

General Interview Tips

Everyone gets nervous at interviews, but careful preparation can help you to break through that nervousness and present yourself calmly and confidently as a competitive candidate for any scholarship program. Getting selected for an interview is a privilege – congratulate yourself! Then get down to the work of preparing.

- Review the scholarship program information, including information about the organization giving the scholarship, thoroughly.
- Prepare for demanding, challenging questions.
- Develop your verbal communication skills through communication classes, reading avidly to improve vocabulary, participating in debate clubs/organizations, etc.
- Learn about current affairs by reading national newspapers and journals, participating in current event discussions and debates on campus and elsewhere
- During the interview, take your time responding to questions; don't rush your answers. It's natural to be nervous. Scholarship interviews can be a little intimidating and the interviewers know that. It's important to remember that being interviewed most likely means that you are one of the top finalists for the scholarship. You obviously deserve to be there! Think of your interview as a conversation rather than an interrogation. Make eye contact, maintain good posture, ask questions and answer confidently.
- Stop talking when you've made your point; don't ramble.
- Honesty is the Best Policy. You hear it all the time: Just be you. What does it mean? It means answer questions honestly and respectfully. Don't try to make up a story or an answer that you think someone will like.
- Practice! It takes skill to talk about yourself without sounding too self-absorbed and to answer questions thoughtfully but concisely under pressure, without sounding too canned.
- Remember to Be On Time. Know where and how far away your interview is. Never be late. Of course, a student who is late to an interview can still do very well and even earn the scholarship, but you are definitely hurting your chances at a good first impression. Give yourself plenty of time to get there. Try to be no more than 10 minutes early.
- 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.

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

Scholarship interview committees will ask questions that are tailored to the specific scholarship program you're applying to, so each interview will be different. Here are just a couple of common questions to help you get started preparing.

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