

4. The interview

The interview is about to begin; you are nicely on time and are waiting for a moment in the reception area. You may well be nervous, and unfortunately this can show itself in physical symptoms. The muscles in your arms and legs will tense up more than usual (ready to fight or flee), resulting in raised shoulders, jiggling legs or trembling, sweaty hands. The muscles in your bladder, on the other hand, relax, so you need the toilet more often. Your mouth also dries up quickly, which makes speaking harder.

To avoid making things even harder for yourself, don't opt for coffee or tea: these draw even more moisture out of you, and the chances of needing the toilet during the interview or of getting an even drier mouth only increase. On top of that, trembling hands are more noticeable when you have to handle a cup, saucer and spoon. Go for a glass of water.

A secretary comes to collect you. Use the walk for some positive small talk: say something pleasant about the building, a work of art or something similar.

You enter the room where the interview is to take place. Look at the person or people you are going to speak to and shake hands. Smile with self-assurance. Let the interviewer take the initiative. He or she will invite you to take a seat. Make sure you use the formal form of address ('u') throughout the interview. Keep looking the interviewer straight in the eye during the conversation. Sit up calmly and straight, with your hands in your lap in front of you as if you were holding a tennis ball. You do not need the protection of folded arms; you have nothing to hide. Do not fidget with your hands, do not touch your face and do not play with your hair. Stay seated calmly, feet on the floor, and consciously lower your shoulders. This will relax you.

A job interview usually has four phases:

1. Getting to know one another. The introductions, the offer of a drink and the 'Did you find us all right?'.
2. Introduction by the interviewer. The interviewer opens the conversation, explains the purpose of the interview and says something about the company and the position you are applying for.
3. The interview proper. The focus now shifts to you: time to present yourself and to ask any questions you have.
4. Closing. The interview is brought to an end and sometimes a brief evaluation is given. You are also told how quickly and in what way you can expect a response.

During the interview you can fall back on all the exercises you have spoken aloud and on your personal CV. You know who you are, what you want and what you are worth. You express yourself actively and positively. You speak clearly and calmly. You

do not voice criticism. You speak without a lot of 'ums' and 'ers' and you have a stack of STARS to hand. You will probably relax fairly quickly during the interview and you show your interest in the interviewer: after all, he knows everything about the role and can tell you more about the company and whether the job is right for you.

Do not hang around or look at you questioningly after the interview. You are never told during an interview whether you have got the job. The interviewer will announce that he has heard enough, having already given you the opportunity to ask questions of your own. You stand up, shake hands, smile, thank them for the interview and leave the room upright and at a calm pace.

Exercises: the interview

1. Besides the preparatory exercises, you can also practise coping with the tension of an interview through visualisation. Top athletes use this technique to prepare for competitions, and with results. You visualise yourself in a job interview. You visualise how you sit, your calm rate of speech, your fluent use of words, your gestures, how you keep looking the interviewer in the eye.
2. Practise the 'say something' game with someone. Talk for as long as possible without saying 'er' and without saying yes or no.
3. Walk consciously upright and practise sitting upright in a relaxed way. Do this in front of the mirror. Look at the effect a particular posture has. Observe it in the mirror and notice how the posture feels.