

The College/Scholarship Interview

Get ready for the interview.

Prepare yourself and make sure you know the interview time, location, and how to get there. If possible, ask who might be interviewing. Act out your upcoming interview. Ask a teacher, counselor or friend to read through a list of potential questions with you and practice stating your answers. Lastly, pick out a nice outfit to wear the day of the interview. Wearing jeans and a t-shirt to the interview may not be a good idea. Instead, wear something you might wear to a job interview.

Learn about the school/scholarship.

Research the school/scholarship online to see what you can find out ahead of time. Having knowledge about the school/scholarship and sharing what you know during the interview could be positive with the selection committee.

A list of sample questions that might be asked during the interview.

1. Why did you apply to this school/for this scholarship?
2. What makes you stand out from other candidates?
3. How will you contribute to your community?
4. Tell us about one event or person in your life that shaped you?
5. Talk about your academic achievements/aspirations?
6. Talk about your community involvement?
7. Tell us about yourself.
8. Tell us about your current educational and career goals?
9. Where do you see yourself in five years?
10. How do you spend your free time outside of class?
11. What is a skill or experience you don't possess now but hope to leave college with?
12. Tell me about a personal achievement that makes you proud?
13. Tell me about a mistake you made and what you learned from it?
14. Who has influenced your life and why?
15. Why do you think you're an excellent candidate for admission/this scholarship?

Prepare your list of questions.

Have questions ready to ask interviewers and take the list with you to the interview. In addition, think of three things you want to tell your interviewers about you. Prepare your resume and bring it with you to the interview also. Be sure to read it thoroughly to remember what your experiences and past responsibilities have been and share it with the interviewers.

More Info:

We've put together a list of the most common college/scholarship interview questions (and how to answer them) to help you prepare.

1. "Tell us about yourself."

It sounds simple, but there is a right way to answer this question. They're not asking for your life story here. Don't waste time talking about what's on your application resume or scholarship application – they already know all that, and they want to see what else sets you apart from other applicants! Give them a quick overview of what your interests and skills are, how that relates to receiving this scholarship, and why you'd be the best person to win.

2. "What's your greatest strength?"

If you've made it this far, they already think you're pretty awesome, but this is the time to really show them. If you're a good writer, tell your interviewer(s) how much you enjoyed your high school English class or what your strategy was for writing your scholarship essays. If you enjoy performing, give an anecdote about helping others overcome stage fright. Whatever your strength is, always be specific and give examples.

3. "What's your biggest weakness?"

The key to talking about your weaknesses is to paint them in a positive light. (And no, saying you're a perfectionist isn't a real answer.) If public speaking isn't your strong suit, explain how you took a public speaking class, and even though it still makes you nervous, you're working on overcoming your fear. If you struggle to work in group projects, give an example of a time you were able to let go and trust other people to accomplish something great together. Even if you're still working on overcoming a weakness, the thing your interviewer really wants to see is how you handle it.

4. "Why do you deserve this scholarship?"

You don't deserve this scholarship because you have a high GPA or because you won't be able to go to your dream school without it. You deserve it because all of your skills and accomplishments have come together to get you to where you are today. Explain that you know there are plenty of applicants who are deserving of this scholarship, but your unique experiences are a good indicator of your future success, and receiving this scholarship will open the door for many more opportunities.

5. "Where do you see yourself in five years?"

You don't have to have your entire life mapped out for the next five years, but the scholarship committee wants to see that you've got some sort of game plan. What do you want to accomplish while you're in college? What do you see yourself doing after graduation? Incorporate how this scholarship will give you a leg up on accomplishing your goals.

6. “Who is your role model?”

When your interviewer asks this question, they’re trying to learn more about who you are, not about your role model. Whether it’s a family member, a teacher, or a celebrity, explain how their actions have inspired you or what you’ve learned from them and why.

7. “Do you have any questions for me?” or “Is there anything else you’d like to add?”

Whatever you do, don’t say “no.” Use this as an opportunity to mention anything you didn’t get to talk about that you think the committee should know, or to ask a few questions that show your interest in the scholarship. Here are a few ideas for good questions to ask:

- What’s something you wish you would have known when you were in my shoes?
- What advice would you give someone in my position?
- How/why did you get into this field?
- What do you think is the biggest challenge for people looking to get into this field?

It’s important to keep it professional, but don’t be afraid to have fun with your interview! The committee has already seen your application, essay, and transcripts – now it’s your chance to show them who you are beyond that.