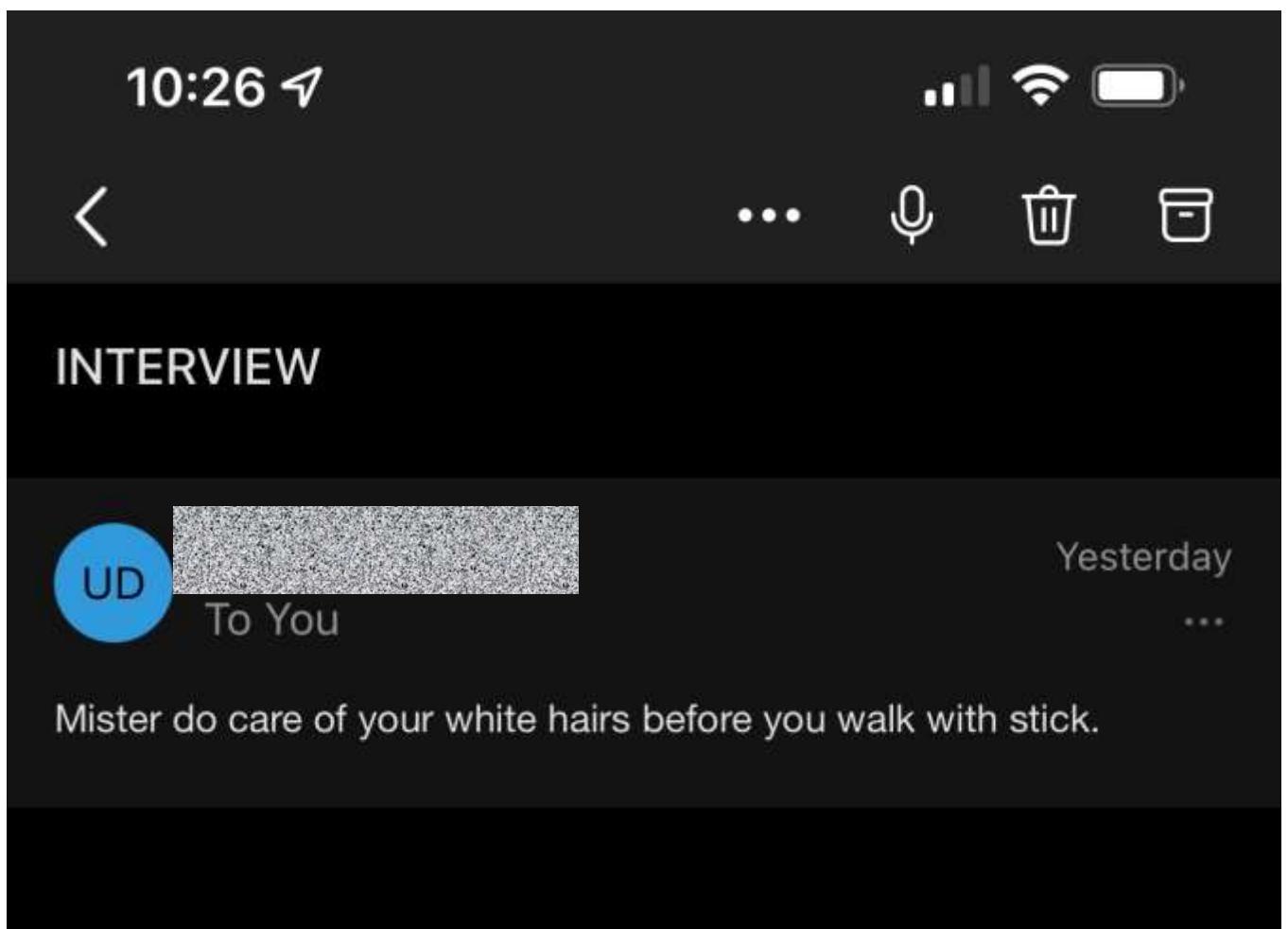
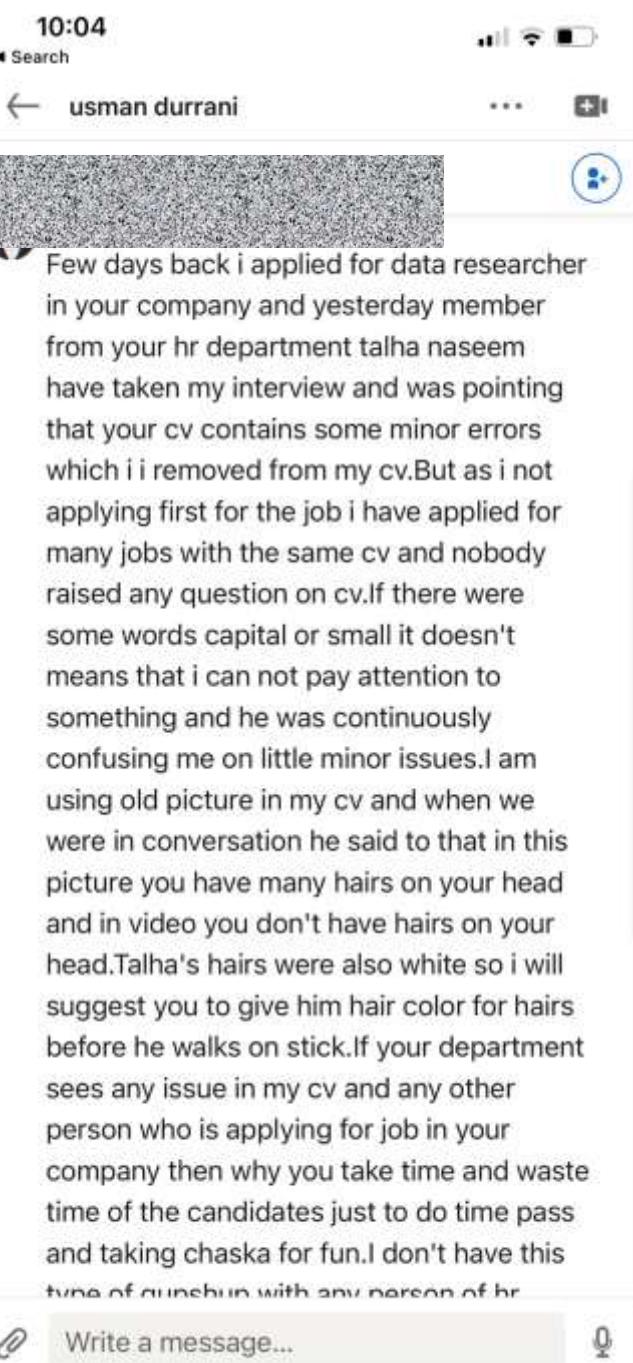
**?** **Why:** Don't undercut yourself - focus on your strengths

**✓ Say:** "I'm excited to use my experience to lean into the challenges of this role and learn and grow quickly"

**✗ Don't say:** "When can I get promoted?"

**?** **Why:** In contrast to the last one, blatant climbing isn't ideal either

**✓ Say:** "What does career growth look like, and how are employees supported in reaching their potential?"



# Interview Skills

# After the Interview

## 1. Express Gratitude

Thank the interviewer before leaving the room.

Send a brief **thank-you email** within 24 hours.

**Tip:** Mention one point from the conversation that you appreciated or found insightful.

## 2. Reflect on Your Performance

Review what went well and where you can improve.

**Tip:** Write short notes while the experience is fresh — they help you prepare for future interviews.

## 3. Stay Patient and Professional

Give the employer reasonable time to respond (typically a week or as indicated).

**Avoid:** Following up repeatedly or sounding impatient.

# After the Interview

## 4. Keep Networking

If you made good connections during the process, stay in touch on **LinkedIn**.

***Tip:*** Share a polite message expressing interest in learning more about the company or its work.

## 5. Continue Applying and Preparing

Don't stop your job search while waiting.

Use what you learned to perform even better in the next one.

**Thank You**