**Preparing for an Apprenticeship Interview**

Usain Bolt might look like he just cruises up to the blocks and wipes the floor with the rest of the field, but in reality he puts an amazing amount of effort into his training. As any athlete would tell you, preparation is crucial and it certainly matters when it comes to apprenticeship interviews. So what steps should you take to ensure you’re ready for an apprenticeship interview?

**1. Find out exactly where your interview will be and when it is**. Work out how long it’ll take you to get to the interview and give yourself plenty of time to get there. You should aim to arrive about ten minutes before the start of the interview. Don’t be late. Make sure you take the contact details of the interviewer with you, including their telephone number, email and the address of the company, so you can get in touch if you are unexpectedly held up.

**2. Practice speaking up in group situations.** Many apprenticeship employers use group interviews to sift out the strong candidates. However cringey it might sound, having formal debates and discussions with your friends is a great way to prepare. If you are still at school, you could try and get more involved in classroom discussions or even join the debating club to hone your skills.

**3. Research the employer.** We really can’t stress this enough. Employers aren’t interested in whether you want a job; they are more interested in whether you want an apprenticeship with them specifically. If you rock up to an interview with only the tiniest idea about what they do, they aren’t going to be impressed. Swot up on the company, scour their website, read any news stories about them and get clued up on their industry. Try and get a real sense of their company culture and their values. It’ll really help you out. Honest.

**4. Have a go at some practice interviews.**One of the key things employers will be looking for is good communication skills. Staging practice interviews with a teacher, parent or friend is a great way to practice answering interview questions. Check out these articles on [interview technique](http://www.allaboutcareers.com/careers-advice/interview-tips/interview-techniques) and [interview body language](http://www.allaboutcareers.com/careers-advice/interview-tips/interview-body-language) for some pointers. Don’t forget to smile!

**5. Plan out your interview attire.** There’s nothing worse than waking up on interview day and going into a full blown panic about what to wear, so make sure you’ve already planned out your interview attire for the apprenticeship interview. A formal business suit might not be appropriate for a plumbing apprenticeship interview, but it might be for an accountancy apprenticeship. If in doubt, opt for smart casual. Make sure your clothes are clean and you look wholesome and presentable.

**6. Have questions ready.** Often at the end of interviews, interviewers like to say “Do you have any questions?” Unfortunately, it’s not really a case of asking a question if you want to; they’re actually saying: “Ask us a question now”. It’s easy to get frazzled by it, so it certainly doesn’t hurt to prepare some questions in advance.

It’s probably best not to ask them questions like “Which football team do you support?” or “Is Justin Bieber’s career over?” The safer questions to ask are ones about the apprenticeship (e.g. what will be your normal working day? How much time will you spend with the learning provider?) or about the company (e.g. questions about the company culture or the career prospects for apprentices).

**7.**You might want to **bring copies of your CV, covering letter, a copy of the apprenticeship job description and a notebook and pen.** If the employer has asked you to bring something, make sure you’ve got it!