

Phone Interview

Stephen F. Austin State University | Center for Career and Professional Development

Bring, brrring! Your future is calling! Be ready for a telephone interview from the moment you apply for a position. Many times a company will ask you questions the first time they contact you to begin assessing your qualifications. Phone interviews may also be used for other reasons, such as geographic obstacles.

Keep a list with you of the positions you have applied for, the companies they are with, the job descriptions, and any other pertinent information. The fact that the interviewer cannot see you is a challenge but also a huge benefit: **use your notes.**

Do	Don't
Do be well prepared.	Don't conduct a phone interview in your car.
Do ask to reschedule the interview for another time if you are unable to interview when you receive the call.	Don't eat, smoke, drink, chew gum, surf the Web, IM, or text during the phone interview.
Do use a land line to avoid the possibility of a cell phone call being dropped or poor reception.	Don't take other calls while on the phone.
Do find a quiet, secluded location.	Don't give in to nervous habits that will create amplified noise.
Do ask family members and friends not to disturb you during the interview.	Do not interrupt the interviewer.
Do turn off all distractions: radio, TV, other phones, etc.	Don't have a ring back tone.
Do wear something professional.	Don't talk to someone else while on the phone.
Do have a professional voicemail message.	Don't snuffle, sneeze, or cough. If you can't avoid these behaviors, say, "excuse me."
Do expect minor miscommunications, such as speaking at the same time. These are hard to avoid in telephone interviews. Use normal courtesies in resolving them.	Don't feel like you have to fill in the silences. If you've completed a response, don't start babbling. Instead, ask a question of your own.
Do write down the names of the interviewers as introductions are made.	Gather your tools by the phone: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Résumé and cover letter you sent • Job description • Research you have conducted on the company • Questions to ask about the company and position • A loosely written outline of points to make or items to cover as you talk about the position • Pen and paper to take notes during the interview • Comfort items: tissues, water, etc.
Do have a confident and enthusiastic voice, conveying energy with inflection.	
Do smile as much as possible – the tone of a smile brings about enthusiasm.	
Do keep the conversation going with prepared questions.	
Do speak directly into the phone so that you can be heard clearly.	
Do sit in an upright position or stand (but do not pace) while talking – your voice will sound stronger.	