



As we move towards the digital age, most employers use a phone interview to screen candidates, and then sometimes will conduct a virtual interview via Zoom or other online program. Preparing for phone or virtual interviews are somewhat the same, but we have a list of tips and advice to help guide you through these types of interviews.

HOW TO PREPARE FOR A PHONE INTERVIEW

Make sure that you pick an interview location that is free from distractions. Put your cell phone on silent or Do Not Disturb mode.

Be sure to have a voicemail message that is clear and professional should you miss a call from an employer.

Clarify with the employer the time zone, the length of the interview, and who will be conducting the interview.

Research the employer and have your notes handy for easy access. Your notes should have a list of answers to typical interview questions, as well as questions you have prepared for the employer.

Grab a pen, piece of paper, and a copy of your resume as well.

Remember to speak clearly and directly into the phone. Having a smile on your face will produce a smile in your voice.

Sit up straight or stand during a telephone interview so you can sound more confident and alert.

Have a glass of water handy.

Be prepared for pauses - take some time to answer the question if you need it. Also, if there is a pause after you answer the question, don't try to ramble to fill the silence. The employer may be taking notes, or figuring out what question to ask next. If you do not hear a question or fully understand the question, please ask the interviewer to repeat their question or explain in further detail.

HOW TO PREPARE FOR A VIRTUAL INTERVIEW

Just like a phone interview, pick a location with no distractions and have your notes in front of you

Choose a professional username that incorporates your first and/or last name. You may exchange your username with the employer, so be sure to pick a username that is professional and will leave a positive first impression.

Practice talking with a friend through Zoom or Skype. Make sure you are familiar with the technology. It is important for you to know how to launch a video call, adjust microphone levels, and other functions within the program. If your picture is too grainy or having audio issues, you may need to look into investing in a webcam. Another tool to help practice is [SkillsFirst Interview](#).

Create the right interview setting. Look at what the employer can see behind you. It is best to have an uncluttered background with no distracting objects or sound. Do not have a light behind you, as it may make it difficult for the employer to see your face.

Don't be so close to the computer screen that all the employer can see is your face. Adjust the camera to ensure the employer can see you from the chest up.

Dress professionally. Treat this just like you would an in-person interview when it comes to dress - typically business casual or business professional are ideal for a virtual interview.

Have a back-up plan. Software for online interviews is not 100% reliable; calls can be dropped with a bad connection. Be sure to have a phone available in case there are any technical issues.

AFTER THE INTERVIEW

Regardless if it is phone or virtual, make sure to follow-up with a thank you note. If you know the employer is working from home, an email will do. However, if the employer is working in the office, sending a hand-written note goes a long way.