

How to make the most of a college interview

- The interview is primarily for you to learn about the college and to allow the interviewer to learn about you. Use it as a tool to assist your college selection. The interview can have a positive effect on your admission — rarely a negative one. Relax and be yourself!
- Your interview will usually be with an admissions staff member, but it may be with a student, alumnus or a professional interviewer. Keep this person’s perspective in mind. Don’t write off the college just because you think you had a bad interview. Interviewers have bad days, too.
- The interviewer is eager to get to know you and will try to put you at ease. The interviewer will answer your questions but will be more interested if you have helpful questions that show you’ve done some research on the college already.
- An important part of preparation is self-assessment. Know your rank, your test scores and your present areas of interest. If you are undecided about your career, feel free to say so (half of college students change their intended major). Think through some areas you would like to explore, competencies you would like to develop and projects or situations that intrigue you.
- Don’t go unprepared. Do your homework about the school to get the obvious questions answered. You don’t want to be silent when asked, “What would you like to know about our college?” Questions or comments like, “What kinds of internships are there, and how often do students take them?” show more maturity in your thinking than asking about the number of books in the college library.
- Interviewers may ask questions about your interests, extracurricular activities/jobs, books you’ve read, meaningful experiences, reasons for applying to this college, life at school and similar topics. Be ready to talk about these subjects.
- Be honest. Everyone has strong and weak points. College will help you with some of the latter and promote the former.
- Plan to have your interview alone. Most admissions officers prefer to speak with your parents after talking with you, rather than during the interview.
- Dress neatly and comfortably.
- When you return home, **write a thank-you note** to the person who interviewed you.

Source: Adapted from material prepared by Gloria Mueller, Glenbrook High School, Illinois

Handout 3G