

## Lesson 10

### The College Interview

**Materials Needed:**  
pen or pencil



**Vocabulary:** These words will help you understand this lesson.

Word/Term	Definition
<b>interview</b>	a formal meeting in person, especially one arranged for the assessment of the qualifications of an applicant
<b>academic advisor</b>	college personnel to whom you are assigned to give you advice to help you be successful
<b>admissions officer</b>	college staff person who interviews potential college students

#### Journal Entry

How do you feel about being interviewed? Does the thought of answering questions about yourself give you an uneasy feeling? Many people are uncomfortable thinking about being interviewed. You are not alone. Remember a college interview is a chance to show that you are just more than facts on a piece of paper. What can you show in an interview that you can't explain on paper? Be positive. In your journal write what you would like to convey to the college interviewer.

#### Preparation for the College Interview

Preparation for the college interview begins when you are doing research about colleges. There are many things that you will have questions about that aren't covered in the college

catalog. As you begin to make your college selections be sure to note some specifics about each college that you would like more information on. Spending your interview just finding out the basic facts about the college is a waste of your time and your interviewer's time. Do your homework; read the catalog carefully. The interview will be an exchange of information.



You will learn about the college and the college personnel will learn about you. Colleges do not use the interview to eliminate prospective students; however, a great interview could enhance your application and your chances of getting accepted.

Many colleges don't require an interview. Some colleges offer more than one type of interview. You could find yourself interviewing with a student, an alumnus, as well as, or in place of, an admissions officer. A less formal interview might be a group interview session. If you plan to pursue specific interests in college, such as sports or clubs, you might find it helpful to talk to current students or faculty members connected with your activity. Your college catalog will have a list of clubs and sports available to students.

If you have a chance to speak with students on campus you might ask what they like about the college, or what they dislike. Visiting the student center and reading the college newspaper and bulletin board may answer some of your questions. Be observant while touring the campus whether it is a formal tour or an informal stroll around the campus. Answer these questions for yourself. Are the facilities and grounds in good condition? Do classes tend to be large lectures or small sessions, or a combination? What kind of interaction do you see among students?

### **Honesty Is the Key in the Interview**

Keep in mind this is a conversation, not a quiz. You should be prepared to discuss your accomplishments, but not in a boastful way. Feel free to discuss your achievements

concentrating on the most important ones. It is perfectly all right to discuss some things that haven't gone as you might have wished. Doing so without making excuses or blaming others will show maturity.

The list of possible questions you might be asked is endless. The following is a sample of often asked questions. Read these over several times and formulate answers you might give. Spend time preparing.

What do you want out of college?

How did you develop interest in our school?

What other colleges are you considering?

What are you interested in studying?

What is the biggest challenge you have faced?

What is the most important thing you do in your spare time?

Name some hobbies you are interested in.

Tell me about your family.

Give three characteristics that describe you.

What is your weakness?

If you could change the world, what would you change and why?

Who do you admire and why?

What accomplishment are you most proud of?

What is your favorite book?

How do you manage your time?

What has been a controversial issue in your community? What is your position on it?

What is one thing that has influenced your life?

Have you worked up to your potential?

Is there any outside circumstance that interfered with your academic performance?

What are your goals?

Where do you see yourself in ten years?

**Know yourself; be yourself.**

### **An Important Part of the Interview – the Questions YOU Ask**

As a part of this conversation you will have an opportunity to ask questions. Consider carefully what you would like to ask. A few questions are appropriate. Here are some you might consider.

How many students will be in the freshman class?

How hard is it to get time on the college's computers?

How can I find out about part-time job opportunities or internships on campus?

What activities are available for freshmen to meet other students?

How does advisement work?

What is the college's system for course selection?

What type of housing is available to freshmen?

Do all students eat in the cafeteria? Is there a meal plan?

What kind of financial aid program does the college have?

What kinds of special services are available to students? (health? vocational placement?)

Do you have any advice for me?

\*If you have a specific concern now might be the time to ask for help.

Don't ask questions you already know the answers to. Ask for clarification or more information. Asking insightful questions shows your interest and that you have seriously thought about the college and your own needs. You might jot down several important questions ahead of time and take the list with you. Then you won't forget the important ones and your interviewer will be impressed that you are prepared.

### **Critical Part of the Interview**

Remember your manners. Say "thank you" to the interviewer for his/her time and information. If you really want to impress the interviewer send a written *thank you* when you get home.

### **Tips for the Interview**

Call in advance and make a definite time for an interview. Be prompt for your interview. In fact, arrive about 10 minutes early. Make sure you understand the interviewer's name. Ask the person to repeat his/her name if you are not sure of it. Dress appropriately. Suit coat and tie are not necessary, but jeans and a T-shirt are not appropriate. First impressions do count. Don't let how you're dressed get in the way of connecting with your interviewer. Casual dress is fine – especially if you're planning to walk all over campus later, but avoid T-shirts and very short skirts or shorts and caps. And for a great last impression, write a thank you note to the person who interviews you (make sure to get his/her business card before you leave the admission's office). Many students don't take the time to do this—which will make you stand out as the wonderful, well-mannered person you are.

#### **Things to Avoid**

##### **Don't**

- Be late
- Chew gum
- Wear too much perfume or cologne
- Swear
- Be arrogant
- Lie
- Memorize your answers
- Respond with only yes or no answers
- Be rude to any staff
- Bring a parent into the interview
- Refuse an interview

#### **Things to Remember**

##### **Do**

- Smile
- Make eye contact
- Dress appropriately
- Have confidence
- Shake hands firmly
- Ask good questions
- Be a good listener
- Sit still

### Talking with Your Body

Body language tells an interviewer a great deal about you. Send the right message. Sit up straight. Sit still and look at the interviewer, or if there is more than one, look at the interviewer who is asking the question. Don't tap your fingers on the table or chair, or tap your feet on the floor. Take time between the question and the answer so you can say what you really want to say.

### Finally ...

Anticipating an interview with a college admissions officer makes many students nervous. This is normal, but if you are prepared you should not be concerned. In the interview speak positively about yourself without bragging. Be cheerful and friendly. Listen carefully to the question you are being asked and answer it fully. This is a professional setting so use your best English – no slang.

### Analysis:

1. Look over the list of questions an interviewer might ask you. Select 6 and write them here.

a.

b.

c.

d.

e.

f.

2. Now write your response to each question.

**a.**

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**b.**

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**c.**

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**d.**

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**e.**

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**f.**

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3. Show your answers to your mentor. Ask him or her for suggestions. Were the answers appropriate? Were they complete? Write the comments here.

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4. Now select 5 questions you would like to ask a college admissions officer.

a.

b.

c.

d.

e.

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5. Which ones (use letters) are the most important to have answered? Make sure these are written down when you go for your interview. Add others if you want to.

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6. Select 5 *different* questions from the list of questions an interviewer might ask. Ask either your mentor or an adult to ask you the questions. You are to respond orally. Ask them to assess your answers. Are they appropriate and complete? What suggestions do they have?

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7. What will you wear in an interview? Ask your mentor if it is appropriate.

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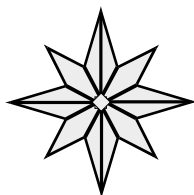
8. How do you feel about the interview process now?

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**NOTES or questions for your mentor / teacher:**



**End of Lesson 10**