

Interview Mastery Checklist

Your step-by-step guide to ace every interview
by Dr Jo Winchester

Interviews can feel intimidating, but the secret to success is preparation and connection. You don't need to be perfect. You just need to be present, curious, and ready to show what you can do.

1. Before the Interview: Do Your Homework

- ✅ Research the organisation.

Find out what they do, who they help, and what makes them different.

- 👉 Look for: values, recent projects, or headlines that show their direction.

- ✅ Re-read the job description.

Highlight keywords and required skills. These become your talking points.

- ✅ Know your stories.

Think of 3–4 examples that show how you've solved problems, worked in teams, or learned fast. Use the STAR method (Situation - Task - Action - Result) to structure each one.

- ✅ Prepare your outfit & logistics.

Plan what to wear, test your tech if it's online, and know exactly where you're going.

- ✅ Bring (or open) your kit.

Notebook | Pen | Copy of résumé | Questions for them | Water bottle | Confidence.

2. Master the Questions

The classics:

- “Tell me about yourself.” → Start with the present, then past, then future.
- “Why do you want to work here?” → Show you know their mission and how you add value.
- “What are your strengths?” → Link them to what the role needs.
- “What’s a weakness?” → Pick something real and show how you’re improving it.

Behavioral questions (anything starting with “Tell me about a time...”)

Use the STAR method. Keep stories short and specific.

Questions you should ask:

- “How would you describe success in this role?”
- “What’s the team culture like?”
- “What are the next steps in the process?”
- “Is there any question you asked today where my answer didn’t match everything you were looking for? Could I have the opportunity to provide you with more clarity?”

👉 Great candidates ask as well as answer.

FUTURE OF WORK

3. Show, Don’t Tell

- ✅ Use examples instead of adjectives.

Say “I led a project with three peers that increased attendance by 20%,” not “I’m a natural leader.”

- ✅ Mirror their language.

If they emphasise teamwork, use teamwork words.

- ✅ Watch your tone and body language.

Sit tall, smile, and make eye contact. This shows confidence without arrogance.

- ✅ Practice out loud.

Record yourself or do a mock interview with a friend. Notice pacing, ums, and body language.

4. Nail the Logistics

- ✓ Arrive early. (Or log in 5 min before.)
- ✓ Turn off notifications. Silence phone, close extra tabs.
- ✓ Bring ID if required.
- ✓ Have backup tech — hotspot, extra charger, or printed résumé.
- ✓ Breathe. Two slow breaths calm nerves faster than coffee can create them.

5. Follow-Up Like a Pro

- ✓ Send a thank-you email within 24 hours.

Keep it short:

“Thank you for the opportunity to meet today.” I loved hearing about [project/team name] and I’m even more excited about [role].”

- ✓ Reflect.

What went well? What can you improve next time? If you haven’t gotten the job, email and ask for feedback if they don’t give you any in the phone call. Maximize the experience

- ✓ Stay in touch.

Follow their page on LinkedIn or send a connection request with a quick note.

6. Bonus Mindset Hacks

- You’re not being judged. You’re being discovered.
- The interviewer wants you to succeed (they’d love to find the right person).
- Treat every interview as practice. Everyone needs to build skill and self-belief.

Final Thoughts

Interviews aren’t about perfection; they’re about connection. When you prepare with curiosity, communicate with warmth, and follow through with professionalism, you stand out.

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