

Going to a Job Interview...

Horror Stories

1. Avoid dog poop.

"I really, really needed this job. So the fact that I was riding to the interview on an ailing public bus that was having a hard time keeping the engine running was making me even more nervous. The bus pulled to a stop at my corner, and I was already standing at the door waiting to burst through to make it on time. I leapt off the bus, hurried to the receptionist desk, where she was waiting to lead me in immediately. After about two minutes of small talk and an official question, I noticed a quickly overpowering smell in the office. My interviewer and I quickly discovered the cause, to my horror. Always look where you're walking." – Chris F., San Francisco

2. Turn off your cell phone - especially if you have a ringtone that sounds like farm animals.

"I had an interview for an MIS position. I'd spent the night before in a less-than-civilized fashion in another city in an overcrowded house with several friends, catching up. I got back into town tired and stinking of drink, smoke and sweat to frantically try and put myself together.

"I arrived 10 minutes late and still looking like a carnival freak. Mere minutes into the interview, my cell phone begins ringing. I'd forgotten one of the basic tenets of job interviewing: turn my ringer off. Of course, with me being a geek, the phone didn't sound off with just any everyday, boring ringtone. I'd created a special one from an old punk band on my digital audio workstation, complete with cursing and cow mooing effects. My interviewer didn't try to hide the fact that she wasn't much of a music fan." - Megan H., Lawrence, Kansas

3. Keep your computer virus software updated if you're sending your resumé electronically.

"I sent a [digital resumé](#) and cover letter via e-mail to apply for a position as a technical writer. Within a few hours, a message from the director in charge of hiring came via e-mail. Full of anticipation, I opened it to find a terse message: 'Your resumé is infected with a virus and has been quarantined.' You just can't recover from explaining an infected resumé during an interview. I did not pursue the position further." - Ed B., Madison, Wisconsin

4. Don't be "cute" or flip about your answers. Condescending statements and jokes to questions don't reflect well during the hiring process.

"I had to undergo a ludicrous 500-question psychological examination when I applied to be a security guard during college. Among the 500 questions were about 17 questions asking me in slightly varied ways whether or not I have ever thought of killing myself. I answered, 'No, but the idea is growing on me every time you ask.'" - Jarod H., Clarkesville, Tennessee

5. If you're bringing along a purse, case or European Carry All®, make sure you know what's inside it.

"I was a bit flustered and nervous during a particularly specific set of questions given me, which caused me to shift in my seat and knock my purse from the

table to the left. Out burst three condoms (three of a large number still in my purse given to me during a street festival I attended the day before). I was mortified. The interview lasted approximately one minute after that episode. I didn't get the job but was told that I 'interviewed well.'" - Teresa B., New York, New York

Questions:

1. Have you ever been interviewed for a job in English? How did it go?
2. How do you feel about going for an interview?
3. How can you prepare for an interview
4. Have you ever had a bad experience at an interview before? What happened?
5. Where have you worked before?
6. What was your favourite job?
7. What do you want to do in the future?