

Ten Tips for a Great College Interview

Why Interview?

- For you and for the college.
- A chance to show you're more than just statistics.
- It's highly recommended or required.
- A chance to explain your application.

Role of the Interview

- One of many factors, but not the most important.
- Informational at some colleges, evaluative at others.
- Can help the marginal student.

What Are Admission Officers Looking For?

- Enthusiasm, motivation, intellectual promise, sense of humor, integrity, independence, leadership, personality, creativity, confidence, values.
- Who you really are beyond scores and statistics.
- What motivates you? Makes you happy, sad or angry?

Talking About Your High School

- Putting you in the context of your school community.
- Statistics: know your rank, scores, GPA.
- A chance to explain any holes or problems in your transcript.

Talking About Your Extracurricular Involvement

- Be prepared to list the organizations in which you participate.
- What has been the most important to you?
- What might you continue in college?
- Have you risen to any leadership positions?
- Be sure to talk about activities outside of school, too, such as involvement with your church, scouting or an after-school job.

Know Yourself

- Why do you want to go to college?
- Why do you want to go to X college?
- How did X college get on your list? Why is it a good match?
- The better you know yourself, the easier it will be to talk about yourself. This is a chance for you to do a little self-promotion.

Be Prepared

- Call ahead. Make an appointment. Don't overschedule.
- Leave plenty of time for the interview and the visit.
- Come early to fill out forms.
- Don't bluff your way through answers. It's okay to say, "I don't know."
- Practice. Don't forget to shake hands. It's a nice touch to introduce your parents.
- Listen carefully. Be attentive.
- Know what kind of interview you'll be having (informational or evaluative).
- Interview at your least favorite school first, for practice.
- Avoid yes-and-no answers.
- Be yourself.

Do Your Homework

- Read the literature or consult the website before you visit.
- Have an agenda.
- Ask questions. This is where you might be spending four years of your life. No question is too silly or stupid. Let your parents ask questions, too. (Maybe agree beforehand on who will ask what.) Questions show you are really interested.

Use Common Sense

- Dress appropriately.
- Silence your phone.
- Don't chew gum.
- Be on time.
- Don't overshare.
- Be confident and assertive.
- Don't swear.
- Don't put down your family.
- It's a nice touch to write a thank-you note.

Relax

- There's really no such thing as "bombing"—there's no pass or fail.
- Admission officers like young adults; we want to make you comfortable.
- Interviewers are not looking for the details, but an overall impression.
- Everyone has second thoughts—things they could have said, pithy remarks or insightful comments that would have made them more memorable.
- Be confident and assertive—you have plenty to recommend you!