

# Mastering the Art of Interviews

A Comprehensive Guide for A-Level students on Excelling in University, Apprenticeship and Job Interviews

## Interview Preparation Guide for A-Level Students

Preparing for an interview can be quite daunting, whether it's for a university placement, an apprenticeship, or a job. This guide is crafted to help you anticipate what to expect and how to prepare effectively, ensuring you make a positive impression. Remember this is only a guide and you will need to do your own research and read any information the university, job or apprenticeship has sent to you.



## Top Tips for any interview:

- **Sleep:** Get a good nights sleep before the interview; it's not a great idea to go out to a party the night before and then be tired and miss your alarm and rush off to interview.
- **Food:** Having a healthy breakfast on the morning of your interview will stand you in good stead. If your interview is scheduled after lunch, make sure you eat something even if you're feeling nervous - you won't put in your best performance on an empty stomach.
- **Clothes:** Get them ready the night before; maybe even iron them!
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## Applying

- **Online presence:** username and Email Address: Use a professional username or email address, hungryhippo@gmail.com won't sound very professional and may get your application denied before they're read any further!
- **Social Media:** People may well Google you or search Social Media before the interview. Ensure that your presence on the internet is professional. Pictures of you on a night out sticking the middle finger up is not what they want to see!

## UCAS

It could be an interview or audition, or you might be asked to provide examples of your work – maybe a portfolio or an essay. Finding out more about you is an ideal way for them to see if you'd be a good fit for the course.

If they do send you an invitation, it could either be sent to you directly, or through your UCAS application. It's best to contact the uni or college to find out how and where you will receive information about your interview.

Universities and colleges say it can be difficult to change the times and dates of interviews, so if possible, try to go at the suggested time. If you can't attend at the allotted time, you need to let the university or college know as soon as possible. If you received your interview decision through UCAS, the option to request a different time will be available. If you received the interview decision in another way, get in touch with the uni/college. When you've agreed a new date, they'll either update the invitation in your application or contact you directly to let you know.

Then after you've attended, they'll tell UCAS when they've made a decision and UCAS will let you know. Once all decisions are in, you can reply to your offers.

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## Understanding the Interview Format

### Online Interviews

Online interviews are not everyone's favourite but nowadays it is becoming more common. Online allows the recruiter to watch the interview again rather than just relying on their notes. There are two main types, both with very different experiences.

- **Live** - this is similar to a regular face-to-face interview. You'll speak to the interviewer (or panel of interviewers) in real-time over Microsoft Teams or Zoom. Live videos enable employers to recreate the traditional interview format without requiring the candidate to travel to their office, meaning they can recruit from anywhere in the world. Try to treat the conversation as you would an interview at the employer's offices and build a rapport with the interviewer.
- **Pre-recorded** - this is a much less personal experience as you won't be speaking to a real person. You'll be presented with pre-recorded or even written questions on screen, and then you'll have to record your answer on video, often to a time limit. This helps employers who have lots of candidates, as they can simply watch your answers at a time that suits them - but it can be awkward if you aren't used to recording yourself. This makes practice even more important. On the plus side, you will be able to do the interview at a time of your choosing up to a set deadline.



Regardless of whether live or pre-recorded think of the following:

- **Technical Setup:** Ensure your computer or device is functioning correctly. Test your internet connection, camera, and microphone well in advance to avoid last-minute issues. Have a back up plan in case there is a technical issue.
- **Environment:** Select a quiet, well-lit space where you won't be disturbed - tell the people you live with that the interview is happening and maybe even put a sign on your door to indicate that the interview is happening - you'd hate it if your brother comes in asking to borrow something or offering you a cup of tea! Ensure the background is neutral and free of distractions.

- **Lighting:** You need to think about the lighting, as it won't be a great interview if you can't be properly seen. To ensure you don't get a shadow either use natural light from a window or put a lamp in front of the camera and adjust the distance to get it right.
- **Dress Code:** Dress professionally, just as you would for an in-person interview, to convey respect and seriousness. Some places of work you won't need a tie for but maybe a jacket and nice shirt. Think about your top - girls a strappy top for an online interview is probably a no go or pale pink tops - things can look very different over a screen. For everyone avoid busy patterns and strips that can look funny on screen. For telephone and online interviews make sure you dress as though the interview is in person. Sitting in your tracksuit bottoms trying to act professional probably isn't going to go too well.
- **Notifications:** Close any software on your computer that might play notification sounds and switch your phone to silent to guarantee you won't be distracted. Also, let everyone in the house know you're about to start the interview so they don't interrupt.
- **Body Language:** It's best to avoid slouching, moving too much or touching your face. Instead, employers will be looking for you to make good eye contact, smile, listen and take an interest in what they're saying. To help you do this your camera should be at eye level and you should look into it rather than at the screen.
- **For pre-recorded interviews:** Try to imagine you're speaking to a real person, maintaining your enthusiasm and positive body language. This can be harder to do when you're simply recording your answers. Practice and watch yourself back; this can be quite an eye opener. Just a note that most people don't like watching themselves back but it's worth doing to avoid things you didn't realise you do like twiddling with your hair, scratching your nose etc.
- **Nerves:** If you're nervous it can be easy to rush what you're saying but remember that the employer wants to hear your answers. Speak clearly and be careful not to interrupt, as this is more easily done with the slight delay over the internet than during a face-to-face meeting.
- **Notes:** You can use notes during a video interview but you need to make sure you use them effectively.
  - Use bullet points and keep notes to important facts, skills you want to highlight and any questions you want to ask at the end.
  - Place notes just below or near your camera so your eyes stay close to the lens when glancing. Looking away from the camera too often can break the connection with your interviewer.
  - Use sticky notes on your screen or a printed sheet, whatever's easiest to look at naturally. Keep notes to a minimum to avoid having a cluttered space and being too distracted.
  - Practice so you don't read word-for-word as it can sound robotic and unnatural.
- **Using your mobile:** Yes, you can do a video interview on your phone and many people do. It's portable and easy to use anywhere, has a built in camera and microphone, which are often great quality and it's simple to join video platforms. However a smaller screen makes it harder to see interviewers or notes, it can be harder to position the phone steadily, you have limited ability to multitask and battery life or notifications can interrupt if not managed carefully.

- **Technical Issues during the Interview:** Despite the planning and prep if there are any technical hitches, for example if you can't hear the questions very well, don't struggle through, as you won't put in your best performance. If it's a live video interview, mention the problem. It may easily be fixed, or the interviewer may be happy to end the call and redial. For pre-recorded video interviews, check beforehand whether you're allowed to stop and restart in case of technical issues.



## Face-to-Face Interviews

- **Location:** Familiarise yourself with the interview location. Plan your route and aim to arrive at least 15 minutes early to account for any unexpected delays.
- **Accommodation:** Will you need to book accommodation so you don't have travel anxiety. Check this out as soon as possible. If you do have to book somewhere look at location, transport.
- **Transport:** If you're travelling by car - where can you park? How long is the walk from the car park? If you're travelling by train - allow longer than 15 minutes spare - what if your train is cancelled or delayed? If you're walking - look at the weather forecast - take a coat or an umbrella; you'd hate to turn up looking like a drowned rat.
- **Things to take:**
  - pen and notebook
  - your CV and a print out or screen shot of your interview invitation
  - your academic certificates and work examples if requested
  - photo ID
  - breath mints or gum

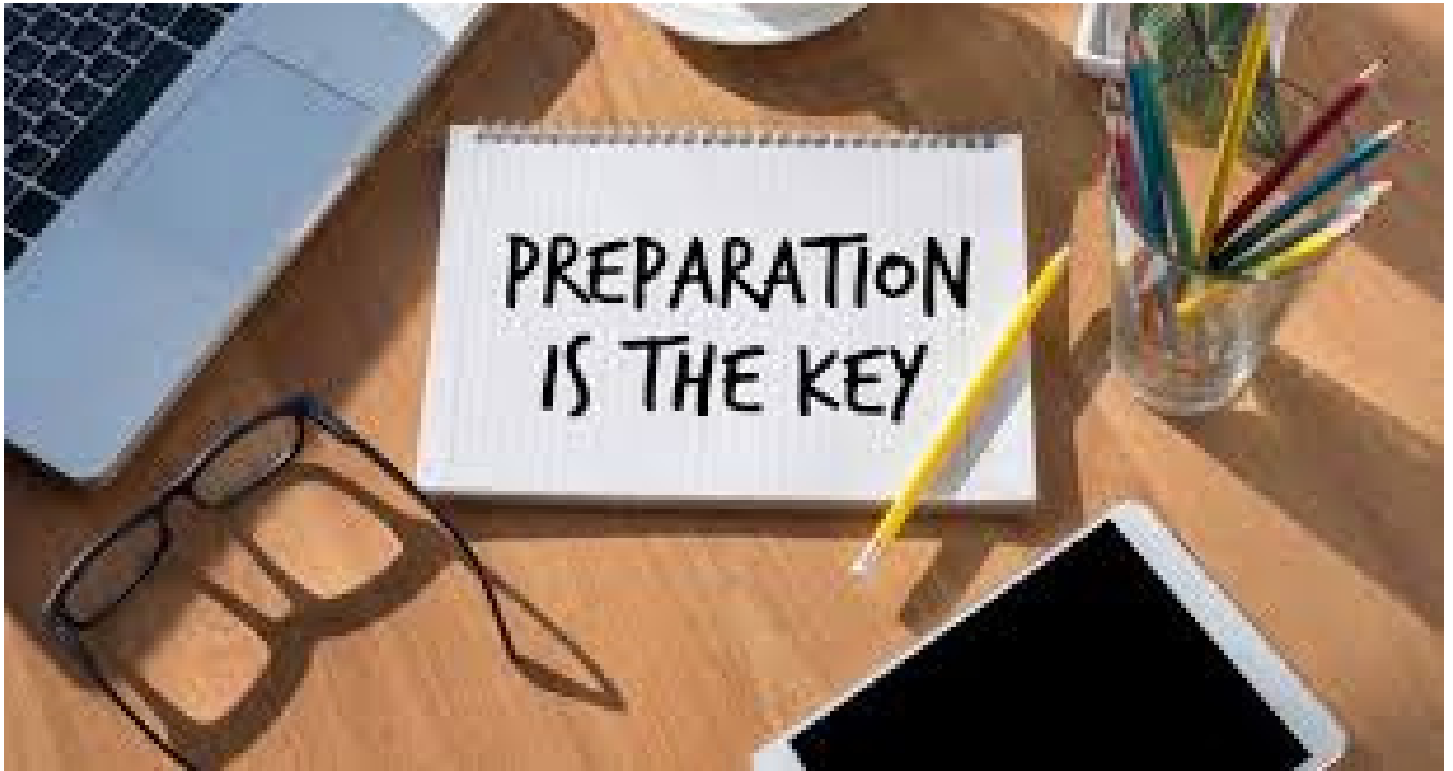


- a bottle of water
- money for transport and food.
- **Contact Details:** Have these to hand just in case there is a delay; you can then call them and inform them of the delay rather than just turning up late.
- **What to wear:**
  - What you'll be expected to wear depends on the size of the company, the industry it operates in and the culture it promotes. For example, a small creative agency may have different expectations to a major accountancy firm.
  - If you're unsure on the dress code, ask before attending the interview. The key point to remember is that it's better to be too smart than too casual. Only opt for a more casual outfit if you're certain that's acceptable - if there's any doubt, go for smart business attire.
  - Whatever you choose, make sure that your clothes are ironed and your shoes are clean. But do think about it; a creative art course may require different dress code to an accountancy course/job. Check out their website.



- **Mobile phone/Watch:** Make sure your mobile phone is switched off or on silence. If you're wearing a watch that buzzes or notifies you of an email turn it off or don't wear it; you do not want to look at your wrist, out of habit when it buzzes, during an important question. All of your attention should be in the interview.
- **Body Language:** Maintain steady eye contact, offer a firm handshake, and sit up straight. These non-verbal cues convey confidence and attentiveness.
- **Expect the unexpected:** they might do a surprise test to see how you react under pressure – just do your best. Everyone interviewing for that role will be under the same pressure.

# Interview Preparation



## For a University Placement or Apprenticeship

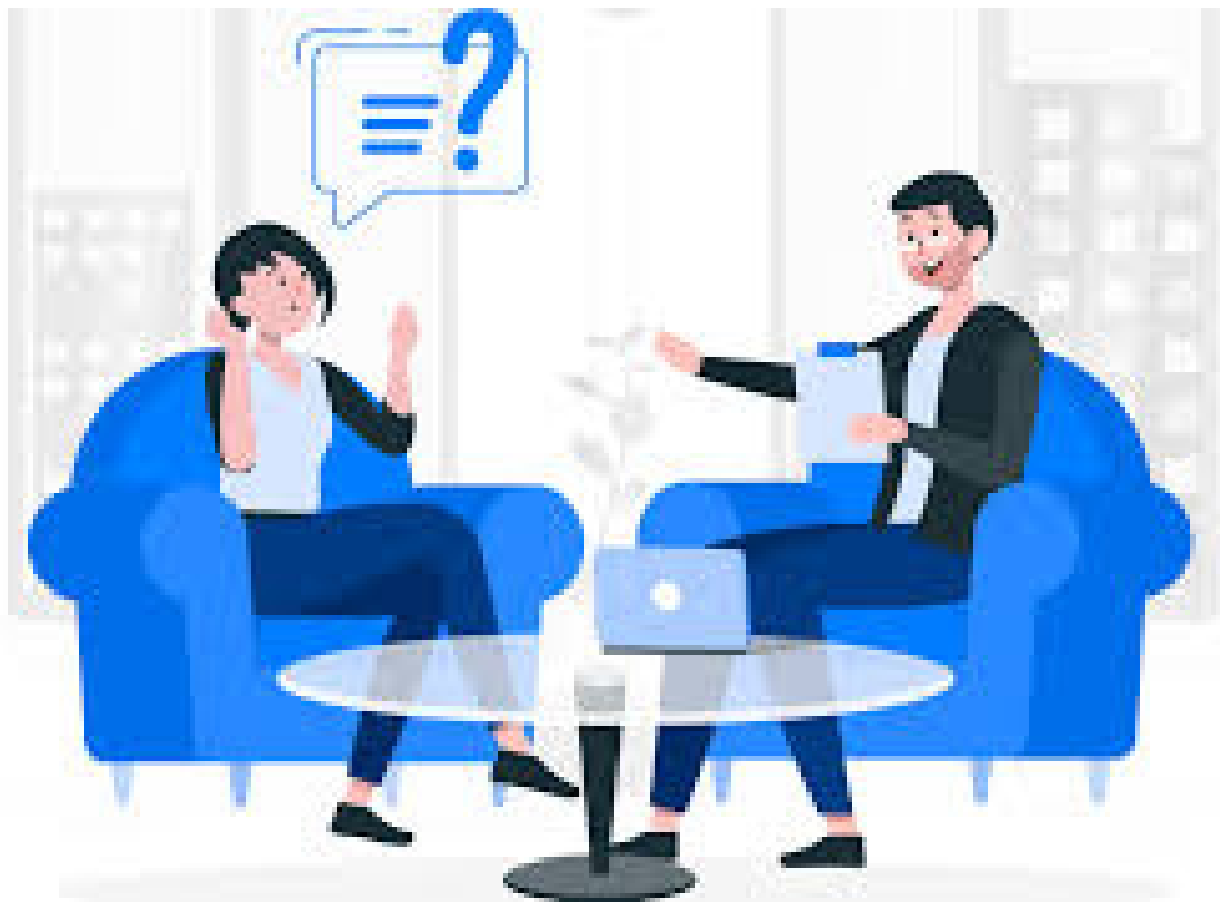
- **Research** - Do your research. Remember the modules over the years you'd be studying; if you can't remember print it out. Highlight the ones that really interest you. Research what the university offers outside of the course and it's location for things you are excited about in the local area linked to your course.
- **Interview** - Find out who the lecturers are, have they written any papers you could read but don't claim to have read them if you don't as they may ask you a question on it and that could trip you up; that won't create a good impression.

## For a Job

- **Employer** - you need to show that you understand the business beyond the basics. What sector does it operate in? What challenges does it face? Who are its competitors? What major projects has it recently completed? What are its culture and values? This kind of knowledge demonstrates a genuine interest.
- **Role** - read the job description again and, if you completed an application form, go over it to refresh your memory of how your skills and qualifications match the job. It's vital that you can explain why you want the job, that you understand the role and, even more importantly, why the employer should choose you over other candidates.
- **Interview panel** - try to find out who will be interviewing you. The email inviting you to the interview may include this information. Use LinkedIn and the 'About us' section of the company website to find out more about their professional interests and experience. This may help you to connect with your interviewers and create a positive impression during the interview.

# Five Ways to Make a Good Impression

- **Punctuality:** arriving late will increase your stress levels and give the employer a bad first impression, so do your best to arrive in good time.
- **Positivity and enthusiasm:** be polite and professional with any staff you meet before or after the interview and, if you're feeling particularly nervous, remind yourself that the worst thing that could happen is not getting the job. During the interview, respond to questions with positive statements, be enthusiastic about the job and avoid badmouthing your previous employers or university tutors.
- **Body language:** give a firm handshake to your interviewer(s) before and after the session. Once you're seated, sit naturally without slouching in your chair or leaning on the desk. Throughout the interview, remember to smile frequently and maintain eye contact.
- **Sitting:** don't slouch or hang your arm over the back of the chair; you may think it looks cool but it might not give the best impression.
- **Clarity:** answer all questions clearly and concisely, evidencing your most relevant skills, experiences and achievements. It's acceptable to pause before answering a difficult question to give yourself thinking time, or asking for clarification if you're unsure what a question means. When answering, don't speak too quickly. Also, don't be afraid to ask them to repeat a question; this can give you a little more thinking time or indeed mean you answer the question correctly if you genuinely didn't hear them.





# Common Interview Questions

At Bishop Luffa Sixth Form you can have mock interviews with a teacher or careers advisor, they will cover why you chose that course and what you enjoy most about your current studies. Take this opportunity; they will give you honest feedback about how you came across. Even if it's a teacher you're familiar with pretend you've never met them before and act like you would in the interview.

Plenty of places conduct interviews as a means of deciding between candidates who appear equally well-qualified on paper, but unfortunately, applicants often crumble under the pressure of the interview situation. The key to a successful interview lies in thorough preparation. Preparation is key!



## For University Placement

- **Why do you want to study this subject?** Explain your passion for the subject and how it aligns with your career goals. This is probably one of the most important questions you can be asked during a university interview. The interviewers are looking for people who can demonstrate a genuine interest in the subject they're applying for, and will want to know that you've chosen the subject for the right reasons not just because you will get the grades for their course.

### What to say:

“Because I enjoy it” – you’re more likely to be committed and to succeed if you genuinely enjoy the subject you’re studying, and you’ll probably also be better at the subject. Someone who’s genuinely interested in the subject will engage more with it, produce better work and contribute more usefully to class discussion.

“Because it fits in perfectly with my career aims” – this shows them that your choice of course is part of a well-considered long-term plan, meaning that you’re more likely to be committed to it.

A related answer might talk about the degree enabling you to achieve certain other things, such as “help change the world” for politics, or “find a cure for cancer” for medicine, and so on. These are exaggerated examples, although there’s nothing wrong with being ambitious and having big aspirations when it comes to your subject!

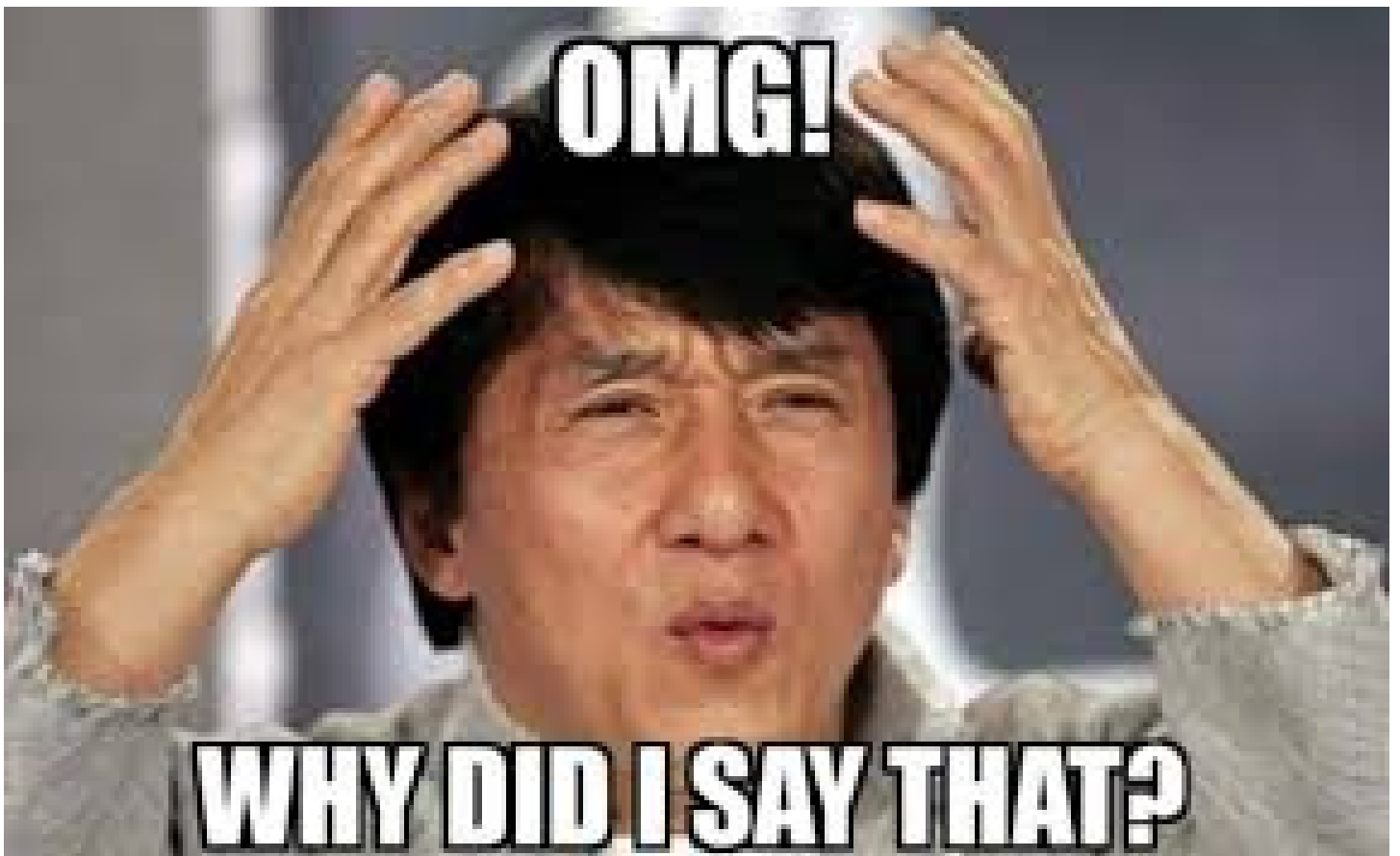
### What not to say:

“Because it had the least number of applicants per place” – admissions tutors aren’t going to be impressed if you’ve chosen their subject because you thought it would be a soft touch or easier to get into.

“Because I’m not likely to get the grades for [more competitive course]” – similar to the implication that their subject is the soft option, it’s going to look equally unimpressive if you say that you’ve chosen a particular subject – perhaps a less popular one – because you didn’t think you’d get the grades for a more competitive subject. What’s more, you should never introduce any negative thoughts about your grades – keep the tone of everything you say positive.

“Because my parents/teachers told me I should” – the admissions tutors will want to know that the motivation for studying the course comes from you, not from external influencers. Someone who is only applying for a particular subject because they’ve been told to is likely to be less motivated to see the course through to its completion.

“Because it will enable me to earn lots of money” – while earning potential can be a powerful motivator, it’s better to use your answer to this question to demonstrate genuine engagement with the subject, rather than focusing on longer-term financial gain.



- **Why did you choose this particular university?** It's not just your particular subject that admissions tutors want to see that you're committed to. They want to know that you have a good reason for choosing their university, because they'd like to know that if they offer you a place, there's a good chance that you'll accept it. They also want to know that you've done your research, so this question is a good opportunity to demonstrate your knowledge of the university. This question assesses your understanding of the university's strengths and how they align with your goals.

### What to say:

“Because the facilities here for my subject are second to none” – this shows that your subject has been at the forefront of your mind when making a sensible choice of university, again demonstrating your level of commitment to it. You can mention specific facilities to show that you’ve read into it thoroughly.

“Because I liked the approach this university takes to my course” – even within the same subject, every university takes a slightly different approach to the way it’s taught and structured. The university question is another good opportunity to show that you’ve really thought about the course and gone to the effort of finding a university whose approach to the subject you agree with. You can even name specific modules that set this university’s course apart from the others offering the same subject. Along similar lines, you could also mention the university’s great reputation for your subject, or the presence of certain lecturers you feel inspired by (though don’t let this last point dominate your answer; lecturers often move about or go on sabbatical, so even if there’s a particular academic you admire, they may not end up teaching you).

### What not to say:

“For the nightlife” – this shows that you’re motivated by the wrong things. University is primarily about studying, not about partying the night away, and answering this question in this way may raise alarm bells, making interviewers question whether you’d be committed to your studies.

“Because it was cheaper than the others I looked at” – even if this was one of your reasons, it’s best not to mention it; although finance is an understandable concern, it’s better to focus your answer on your course.

“Because my dad went here” – such an answer may carry a little bit of weight in an American university, but it’s unlikely to do so here. It’s not really a strong enough reason to apply to a university, and admissions tutors want to know that you’ve put a bit more thought into it than that.

“I couldn’t decide where else to apply” / “I was filling a space on my UCAS form” – this tells the interviewer that you didn’t put much thought into your decision, and that rather than having a genuine desire to study with them, you were simply making up the numbers on your UCAS form

- **Why did you choose your particular A-Levels?** You need to be able to justify the decisions you’ve made with regard to your education; this question tests whether or not you’ve put thought into the direction you’re heading in, and helps the interviewer ascertain that you’re motivated by the right things.

### What to say:

“I chose the subjects I thought would prepare me best for this course” – again, keeping your answer focused on the course is always a safe bet.

“I chose subjects that I genuinely enjoy and feel motivated to learn more about” – this shows that you’re someone who’s motivated by their own interests, suggesting that you’ll be committed to your chosen degree subject as well.

“I chose subjects that would teach me a range of skills so that I’d get maximum value from my A-levels” – this demonstrates that you’ve considered what each of your A-level subjects will teach you, so as to give yourself the widest possible set of skills to support your degree. It shows that you’re thinking about the long-term.

“I chose subjects that would complement each other” – showing that you’ve thought about how well your subjects work with each other is also advantageous, as it shows you have a mind that can make connections and see the bigger picture.

### What not to say:

“I had to take Subject A because Subject B didn’t fit in with my timetable.”

“I chose the subjects that would have the least homework.”

“I didn’t like the look of any of the other subjects.”

- **What are your career aspirations after completing this course?** Discuss your long-term goals and how the course will help you achieve them.
- **How do you manage your time and study effectively?** Share specific strategies you use to balance your studies and other commitments. Online planner, paper planner, written schedule.
- **Can you tell us about a significant challenge you faced and how you overcame it?** Describe a specific instance, emphasising your problem-solving skills and resilience.
- **What work experience have you done? What did it teach you?** Admissions tutors will be interested in the work experience you’ve done, especially if it relates to your course. Even if it doesn’t, though, work experience develops your maturity and gives you transferrable skills.

### What to say:

Subject-specific work experience is ideal; you can then say things like “it taught me that this is definitely the career I want to pursue” or “it gave me an interest in this particular aspect of the course” or “it taught me about the challenges this industry faces”.  
“Handling this difficult situation in my part-time job taught me that it’s important to persevere, even when you feel like giving up – something that applies to any situation, but especially academia.”  
“I spent the summer working as a personal assistant to a researcher in a research and development lab, which taught me to be very organised. It also gave me a unique insight into how academia can be applied to the real world.”

### What not to say:

“I had to take Subject A because Subject B didn’t fit in with my timetable.”  
“I chose the subjects that would have the least homework.”  
“I didn’t like the look of any of the other subjects.”

- **What do you know about the university and its courses?** Demonstrate that you've researched the university and its offerings.
- **What are your weaknesses?** The key to an effective answer to this question is to turn the negative angle into something that isn't really a negative.

### What to say:

“I’m a total perfectionist – I sometimes spend too long agonising over work to get it just right.”  
“I spend far too much money on books.”

### What not to say:

“I’m really lazy.”  
“I take criticism really personally” / “I can be very aggressive if someone questions my opinion.”  
“I don’t have any.”

- **What can you contribute to the university community?** This explores your potential to engage with campus life and contribute to the university. Avoid humorous or overly self-aggrandising answers here; instead, focus on selling yourself (modestly) to the interviewer and highlighting the key traits that make you a good person to have around. Support what you say with concrete examples of your experience.



### What to say:

“As an enthusiastic member of my school debating society, I enjoy academic debate, so I think I’d be able to contribute a lot to class discussions.”

“I’m good at organising things, and keen to get involved with running events for the department.”

“I love giving presentations, especially preparing great handouts, so I think I’d be particularly useful when it comes to group work.”

### What not to say:

“A wicked sense of humour.”

“I’m great at rugby.”

“My hamster.”

- **What did you read on the train here?** Questions like this – or more simply “what are you reading at the moment?” – are designed to spark discussion as well as to test what you read beyond the confines of the A-level syllabus whether applying for a university or job place. Be prepared to answer questions about whatever you mention here.

### What to say:

A seminal work related to your subject, or something more obscure.

For scientists, a reputable publication such as Nature, Scientific American or New Scientist would be acceptable (this shows that you’re keeping abreast of developments in your subjects), providing you can talk about specific articles or discoveries that interested you.

For non-English subjects, you could say a work of fiction if it’s highly relevant and you think they’re likely to have read it – e.g. “Pompeii” by Robert Harris if you’re applying for a Classical Archaeology subject (this would spark discussion of historical accuracy).

### What not to say:

Anything not subject-related.

Anything you haven’t actually read.

Anything popularist or discredited.

“Twilight” / “Cosmopolitan” / “The Daily Mail” / “The Star”

- **Why should we offer you a place?** Finally, the question every student dreads. Try to keep your answer short and sweet; if this question comes last, it's probably designed to wrap up the interview.

#### **What to say:**

This is a good opportunity to recap what you've highlighted already – your strengths, career aims, what you can contribute and so on.

At the very end, if you judge that the interviewers would respond well, you could also lighten the tone and end on a note that injects some of your personality, by saying something like “Also, I’m told I bake a good cake!” (with a grin).

#### **What not to say:**

“Because I’m better than all the other applicants” – trashing your fellow applicants is ungracious, and making an unsupported statement like this is unlikely to convince your interviewers.

## **For Apprenticeships**

- **Why are you interested in this apprenticeship?** Highlight your interest in the field and how the apprenticeship aligns with your career objectives, do NOT say “because it’s a good way to earn money and learn to do something cool” - they will want to know you are genuinely interested in learning the skill.
- **What skills do you bring to this position?** Discuss relevant skills and experiences that make you a strong candidate. These are your Super-Curricular activities that we asked you to look at and think about.
- **How do you handle constructive criticism?** Provide examples of how you’ve used feedback to improve.
- **Describe a time when you worked successfully as part of a team.** Highlight your teamwork skills and the positive outcomes of the collaboration.

## **For Job Interviews**

- **What interests you about this position?** Connect your interests and skills with the job responsibilities.
- **How do your skills and experiences align with the company’s goals?** Show your understanding of the company and how you can contribute.
- **Can you provide an example of a project you successfully completed?** Discuss a project, focusing on your role and the impact of your contributions. This could be anything from within school such as your EPQ or if you were involved in Inter House Drama competition, Sixth Form Council, Fashion Show.
- **What achievement are you most proud of?** This is another chance to highlight your suitability for and interest in the course, so try to make it subject-relevant if possible.

### What to say:

"I felt proud to be awarded first place in a poetry competition with a sonnet I wrote about..." (if you're applying for English)

"I recently won the Senior Challenge for the UK Mathematics Trust."

"Achieving a 100% mark in my AS-level History and English exams – an achievement I hope to emulate at A2."

### What not to say:

"Getting a Guinness World Record for having spending the longest time in a bath filled with Baked Beans."

"Being made Prom Queen at my Year 11 Leavers' Ball."

- **Where do you see yourself in five years?** Outline your career goals and how this position fits into your plan. This question addresses how much you've thought about the future, and how your new job placement fits in with that.

### What to say:

A career that fits naturally with what you're studying

"I'd like to continue to progress and maybe complete some training on the job so I can progress within the company."

### What not to say:

"Travelling."

"Marrying someone rich so I don't have to work."

"I haven't really thought about it."

## For any type of interview

### About Your Personality and Future:

- **Tell me about yourself:** This is an opportunity to provide a brief overview of your background, interests, and personality.
- **What are your main interests?** This helps the interviewer understand your personality and how you spend your time outside of academics.
- **What are your career plans?** While not mandatory, this question helps assess your long-term goals and how the university can help you achieve them.
- **What are your biggest achievements?** This allows you to highlight your accomplishments and showcase your abilities.
- **How would your friends describe you?** This provides insight into your personality from an external perspective. Interviewers use this interview question to assess your personality. Interviewers ask questions to learn about your character to determine whether or not you would fit in at the university. This question can be tricky since you

must mention distinguishing characteristics about yourself rather than traits such as caring, being a good listener, being pleasant, and so on, as these would not impress them.

**What to say:**

“My friends often describe me as dependable and approachable. They appreciate my willingness to listen and offer support whenever they need it. Additionally, they see me as someone determined and resilient, always striving to overcome challenges and achieve my goals.”

**What not to say:**

“I’m caring”

“I’m always up for a laugh and the first on the dance floor”

“I don’t have many friends, I’m a bit of a loner.”

- **What are your interests and hobbies?** It is one of the most important university admission questions, mainly asked to learn more about your personality and determine whether you will be a good fit for the university. Any hobby that makes you appear sluggish, such as binge-watching TV series all day or lying around, should be avoided when answering this question.

**What to say:**

One of my active hobbies is hiking, which I love for the sense of adventure and connection with nature it provides. Through hiking, I've learned adaptability and resilience in challenging situations, such as navigating difficult trails or sudden weather changes. This hobby has also taught me patience and problem-solving skills, which will benefit me in university when facing academic and personal challenges.

**What not to say:**

“Watching re-runs of Stranger Things.”

“I like reading”

“I haven’t really thought about it, I don’t do much really, I like gaming.”

## Interview questions to prepare for

- Why are you interested in our company?
- Can you share a little about yourself?
- What got you into this career?
- What are your strengths?
- What are your weaknesses?
- Tell me about a challenge you experienced in your previous role
- Do you have leadership experience?



## Questions to Ask the Interviewer

Ask the interviewer a question, this shows enthusiasm and gives you chance to get answers you haven't found yet.

### For University Placement

- **What opportunities are there for research or internships within the program?** Inquire about practical learning experiences.
- **How does the university support student development outside of academics?** Learn about extra and super-curricular and personal development opportunities.
- **What support is offered to students by the department? : Do you have regular meetings with a tutor**
- **Are there any extracurricular clubs or programs you would recommend?**
- **What makes you proud to be part of this university?**

### For Apprenticeships

- **What does a typical day look like for an apprentice in this role?** Gain insight into the daily responsibilities and work environment.

- **What skills are you hoping to develop in your apprentices over time?** Understand the growth and learning opportunities available.

## For Job Interviews

- **Can you describe the company culture?** Assess whether the company's values and environment align with your preferences.
- **What are the next steps in the interview process?** Clarify the timeline and what to expect after the interview. When will you find out if you've been successful?

## Follow up

- Send a thank-you email to express gratitude and reiterate your interest and that you look forward to hearing from them.
- Mention specific points from the interview to personalise your message and make a good impression.



## The STAR Method





What STAR stands for:

- Situation - the situation you had to deal with
- Task - the task you were given to do
- Action - the action you took
- Result - what happened as a result of your action and what you learned from the experience

If you still have queries then you can call 0800 100 900 or use their webchat on their website to speak to an advisor. They're open 8am to 8pm Monday to Friday and 10am to 5pm on Saturdays and bank holiday but closed Sundays, Christmas Day and New Year's Day.

### Example 1 - leadership skills

Tell me about a time when you have shown leadership skills.

**Situation** - in my previous digital marketing job, the company wanted to get more people to sign up to a newsletter which was not receiving a lot of attention.

**Task** - my job was to find a way of getting more people to sign up.

**Action** - I organised a meeting with other members of the marketing team to come up with creative ideas, and I led the social media campaign to generate interest in the revamped newsletter.

**Result** - over a period of 3 months, there was an 25% increase in sign-ups to the newsletter and the approach I took was used by the management team in other departments.

### Example 1 - leadership skills

Tell me about a time when you have shown leadership skills.

**Situation** - in my previous digital marketing job, the company wanted to get more people to sign up to a newsletter which was not receiving a lot of attention.

**Task** - my job was to find a way of getting more people to sign up.

**Action** - I organised a meeting with other members of the marketing team to come up with creative ideas, and I led the social media campaign to generate interest in the revamped newsletter.

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### Example 3 - problem solving

Give me an example of when you faced a problem at work. How did you handle it?

**Situation** - I was working in a florist shop with the manager and we were arranging an order of flowers for 2 weddings. The manager, who had taken the order, had mixed up the customers' addresses and the flowers were delivered to the wrong venues.

**Task** - I had to get the flowers to the right place and apologise to the customers.

**Action** - I told my boss that I would deal with the mistake, leaving her to take care of the shop. I spoke to both customers on the telephone to explain, and reassured them that we would put things right straight away. I drove to both venues, swapped the flowers in time and apologised in person. I gave both customers a voucher for a bouquet as compensation.

**Result** - the customers were grateful that we had acted quickly. Later on, they both came back to the shop to spend their vouchers and have since recommended us to their friends.

Give  
it a go

## Tips for Success

- **Research:** Dive deep into the institution or company's values, mission, and recent achievements. This knowledge will help tailor your responses.
- **Practice:** Conduct mock interviews with friends or mentors. Use their feedback to refine your answers and improve your delivery.
- **Reflect:** Consider your experiences and how they relate to the position you're applying for. Be ready to discuss them in detail.

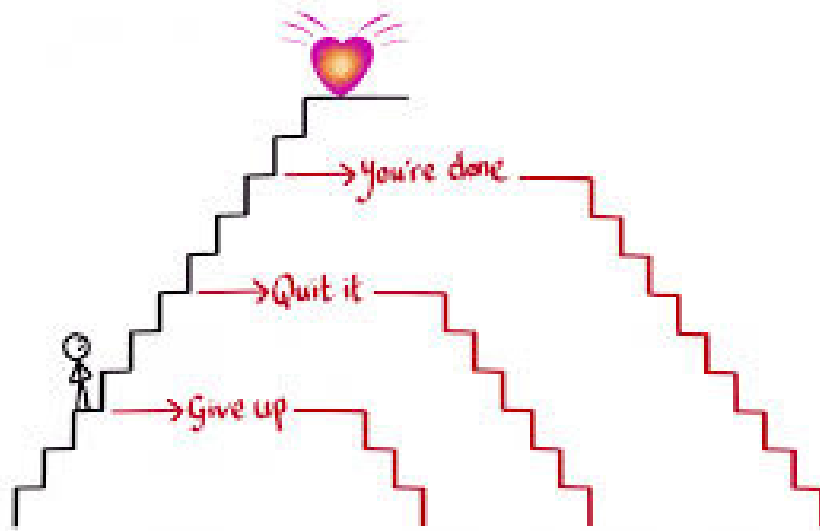
- **Stay Calm:** Take deep breaths, and if needed, pause briefly to collect your thoughts during the interview. It is better to take a short pause rather than fill that space with lots of umm or ahhs!

## Interview Preparation



## After the Interview

- As your job interview comes to an end, make sure you find out when you'll be informed of the outcome - and thank the interviewer for giving you the chance to attend.
- **Make notes** – if you have more interviews coming up, it might be handy preparation to write down the questions and answers you've already had. This will help you prepare even better for future interviews.
- **Reflect on how you did** – decide what worked well and think of new answers for areas you want to improve in.
- **Then sit back and wait** – once we've heard from the university or college, UCAS or the company will let you know if they're making you an offer.
- **There are three potential outcomes:**
  - **Success** - if you're offered the job, make sure it's right for you by discussing it with friends and family, and double-check details such as the salary before deciding whether to accept.
  - **Rejection** - if you're unsuccessful, don't be too downhearted as graduate employers receive large numbers of applications for every role. Email the company to thank them for the opportunity and request feedback from your interview so that you can improve your performance next time.
  - **Further steps** - interviews are typically the final stage in the application process, but if the employer has not been able to make a decision you may be asked back for a second interview



## In Conclusion

Interviews are a platform to showcase your strengths and enthusiasm. By preparing thoroughly and understanding the interview format, you can approach your interview with confidence. Remember, each interview is a learning experience that will help you improve for future opportunities. Remember these questions are just some of the ones you may be asked and by no means an exhaustive list of the only questions you'll be asked, there be some curve balls out there and you'll have to think on your feet; take a breath, ask for a minute then respond, you have nothing to lose. If you are successful on your first interview then that's amazing but many of people may have several interviews before success is theirs - it's a knock but don't stay down, get back up and prepare for the next one - you will get there in the end. Good luck!

**Good luck!  
Seize the day and  
give it everything  
you've got.**



**DON'T GIVE  
UP, ONE DAY  
YOU'LL LOOK  
BACK AND BE  
GLAD YOU  
DIDN'T.**



*Please note that all information in this guide is gathered from across the WWW and various organisations and is by no means the only information out there but you will find more information on Google. Please do your own research and use this document as a platform to get you started.*

**Good Luck!**