

Interviewing with Confidence

What is the JET Program?

Before the Interview

- Reach out to your references before you need them.
- Be mindful of your social media presence. What can the public see? Your potential employers will google you. Are you comfortable with everything they're going to find? Double-check your privacy settings.
- If you have a LinkedIn profile, make sure that it is up to date and tracks with your résumé and cover letter. Make sure your photo is professional.

Practice

- Think of the common questions you could be asked and write out your answers.
- That one question you hope they don't ask? Have an answer ready.
- Practice out loud. In the mirror, at home, with your friends and family, etc.

Research the company

- Talk to any contact you might have at the company.
- Have they had any major events recently?
Have they been in the news?
- If you know the name of the person you'll be speaking with, research them.

Research the position

- Know what the general expectations are going in and be ready to address them with your prior experience when you can.
- Consider doing a practice run to the interview site beforehand so that you know how long it really takes to get there.

The Interview

- Ideally, you should arrive with plenty of time before your interview. Find a coffee shop nearby and do a final review of your notes.
- Arrive 10 or so minutes early to the actual interview. There is such a thing as too early.
- Make sure your phone is off or in airplane mode.
- Bring a portfolio or a briefcase with copies of your cover letter and résumé (on good paper) and a notepad and pen.
 - Do not, under any circumstances, look at your own résumé.

Attire

- Dress appropriately—and get a second opinion on your choices.
- For men:
 - If you're buying a new suit, go for grey and (strongly) consider getting it tailored.
 - If the flaps in the back of your jacket have simple stitches to keep them together, cut them (usually a very visible simple “X”).
 - Unbutton your jacket when you sit.
 - Never button the bottom button.

Attire

- For women:
 - Wear a jacket
 - Avoid loud patterns or anything exceptionally bright or trendy
 - Stick with solid, neutral colors
 - No wedges. Plain heels—nothing higher than 3 inches
 - Be weather-appropriate
 - Opt for sleeves

- Be yourself. Don't misrepresent yourself during the interview. There is nothing worse than thinking you've hired one person only to be confronted by someone entirely different during their first week on the job.
- If you're being interviewed by a panel, be sure to look at and include everyone in the room, even if only one of them is doing the talking.
- When asked about previous experience or accomplishments, have specific, concrete examples. It's good to have a handful of good examples that you can draw upon to field a variety of questions.

- The interview should work both ways. You should come prepared with questions tailored to the company/position. Not having any questions will give the impression that you're not really invested or interested in the position.
- Never badmouth a previous employer.
- Ask for business cards at the conclusion of the interview.

After the Interview

- Send a thank you/follow up email no later than the next day.
- Make sure that you spell the names correctly.
- If you write more than one email, be sure to vary your text. They will likely compare versions to see if you simply copy/pasted.

The Two Big Prompts

- Why should we hire you?
- “Tell us about yourself.”

Tailored Interview Questions

- “What makes you a good fit for this position?”
- “Why this company rather than another?”
- “This job is a bit different from teaching English in Japan, why would you want to work here?”
- “How does your experience in Japan make you a good fit for this position?”

General Interview Questions

- What is your biggest weakness?
- Where do you want to be five years from now?
- What did you like least about your last job?
- Can you describe a time when you had a conflict with a co-worker or a supervisor and what you did to overcome that situation?
- What accomplishment are you most proud of from your last job?
- Tell me about a time you did something wrong and how you handled/improved/fixed it.
- What sort of salary are you hoping for?