

MINDSET FOR SUCCESS

Preparing for an Interview



**HOBSONS
BAY CITY
COUNCIL**





Welcome to MINDSET FOR SUCCESS!



HOW TO USE THIS BOOKLET

Want to master that
upcoming interview?

Let's get prepared together!
This booklet will get you ready
for the dreaded interview,
whether that's for a part-time
job, placement, apprenticeship,
internship, graduate position,
and beyond – **this booklet is
for you!** Be the ideal candidate
in the employer's eyes.

Across the five sections of this booklet, you will find helpful information and activities that will make you stand out in the interview. It will strengthen your knowledge of the company or organisation and build your own confidence and mindset – all with the aim to maximise your potential!

Preparation is key. It's a process, that is for sure! However, it can pay off, literally!

With each sentence you read, you're closer to nailing that interview. Sit back and be guided on how to prepare. You can select and complete the activities you need to brush up on.

Don't be afraid. Take a deep breath and let's do this together. Each insight, research task and activity has been put together in a way that you do not have to do these in order. You can choose and select the activities that are more applicable to you.

Good luck with your interview – you've got this!

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RESEARCH



Got that interview offer? **Congratulations!**

But what do you do next...? Prepare with research.

Reading up on the organisation is essential.
It will help you understand more about them.

In your interview you can use the information
you have found through your research to stand
out from the crowd. It shows resourcefulness.

The Organisation, The Business, The Employer



In this section, research the business that is interviewing you. Learn more about the business and how the position is vital to the trading, function and success of the business operations.

Use these questions to help guide your research about the business:

- 1 Where are they located?
- 2 What is their basic history?
- 3 What products or services do they offer?
- 4 What values do they hold?
- 5 Do they have a vision and mission statement?

After you have completed some general research about the organisation, **you can use the below questions to research the position you're being interviewed for:**

- 1 Is there any information about your position?
- 2 How does your position fit with the company?
- 3 Are there any key staff members who are involved with your position?
- 4 What examples can you find that could include your position?

KEY TIP!

Research the company or organisation's website, LinkedIn and social platforms is a great way to start gathering information.



Activity!

So after reading the above questions about the business and the position you are being interviewed for, can you answer them all? Have a go answering them yourself!

Position Description



A key document in any job application is called the Position Description. You might have seen one during your application!

A Position Description describes the general tasks, duties and responsibilities of a position. It is used to also give a brief introduction to the business, company or organisation, and most importantly what the role is. It features essential and desirable experiences that employers are looking for in suitable candidates.

KEY TIP!

Employers review applicants in interviews based on selection criteria as a basis to select the successful candidate.



Now, let's have a look at a Position Description.

The arrows below show you important sections of the document and explain them in relation to the position.

Name

The position's title or formal name.



Overview and Background

Lists the background of the company or organisation, and the position itself.
Gives an overview of the position responsibilities and its functions.



Classification and Relationship

Details on the position classification (or payment band or scale), department or branch the role is a part of, who you report to, and you are required to supervise any staff.



Key Duties and Responsibilities

Detailed explanation of the position's main responsibilities. This list shows you the activities the successful applicant will do when selected.



Expertise (aka...Selection Criteria)

A list of the expected qualifications, skills, knowledge and experience that the position requires. It is often known as "Selection Criteria".



www.hobsonsbay.vic.gov.au

HOBSONS BAY CITY COUNCIL

Position Description

Youth Employment Support Officer

- Position Overview**
Responsible for supporting the development and implementation of a new youth employment program delivering a range of learning and development initiatives supporting employment preparedness and career planning of young people.
- Classification and Relationship**

Position Title:	Youth Employment Support Officer
Classification:	Band 3
Department:	Community Life
Reports to:	Coordinator Youth Services
Supervises:	Not applicable
- Key duties and responsibilities**
 - Work in a team environment and support Youth Employment Project Officer to deliver key outcomes.
 - Work collaboratively with staff from across Council in the delivery of a range of programs and services.
 - Engage with and support young people to access services and programs.
- Expertise**

Qualifications

 - Tertiary qualification in youth, community services, social science, business or a related discipline (preferred).
 - Victorian Drivers Licence (preferred).

Specialist skills and knowledge

 - Sound communication and interpersonal skills.
 - Sound organisational skills and ability to meet deadlines.
 - Ability to work within a team environment as well as autonomously.

Experience

 - Demonstrated organisational skills including the ability to prioritise workloads.
 - Sound communication skills, both verbal and written, including the ability to draft correspondence, reports and documents.

PREPARATION

An interview is often used by employers in conversational form, to understand and learn about who has applied for the job. Most importantly, it helps the employer decide whether the applicant should be hired, based on their answers to the questions asked.



Interview Questions



On this page, you will find some popular and frequently-asked questions that you can expect in an interview.

1 Tell us about yourself!

In this question, the employer is asking for you to describe yourself! You can answer explaining your background, studies, work experiences, goals and visions you have.

2 What attracted you to apply for this position?

The employer is asking this question to gather your reasoning for why you applied. Describing how the position links to your experiences and interests, along with any matching values or visions you share with the organisation.

3 Tell us what you know about the business/ company/organisation?

This question will demonstrate your knowledge and research about the company and organisation. Mention things you know about the organisation, names of products or services they provide, locations, and any other relevant information to the position.

4 What do you know about the role you have applied for?

Similar to the question above, you should highlight your knowledge about the position you applied for – its purpose, why it exists, what it does, and how it links to the overall mission and vision of the organisation.

5 What can you bring to the role?

A good opportunity to promote yourself! You should highlight key responsibilities of the role that match with your skills, strengths or experiences, and how the organisation can benefit from them.

6 What are some of your strengths and/or weaknesses?

Describe a key strength that is applicable to the position that you have applied for. It is useful to give an example to demonstrate how you have used this strength. It is also important to recognise things you are not so good at (but not a key skill of the position!) The employer is looking for your self-reflection here, and most importantly, how are you trying to improve this for your benefit.

7 Why should we consider you for this position?

*Often one of the last interview questions. In this question, it is important to link back to the organisation's values, mission or vision, and how you can use your experiences and strengths in the position **and ultimately, be a perfect fit for the job!***

Activity!

Can you answer all these questions above with the knowledge you have gained from research?

If you can – you have done a brilliant job of preparing so far! **TEST YOURSELF** by asking a family or friend to ask you some of the questions above.

Let's keep it going so you can be as prepared as possible!

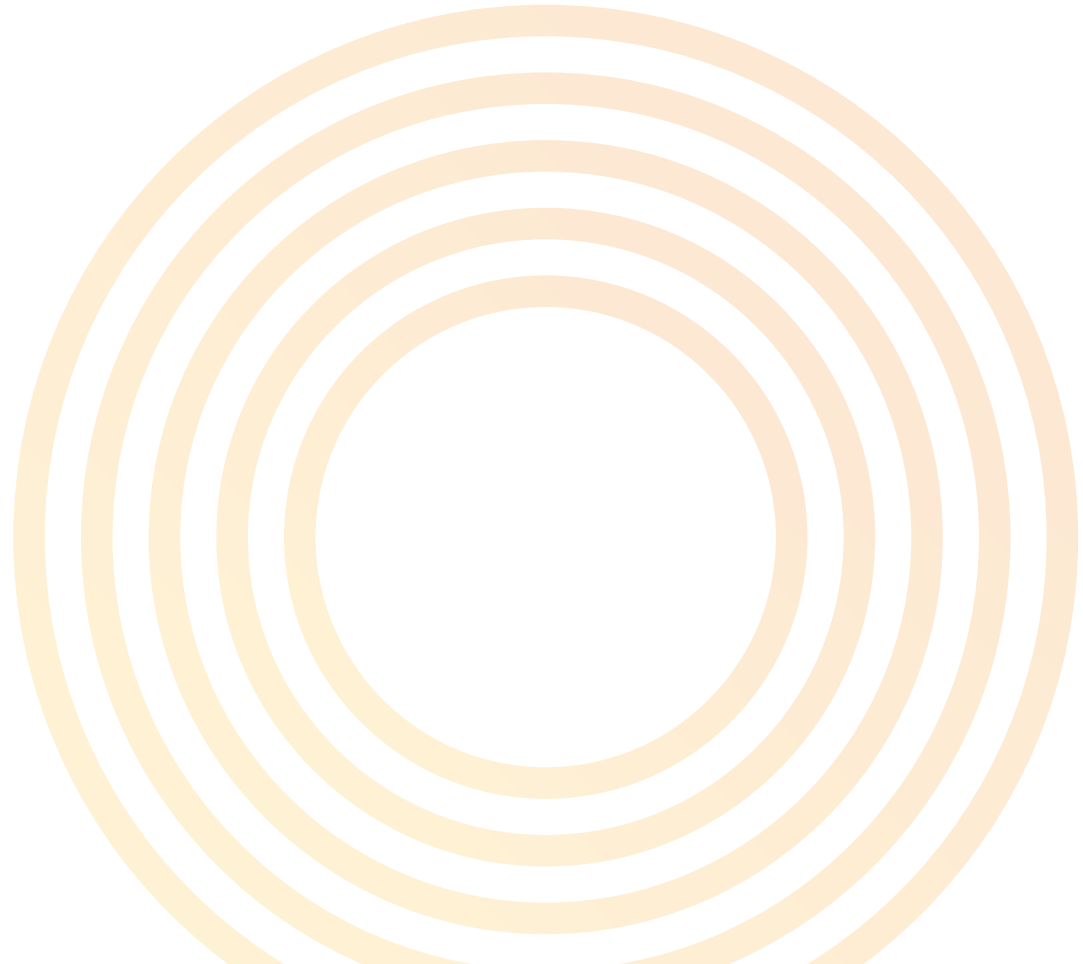
Behavioural Questions



These types of questions ask you to either describe and explain a past situation and its result.

Some examples of Behavioural interview questions could include:

- 1 Can you describe a time when you handled a challenging situation?
- 2 ... a time when you had a conflict (with a classmate, customer or colleague)?
- 3 ... a time when you worked under pressure?
- 4 ... an example of when you had to deal with multiple responsibilities?
- 5 ... a time when you achieved a successful result?



Situational Questions



These types of questions ask you to describe a hypothetical situation and ask how you would handle it.

Some examples of Situational interview questions could include:

- 1 How would you approach a task or job that you have never done before?
- 2 What would you do if one of your team members is having difficulty with a task?
- 3 How would you respond to a customer who isn't happy with your service, even though you've done nothing wrong?
- 4 You are working in a pair, and your partner does not agree to your idea that will fix the problem, and insists their way is better. What do you do?

It is important to have a good knowledge of examples that you can talk about, that might relate to your previous study or work experience.

To help you answer these types of questions during interviews, a technique to use is the **STAR Method**. You will find more information about this in the next section.



The STAR Method



Now that you know some examples of general, situational and behavioural questions that you may get asked in an interview, just how do you answer them properly? Do you go with your gut feeling?



Set the scene: who was involved, what, when and where it was, and how **YOU** were involved?



What did **YOU** need to do?
What were **YOUR** responsibilities?



What did **YOU** actually do?



What was the outcome?
What did **YOUR** actions help achieve?

A leading technique that can help you answer situational and behavioural interview questions is known as the **STAR Method**. STAR is an acronym that features 4 main concepts, or steps, when using the technique. They stand for Situation, Task, Action and Result.

When answering questions using the STAR Method, you use the technique to help structure your answer.

It's important when answering with the STAR Method, that you focus on what **YOU** were involved with. It is fine to give context if you were in a team setting but focusing on your tasks and actions will help you answer the question strongly – the interview is about **YOU**, not anybody else!

The STAR Method – Activities



Now put it into practice with these activities:

- 1 Write out a time you were innovative or had an idea to solve a problem.

- 2 Think about examples of your achievements, personal challenges or a time you were innovative, and practice elaborating on them.

ACHIEVEMENTS

CHALLENGES

Rehearsal



Practice, practice, practice!

We have all heard it before, “practice makes perfect”. In the context of interviews, it is rather difficult to prepare perfectly, but practice is very important to be as prepared as you can be!

In the sections above, you have thought about some interview questions you might be asked, listed several examples you can talk about and how to explain them in the interview itself.

The four activities below will help you to practice what you will get asked, and to be best prepared for the interview! You can choose to do 1 of these or all 4 – the more you do, the better prepared you will be.

Activity 1

Interview questions list

Create a list of interview questions you might get asked – this will help your rehearsal!

You can include questions like in the Common Interview Questions and Behavioural and Situational Questions above, or any other ones you think are relevant to the position you applied for. Write down your answer for each question – don’t worry if it is not perfect, since you can change them in later steps.



Activity 2

Practice your answers: out loud

Once you have created a list of questions – start by reading out the question, and then your answer as well.

It is great to practice your answers out loud. This will help you feel more comfortable speaking, and help you verbalize your answer to see if you might need to change it.

Activity 3

Create “Cue” or “Flash” cards for your practice

After repetition of your answers, create several Cue or Flash Cards with interview questions, and some key words to help you remember your answer. You can shuffle these and practice answering questions in any order, without reading your answers. It is challenging, but this helps you become even more comfortable with the questions!

Activity 4

Practice in front of yourself OR get some family or friends involved

Rehearse these with a parent, siblings, or friends as the “interviewer”. You can do this by handing them relevant questions and practice the interview as if it was the real thing – sitting face to face. You can also ask them for their feedback and what they think about your answers.

If you don’t have anyone to help you, you can either record yourself answering the questions, or practice in front of a mirror. This helps you also critique your body language and any adjustments you think can help you.

REFEREES

Referees – not the ones you see on the sporting field, but people who can speak about you positively to your prospective employer!



Referees are an important part of your professional profile. They act as a contact for you and speak to potential employers to provide them a reference of you. The potential employer may want to know your character, abilities, skills and experience.

Who can be a referee?

You can use a range of people as a referee. Some common examples include:

- Past employer or key staff member
- School teacher, year level coordinator
- Sporting coach or team manager
- Volunteering coordinator or a manager

It is important to know that a referee must be a person you have worked closely with or for – in any of the areas listed above. If you haven't worked very closely with them, they are probably not the best person to speak on your behalf!

A referee must also not be a relative, they must be outside of your immediate family.

The 6 steps below can be used for you to gain referees that can speak on your behalf. You can use these steps when you apply for positions or have an interview.



APPAREL AND ATTIRE



Clothing that is professional, neat, clean and tidy is essential to wear during an interview.

First impressions count.

If practical, a couple of days before the interview, visit the organisation to check out what their employees are wearing, and if possible, try and 'copy' and 'mirror' it.

If you're in doubt, here are some helpful ideas!

Suggested Apparel

- Long-sleeve business shirt (collared)
- Short-sleeve business shirt (collared)
- Blazer or sweater
- Formal pants or chinos
- Black Jeans
- Dark colored dress shoes (closed toe)
- Buttoned up blouse
- Long-sleeve business shirt (collared)
- Blazer
- Formal dress pants
- Skirt
- Tights
- Formal shoes (closed toe)



What is NOT appropriate?

- Wearing casual clothing in an interview is a no-no.
- AVOID wearing singlets, tracksuit pants, torn t-shirts/pants, light-colored jeans, active wear, thongs, moccasins and ugg boots.



THE INTERVIEW – BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER



As the interview day approaches (and then arrives), it is important to do a few things to help you be prepared and ready!



Before



The Route

You've done all the preparation, now, just how will you get there?

Using public transport? Use the PTV application to pre-plan and get there early – be mindful of potential disruptions during your journey – let's face it, it happens!

Driving there? Type in the address of the interview, a day prior, determine how far away it is and factor in traffic depending on the time of the interview. On the day, preload the address, in advance, to help get an ETA to the destination: yes, again. Google Maps and Apple Maps can show real-time traffic, use it to ensure you don't get caught out and arrive on time!

It is good to arrive 10 or so minutes early to any interview, even if you were not asked to. If you were asked to arrive earlier for any reason, you should aim to arrive at the specified time.



Preparing Documents



Dust off that manila folder and put it to good use! It is a great idea to take along any relevant documents to an interview, which can help the process.

Take along:

- 2 copies of your current Resume
- Printed position description for the job you applied for,
- Hard copy certificates that might be specific to the position (e.g. RSA, First Aid, Food Handling)
- Cue cards or written/ typed responses to a series of interview questions, for your reference just before the interview (optional)

By having these documents to reference and display during the interview, you show great initiative, planning and organisation to your potential employer!

At the same time, they are very handy to have in case the interviewer needs to sight any documents during your interview



During

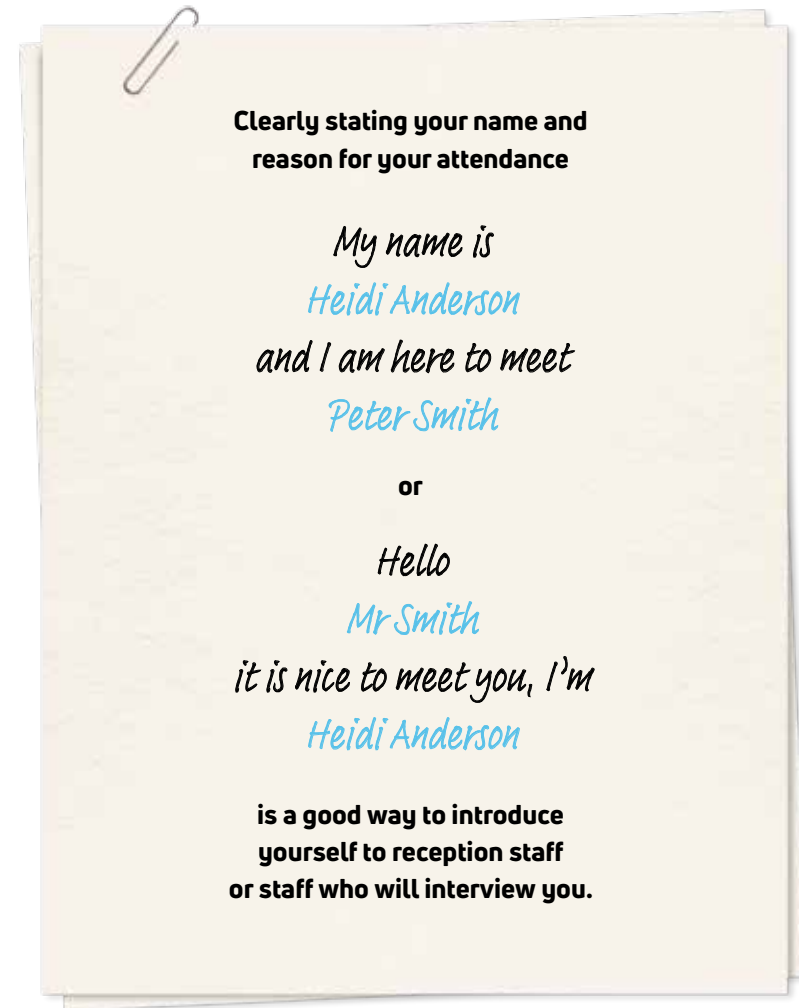


Greeting and Language

Once you arrive at the interview, it is important to use suitable greetings and language to everyone that you might meet – they may be your future colleagues!

Keep your greetings professional and valid, coupled with positivity and a smile! Like attire, first impressions count here as well, so a little effort will go a long way.

At the same time, your language is just as important. It is always good to keep a professional tone throughout the course of your interview, which projects respect to the interviewers. Matching and mirroring the language and tone of the people you speak with is also a great technique to use too.



Posture, Eye Contact and Hand Placement



You made it to the interview! YAY!

Now you've greeted the interviewer, entered the interview room or location, and now it's about to begin!

It's very easy at this stage to be overwhelmed by the occasion, so a few deep breaths here will help you calm yourself and be focused.

Your posture, eye-contact and hand placement are all important factors throughout your interview. Here are a few tips to help you with this:

- Keep your back straight and tall against the chair you are sitting on. Have your shoulders relaxed, and feet level on the floor in front of you.
- Have your hands in your lap (left palm on top of right hand, or vice-versa). It is not uncommon to use your hands when you speak; but limiting this during your interview is good practice.
- When listening to and answering questions, it is important to keep eye contact with your interviewers. Not only does this show attentiveness, but also professionalism when you give your answers to them.



Asking Questions to the Interviewer



Asking questions is a great way to demonstrate your interest! Using all the research you may have done, think of what's 'missing', what would you like to know and bring it up when the time is right, usually at the end of the interview.

Ensure they're appropriate, asking information like, "how much do I get per hour?" is NOT an appropriate question.

As a guide, good questions to ask are:

- "In the first couple of months, what do you want me to achieve?"
- "How would you describe the culture at your organisation?"
- "What's the favourite part of your job?"
- "What does a typical day look like for the position?"
- "What does success look like at your business?"



After



Following up

You've completed the interview – **congratulations!!!** It's been quite a process! What's next?

Want to be memorable? A great tip is to send a prompt follow-up email to thank the interviewer/s for their time and for the interview opportunity.

What to include:

- 1 **Address** an email to the interviewer/s, include their name/s; ensure they're spelled correctly,
- 2 In a paragraph, **show gratitude**, thank the interviewer/s for their time,
- 3 **Re-word** why you're interested in the job, and why you're the perfect person and fit,
- 4 **State** that you are available for further questions at any time,
- 5 **Sign off** with your full name, including your contact information,
- 6 Before you send it off, **re-read** it to ensure no errors are included!

An example of an email might look like this:

To: @company.com.au

Subject: Administration Officer position

Good afternoon Patricia,

Thank you for your time this morning to meet and discuss the Administration Officer position with company name,

I enjoyed learning about the responsibilities of the position, and how it improves the services for the organization's customers and employees.

As I mentioned, my skills and abilities in customer service are highly suitable to the position, in addition to my personal drive to achieve success in an organisation specialising in healthcare products.

If you do require any further details, please feel free to let me know at your leisure.

I look forward to hearing from you in the near future.

Kind regards,

David Lake

0499 999 999

@email.com.au

NEXT STEPS AND FURTHER INFORMATION



The below websites feature handy and useful information if you require more information on study, training and career support – **check them out by clicking on their name!**

[Youth Central](#)

The Victorian Government's website for young people aged 12-25 with information about study, jobs, careers, transitions, travelling, money, and much more.

www.youthcentral.vic.gov.au

[Job Outlook](#)

An interactive website that provides you with information about Australian industries, trends and outlooks. Features quizzes and skill match tools to find your perfect career fit!

www.joboutlook.gov.au

[myfuture](#)

myfuture is an interactive resource designed to help inspire and explore your career possibilities by key skills, learning areas, recommended courses, and more.

www.myfuture.edu.au

[Leaving School – Services Australia](#)

Information to help you choose your next adventure if you're about to, or have just finished school.

www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/subjects/leaving-school

[School Leavers Information Kit](#)

The School Leavers Information kit has a range of resources and information to help 2020 school leavers understand further education, training and work options.

www.dese.gov.au/nci/resources/school-leavers-information-kit



hobsonsbay.vic.gov.au/Community/Community-services/Young-people



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