



Interview Prep Guide

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PREPARING FOR AN INTERVIEW

Your resume made it through and you had a successful phone interview. Congratulations! You've been invited to a face-to-face interview with a potential employer. To shine in the interview and move to the next step, you need to stand out from your competition and make the employer feel confident about everything you have to offer.

The more strategically you prepare for your interview, the better you'll perform...and the more likely you'll be to get the job offer.

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Interview Prep: Research



INTERVIEW PREP: RESEARCH

Research gives you the information you need to appear confident, thorough, and knowledgeable. You should conduct research on four key things:

1. Yourself

Your job is to give the interviewer reasons why you'd be a valuable addition to their organization. Do you know what those reasons are? Think through what your knowledge, skills, and abilities are. Spend time reflecting on what you have to offer and you'll be poised to impress the interviewer. Use Advanced Resources' [**Job Search Prep Worksheet**](#) to guide your thought process.

2. The Company You're Interviewing With

- Primary mission or purpose of the company or organization
- Principal services or products
- Latest annual sales or revenue information
- Major competitors
- Organizational culture (*management style, work environment, structure*)
- Trends in the industry or field and the “hot” issues”

3. The Person You're Meeting

- Google them
- Use LinkedIn
- Also use Facebook and Twitter
- Make note of anything that could be useful during your interview
- Look for ways to make personal connections to help you stand out
- Look for awards, accomplishments that you can congratulate them on

4. The Position

- Major position responsibilities
- Qualifications and required skills
- Required training and education
- Typical earnings, advancement, career path, and employment outlook
- Opportunities for continuing education and training





Interview Prep: Prepare to Answer Questions

INTERVIEW PREP: PREPARE TO ANSWER QUESTIONS

Think through how you would answer some common questions. While you don't want to sound scripted, having a good sense of how you would respond will boost your confidence. Here are some ideas on how to answer some of the most commonly asked interview questions:

- **What is your definition of success?** *Be prepared with your own idea of success. Sometimes it is helpful to mention a person who represents your vision of success.*
- **Why are you interested in our company?** *Talk about information that you found through your research.*
- **What skills do you possess that would allow you to succeed here?** *Refer to specific skills and provide concrete examples.*
- **What are your strengths?** *Provide three adjectives or examples of your strengths. Present them as they relate to the particular position and organization.*
- **What are your weaknesses?** *Don't say "none". Give only one. Discuss your efforts to improve or manage your weakness. "My computer skills are not as strong as I would like them to be, so I've taken a Microsoft Office course, which has been helpful."*

- **What is important to you in a job? What motivates you?** *Talk about results and intrinsic returns in a position.*
- **In what kind of environment would you like to work?** *Open environment vs. closed, innovative vs. minimal change, good communication level throughout the organization.*
- **What do you know about our organization?** *Demonstrate the research you've done!*
- **What is your management style?** *Address issues such as delegation, motivation, and how you promote team spirit.*
- **What are your career goals?** *Talk first about the position for which you are applying. Be more specific with short term objectives and fairly general with long range plans (consider a 5-year plan).*
- **Why should we hire you?** *Discuss things that you bring that other candidates might lack (i.e. work experience, specialized skills, multiple language skills, volunteer experience).*



- **Describe what you find stressful in a job.** *Provide examples of when you have been in stressful situations. Your response should include a positive result.*
- **What other companies are you interviewing with and for what positions?** *Answer this question at your discretion. The interviewer knows you are conducting a job search and expects that you may have other offers.*
- **Why did you select your college?** *Avoid answering this question with "because of the school's geographic location". Think about academic programs, campus climate, and research opportunities.*
- **What are your feelings about working long hours, evenings, and weekends? Travel?** *Think about this question before you answer. Your values regarding work are important to the potential employer.*
- **Tell me about a time when you worked on a team. How did the team go about achieving its goal?** *Discuss the benefits of working on a team. Stay positive in your answer, but make sure you address the challenges of working on a team and how you overcame the challenges.*





- **Describe a leadership role you have assumed.** Possible answers, even if you haven't formally been a manager, could include elected/appointed positions held, the role you took on a project or team, volunteer leadership, etc.
- **Tell me about a time where you failed at a project or task. What did you learn from the experience?** The most important point to get across is how you turned a negative situation into a positive one.
- **Tell me about the best manager you ever worked for and why you liked working for that person so much.** Recall a positive experience with a former/current boss.

- **Name a recent situation when you had to motivate others.**
Remember, every person has a different motivational style. This is another opportunity to showcase your personal leadership skills.
- **How do you organize and plan for major projects? Give an example. Companies want candidates who have strong organizational skills. Elaborate.**

A NOTE ABOUT BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEWING QUESTIONS

The last seven questions listed above are Behavioral Interviewing Questions. The interviewer is looking for you to share a specific instance in which you handled a situation. Never reply to a behavioral interviewing question with a general answer. The STAR technique can help you provide specific and detailed answers to behavioral-based questions. Keep your response to 1-3 minutes (tops!) and provide examples that resulted in positive outcomes:



Situation

Open with a brief description of the situation and context of the story (*who, what, where, when, how*)



Task

Explain the task you had to complete highlighting any specific challenges or constraints (*costs, deadlines, other issues*)



Action

Describe the specific actions you took to complete the task, highlight desirable traits without stating them (*initiative, intelligence, dedication, leadership, understanding, etc.*)



Result

Close with the result of your efforts, include figures to quantify the result if possible

A close-up photograph of a person's hands writing in a small, open notebook. The hands are dark-skinned. One hand holds a yellow and black pen, while the other rests on the notebook. The notebook contains handwritten text that is partially visible, including "Interview Prep", "Prepare to Ask", and "Questions".

Interview Prep: Prepare to Ask Questions

INTERVIEW PREP: PREPARE TO ASK QUESTIONS

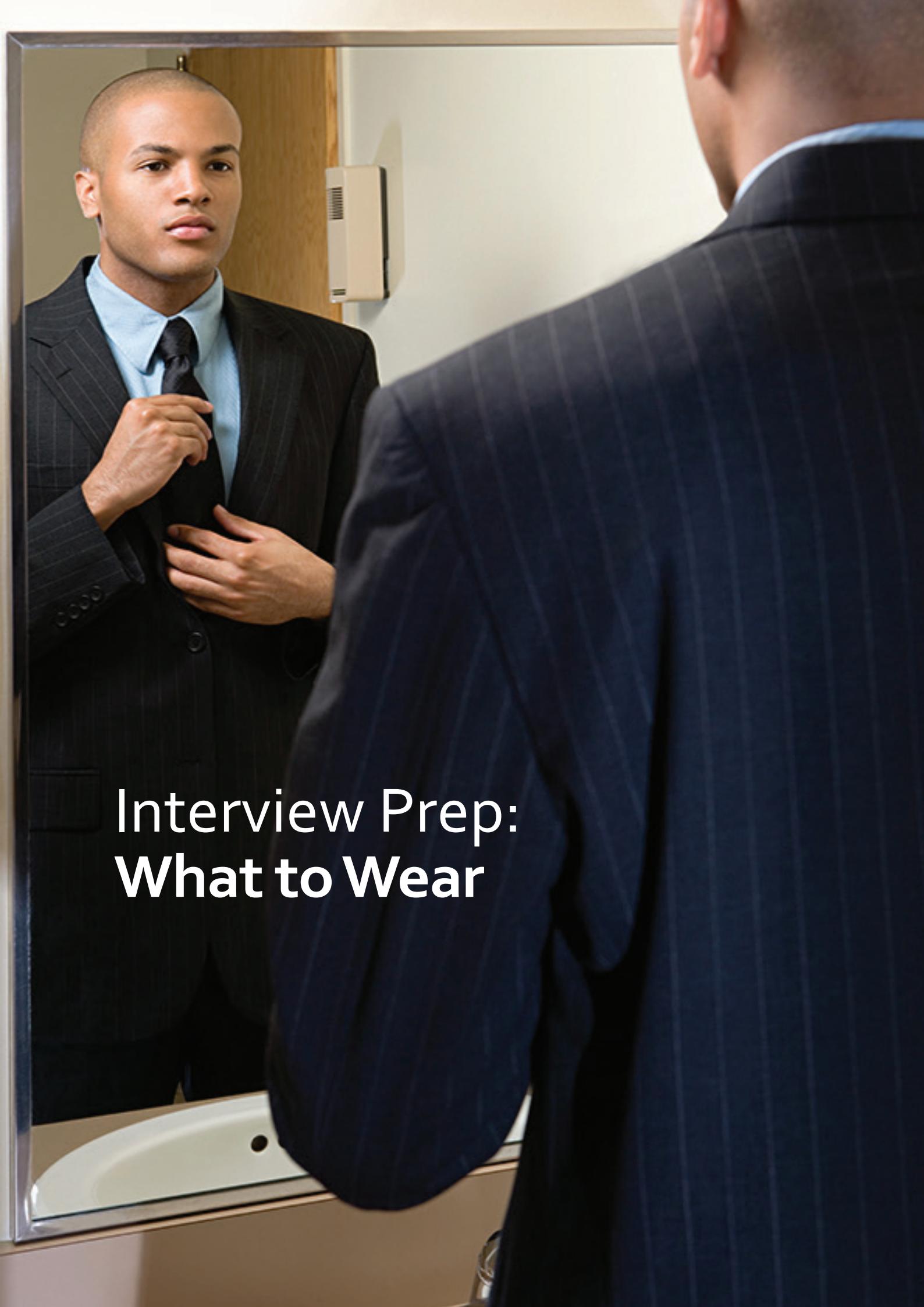
There will come a time during the interview - usually at the end, when the interviewer will say something like, "what questions do you have for me today?" You absolutely must ask questions at this time. Having a list of questions prepared shows the interviewer that you are serious about the job and that you have taken the time to prepare.

Here are some suggested questions that apply to almost any interviewing situation:

- Who is the direct supervisor for this position and what is that person's style of management?
- How are employees evaluated and how is success measured?
- What would you like done differently by the next person who fills the position?
- What type of people seem to do well in this company?
- What type of training is provided?
- What are some of the objectives that you would like accomplished in this job?
- What are some of the most difficult problems facing someone in this position? How do you think these could best be handled?

- What kind of support does this person receive in terms of people, finances, etc.?
- How would you describe the corporate/organizational culture?
- Where is the organization strong and where does it need to be strengthened?
- What are the opportunities you see for the department/company/organization in the next year?
- How is the organization ready to deal with technological changes over the next few years?
- What would you change about this organization?
- How well do departments interact with each other?



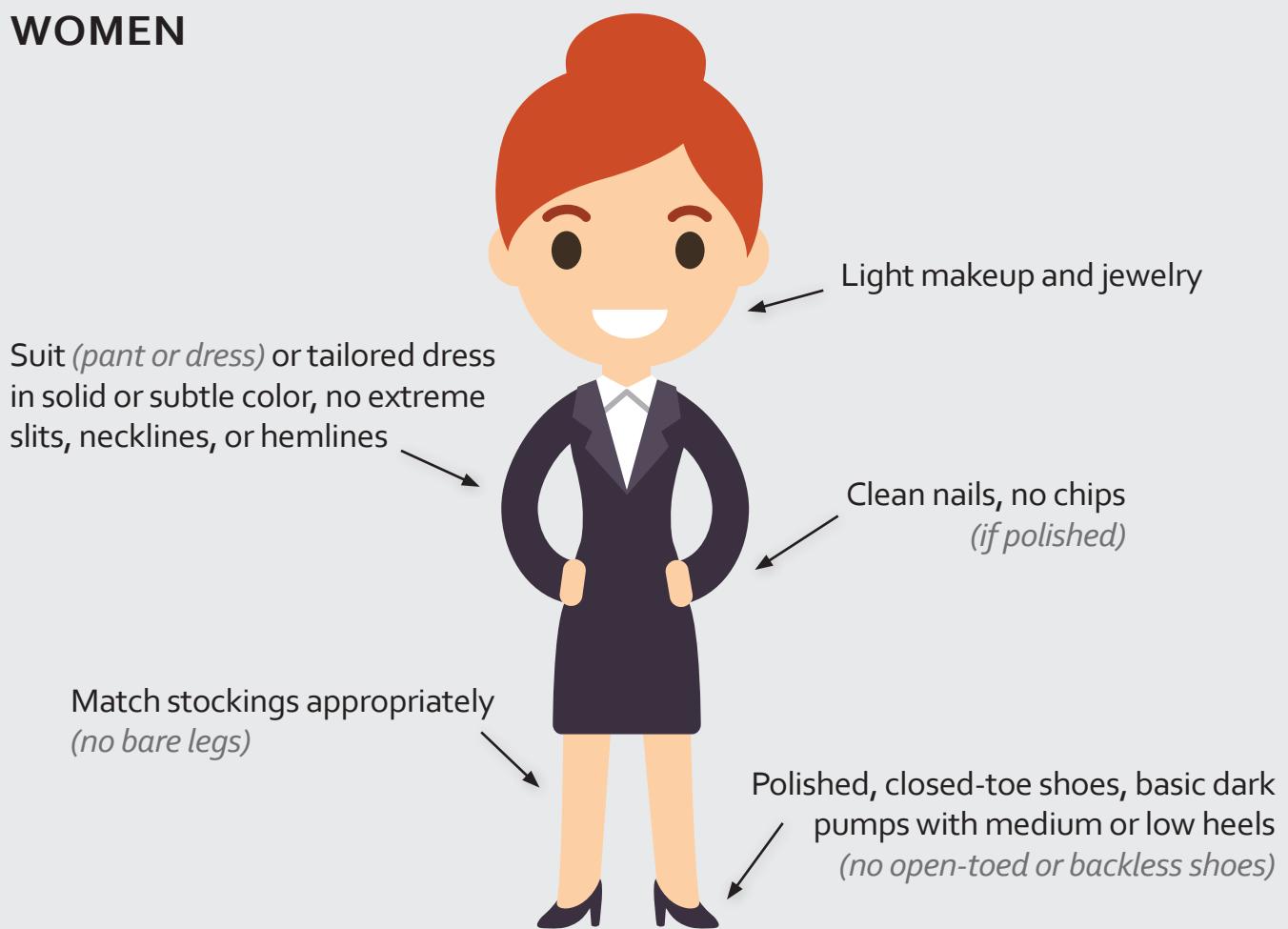
A young man with a shaved head is standing in front of a bathroom mirror, adjusting his dark pinstripe suit jacket and tie. He is wearing a light blue dress shirt. The background shows a wooden door and a white wall with a small vent or sensor unit. The lighting is bright, typical of a bathroom interior.

Interview Prep: What to Wear

INTERVIEW PREP: WHAT TO WEAR

While your skills and abilities are the most important thing, how you look impacts the first impression you create. A polished appearance shows the interviewer that you're ambitious, professional, and most importantly, a great fit for the company. Whether the environment you're interviewing in is corporate classic, business casual, or start-up relaxed, follow these general guidelines to dress for success:

WOMEN



MEN



WOMEN & MEN

- Conservative colors (*navy, black, gray*)
- Light fragrance, if any (*we recommend none*)
- Make sure clothing and accessories do not distract the interviewer from the process

For great interview wardrobe ideas, visit Advanced Resources' [Pinterest boards](#).

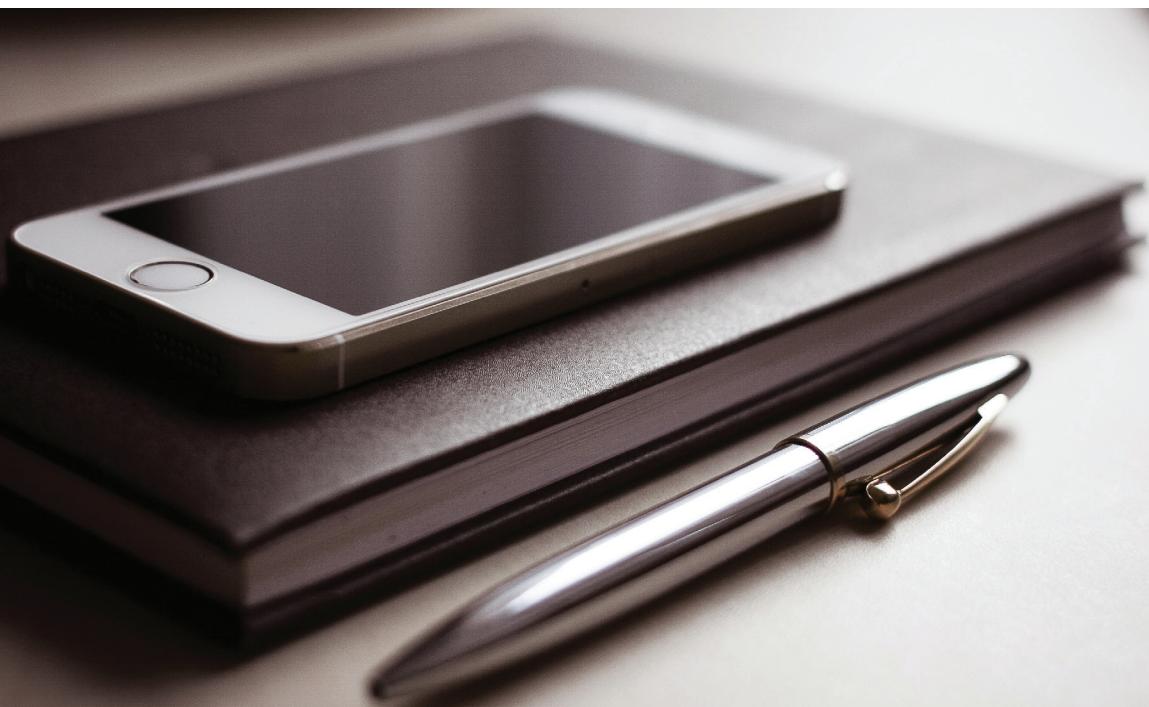


Interview Prep: What to Bring

INTERVIEW PREP: WHAT TO BRING

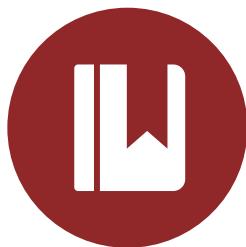
- Several copies of your resume**
- Any relevant work samples/portfolio**
- A fact sheet with references** (*names and contact information*)
- Mints**
- A folio/notepad and pen**
- Your list of questions**

Note: *Remember to silence your phone, or better yet - turn it off!*





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About Advanced Resources

Advanced Resources is a temporary staffing, direct hire placement, and workforce business solutions provider with offices in Chicago and New York. Founded in 1988, we've placed over 60,000 candidates in HR, technology, non-clinical healthcare, accounting & finance, and office support roles.

Advanced Resources is a proven industry leader committed to providing quality service, being one of only six staffing firms throughout the U.S. and Canada to receive both the Best of Staffing® Client Award and Talent Award every year since the program's inception.