

 Navigate

Interview Etiquette

As you prepare to charm the interviewer(s), you would not want to leave *anything* to chance. While you have prepared for all the technical and HR questions, do not forget to pay attention to small details that matter in terms of the overall impression that you make. Follow these simple guidelines.

1. Before the interview

1. Sleep well on the previous night - you don't want to enter the interview room all tired and red-eyed.
2. Dress comfortably **and** professionally. Boys - light colored plain shirt, dark trousers with plain buckle belt, black shoes will carry the day for you. Girls - Sari, salwar suit, or business formals with formal sandals or shoes should do the job for you.
3. Make sure you are properly groomed. Pay attention to your hair & nails. Do not use strong aftershave, perfume, or deodorant. Boys - shave clean or trim mustache/beard as appropriate (religious preference in these matters, of course, takes priority). Girls - minimal makeup and ornaments please.
4. Your folder should contain few copies of your resume, college ID Card, transcripts, certificates, **a pen, and few blank sheets of paper.**
5. Reach atleast 30 minutes before the interview so that you have enough time to settle in the environment, relax & freshen up.

2. Body language

1. **Entry** - knock, ask for permission and enter. Walk in comfortably at a normal pace.
2. **Smile** - you don't have to sport a wide grin but a simple smile goes a long way in establishing the first contact and melting the ice a bit.
3. **Greet** - again basic pleasantries being exchanged is an integral part of settling in.
4. **Handshake** - can be at the beginning or at the end of the interview. Wait for the interviewer to offer his/her hand first and then respond to it. Offer your full palm, should be firm (but not bone crushing), shake gently 2-3 times and release after the shake.
5. **Eye contact** - maintaining eye contact (the way you do when you speak to your friends) is a strong sign of confidence. Don't look down or stare too hard, though.
6. **Sitting posture** - Maintain a comfortable posture but don't slouch or stoop. Don't cross your legs.
7. **Hand gestures** - use them to aid/reinforce the point you are making. Don't sit straight jacketed but avoid being too animated as well, please.
8. **Voice** - even toned, should be clear and audible. Neither mumble nor too loud, please. Speak complete sentences. Enunciate (giving stress on a word or a phrase in the sentence to emphasize it) to communicate effectively.

TIP

A great way to practice public speaking is to speak in front of a mirror for 5-10 minutes every day on any random topic of your choice. See if you are able to formulate correct sentences, use the vocabulary effectively, and not make any grammatical mistakes. Also, watch your facial expressions & hand gestures as you speak - are they in sync with the tone of your voice? Ask a friend to observe these for you if you find it difficult to speak and observe at the same time.

9. **Don't** - stare at the wall or the ceiling, bite your nails, scratch your head, tap your legs or fingers, pull at the corner of your shirt - all of these are signs of an under confident person.
10. **Exit** - Get up gently, thank everyone with a smile, walk comfortably out and close the door behind you gently.

3. During the interview

1. **Engage** - don't just give 'Yes/No' answers to leading questions. For example when asked 'Can you write well?' - don't just say 'Yes'. Talk about various kinds of topics that you have written on. Reinforce whatever you are saying with your own life or real life examples.
2. **Listen** - Let the interviewer complete his/her sentence or question. Don't cut in.
3. **Understand and think** - before you speak. It is OK to take time before you answer. Just say '*may I take a moment before I answer this?*' whenever you want to pause a little before answering.
4. **Ask** - whenever a question is not clear to you or if you could not hear it properly the first time.
5. **Be honest** - If you don't know the answer to a question, say so ('*I am sorry, I do not know the answer to that.*'). Don't try to make up facts or answers.
6. **Don't whine or complain** - about a professor, or a team member, or your previous work experience/internship.
7. **Show interest** - when given an opportunity, ask questions to the interviewer about the company or the role. It is also a great opportunity to show off all the research that you have done on the company and the profile before the interview.
8. **Enjoy** - the conversation. Do not worry too much about the results.

4. After the interview

If you have an opportunity, write a thank you email and ask for feedback (sample email below)

Dear sir,

I would like to thank you for giving me an opportunity to interview with your company. It was a great experience for me.

Please do let me know if you have some feedback on my performance during the interview and what I could have done better.

Thank you once again and I look forward to hearing from you.

Warm regards,

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5. Finally remember...

Everyone makes mistakes. Don't beat yourself up for saying something wrong or making a mistake during an interview. Instead learn from it and apply that in your next interview - there is **always** a better opportunity ahead.

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