



VERSAGE
ENGLISH TUTORING SERVICE

Job Interview Tips



These are helpful tips for preparing for your next job interview.

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Tips for Non-native Speakers – Preparing for Job Interviews in English

As a Business English tutor, I have helped many international students prepare for English language job interviews. Often my students are experienced at interviewing in their native languages and may also have conducted interviews at their previous jobs. Sometimes they were being interviewed in English for the first time. As you might expect, they were often nervous about their interviews!

I have prepared some tips and suggestions for how to get ready for interviews and I hope they will be helpful. Your comments and suggestions are welcome and feel free to share your experience by commenting on this post. If I can help you in any way, please contact me at pnyc2007@gmail.com or fill out my contact form and a description of your requirements at

<http://www.esltutornyc.com/contact-me/> My May 2015 newsletter topic "How

to *Prepare for Phone Interviews*”, available on my blog at <http://www.esltutornyc.com/how-to-prepare-for-phone-interviews/> is closely related to this newsletter. The tips below are for in-office interviews but also can be applied to phone interviews.

1. Prepare and practice an introductory speech

You can expect to get a question like “Tell Me about Yourself”. This gives the interviewer a chance to evaluate your language skill and how you “present yourself”. If you have prepared what you want to say and practiced your responses many times, you will feel a lot more natural speaking about yourself when you actually do the interview. It’s very important to create a strong first impression.

2. Prepare and practice responses for common interview questions

I have tried to list many questions that are commonly asked in job interviews, organized by category. If there is a job description (and there should be), read it carefully. Think about your previous experience and how it can help you to be successful in this job. Identify your best selling points. Many job descriptions list a lot of skills that are hard to find in any one candidate so don’t be discouraged. Make a list of questions for the interviewer.

Company and Job specific

Why are you interested in this position?

What specific experience do you have that fits this position?

Why are you the best person for the job?

Are you willing to travel? How frequently?

What do you know about this company?

Why do you want to work for this company?

What do you think you can do to contribute to this company?

About your past work experience

What were your specific job responsibilities?

What customer service experience do you have?

Describe a challenging problem or very difficult situation in your past job. What did you do to solve it? What were the results? , etc.]

What did you like or dislike about your last job?

What do you expect from a supervisor?

Describe your ideal boss

> If you have a job and are interviewing for a new job

Why are you leaving your current job?

> If you left your job (or lost your job) and have been unemployed

How long have you been unemployed?

What have you been doing since your last job?

> About you in **the** workplace

What are your strengths/weaknesses?

Do you prefer to work alone or on a team?

What would your colleagues say about you?

How do you handle stress? Give examples – techniques you use.

3. Answer questions positively

In your own culture, it may be acceptable to complain about your old job. Do not do this when interviewing for a job in the USA. The interviewer will consider this a negative characteristic. In other words, if you complain about your previous employer, the interviewer will think that you will complain about the firm you are interviewing with at some point in the future. It is acceptable to say that you are looking for a more challenging opportunity where you can improve your skills and knowledge.

4. Anticipate questions about your education / schools attended / degree

You may have attended a top school in your country, but your interviewer is unlikely to understand that. For example, you attended one of the top 3 business schools in Brazil. Chances are very good that the interviewer never heard of your school. Provide some background – explain that the school is very competitive, has the best teachers, and the degree is respected throughout your country or region.

5. Don't give long answers to every question

If you are in a first interview, whether on the phone or "in-person", don't feel that you are being evaluated based on how long you take to answer a question. Be focused, listen carefully to the question and provide the best answer you can. Use facts and details, not long stories or multiple examples. If you finish answering a question and think the interviewer was expecting more information, you can ask "would you like to hear more about"? Americans appreciate direct answers to questions. Often interviewers are working under time pressure. They have many positions and must evaluate many candidates and pick the best for the job. In second or third interviews, you may be asked to go into much more detail to describe your work experience. Consider what information the interviewer wants and then give your answer. It's okay to ask, "would you like another example", or, "do you have any other questions about"?

6. An important selling point - you are international!

You speak two and possibly more languages. You may have experience working with customers in different countries and markets. Perhaps you have experience working with people from different cultures. This is a marketable skill! Don't be afraid to make references to your international experience when answering questions for interviewers, or when speaking about your strengths.

7. Special vocabulary

It will be very helpful if you review vocabulary used in the industry that you are applying for a job before your interview. Try to read articles about the specific company and the industry to become familiar with new words. The Wall Street Journal, New York Times business section, Bloomberg News, Forbes.com, Fox Business News are excellent sources.

8. Finishing the interview and "follow up"

Ask your interviewer(s) for their business cards. It is also expected that you will ask about the next steps in the interview process. It is reasonable to ask if you can contact your interviewer 1-2 weeks after the initial interview. It is polite to respond promptly with a thank you email after the interview. Nowadays, it is normal to follow up by email, but you can use regular mail service if you do not have the interviewer's email ID. You should send the email within 24 hours. In your thank you email, use the proper title from the business card. Mention that you are very interested in the position (give the specific description of the position) and briefly highlight your qualifications and skills that match the job description.

9. Have patience - keep trying!

It is a very competitive job market. You will learn something from every interview that you do. It gets easier with more practice!

If you would like assistance practicing for your job interviews, please contact me at pnyc2007@gmail.com or leave a message on my contact form at <http://www.esltutornyc.com/contact-me/>

Good luck!

Pete Versage

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Contact Me

If you are interested in preparing for a job interview, or would like English lessons over Skype, please contact me.

Contact Me