

**1 First, Tighten up the Resume'**  
Before you can ace your interview, you have to actually get the interview. That means making an awesome resume and making sure it gets through.

**2 Prepare Ahead of Time**  
So you've got the interview, but you still have a lot of work to do before you walk into that building. Writer Alan Skorkin says the main reason most people suck at interviews is a lack of preparation. So, find out as much as you can about the company, research the job, and formulate a strategy to stand out in that interview among all the other candidates. Getting a cheat sheet together and studying it can help you out, too.

**3 Make a Good First Impression**  
Your job interview starts the second you walk in the door, so be ready. Practice walking into a room if you have to. But more than anything learn how first impressions work and do everything you can to make a good one: be on time, dress and groom yourself well, and be aware of your body language.

*Remember—if you don't want to be there, the interviewer will know. When heading into a job interview you might think that you need to start your performance with the...*

**4 Tackle the Tough Questions**  
Once you're inside, it's time for the hard part: answering the interview questions. Know the questions you'll be expected to answer backwards and forwards, and do some extra research on answering the really tough ones, like "what is your biggest weakness," "have you ever been fired," "tell me about a challenge you faced with a coworker," or even just the ever-vague "tell me about yourself."

Most of your answers will probably follow a specific pattern, so when in doubt, fall back on the STAR technique. But most of all: learn why they're asking you each question and tailor your responses to their hidden motives. Don't be afraid to dance around questions you'd rather not answer, too.

#### The Star Technique for answering interview questions

- **Situation:**  
Open with a brief description of the Situation and context of the story (who, what, where, when, how).
- **Task:**  
Explain the Task you had to complete highlighting any specific challenges or constraint (eg deadlines, costs, other issues).
- **Action:**  
Describe the specific Actions that you took to complete the task. These should highlight desirable traits without needing to state them (initiative, intelligence, dedication, leadership, understanding, etc.)
- **Result:**  
Close with the result of your efforts. Include figures to quantify the result if possible.
- **Hardest job interview questions:**  
<http://lifehacker.com/5936901/the-hardest-job-interview-questions--and-how-to-ace-them>.

Career Gear Houston is dedicated to building stronger families and communities by helping low-income, job ready men overcome barriers to success through employment.

**Ask Some Questions Yourself**

The interviewer will eventually ask: "Do you have any questions for us?"

5 Your interviewer shouldn't be the only one asking questions. This is your chance to not only make a good impression, but learn a bit more about the job you're applying for. Ask a few questions that will make you look good, as well as some questions that'll show you whether this is the right job for you. With the right questions prepared, you'll be one step ahead of the competition.

**Emphasize Your Good Qualities**

6 You'll probably feel the need to be humble, but don't. Shameless self-promotion is a good thing in job interviews. In fact, it's the only thing you can really do to showcase your good qualities. If you don't have experience to tout, remember that potential is actually more valuable than experience: if you can show why you're a promising hire, you're in.

**Avoid the Common Pitfalls**

7 So you've learned what to do, but it's also important to know what to avoid. Even something as simple as negative body language can sabotage your chances, so make sure you aren't hurting yourself without knowing it. Research the subjects you should avoid and make sure you don't overshare, particularly when it comes to your personal life. As long as you don't raise any red flags, you should be good to go.

**Ask for the Job**

8 Hopefully, with the right preparation, your interview will go smoothly. When the interview is winding down and you've asked your questions.... Then ask: What are the next Steps in the interviewing process? Finally....ASK FOR THE JOB!!!..... The interviewer wants to know you want it.

**Follow Up Afterwards**

9 Don't let your interview be the last they hear from you. If you follow up afterwards, you'll help them remember who you are, and make sure your resume doesn't fall into the abyss of the forgotten. Send a thank you note after your interview, and a short email later on to check in if you haven't heard back. Take into account how you've been communicating with them so far, though, as different modes of communication may be more beneficial. If you have a follow up interview, be sure to nail that too.

**GET THE INTERVIEWERS CARD!!!**

**If You Don't Get Hired, Find Out Why**

10 Not every interview will be a winner, sadly, even if you do everything right. If you don't get hired, the best thing you can do is find out why and apply that knowledge to your next round of interviews. Look back on your interview and think about what you could have done better, whether it's avoiding the "over qualification" trap or just simply using better grammar. There is any number of reasons someone might not hire you, and all you can do is use this round as practice for your next interview.