

10 College Interview Mistakes

Make Sure the Impression You Make is a Good One

The college interview probably isn't the most important part of your application, but it can help you if you make a good impression. A bad impression can hurt your chances of getting accepted.

During the interview, **DO NOT...**

1. Be Late

Your interviewers are busy people. Alumni interviewers are probably taking time out of their full-time jobs to meet with you, and campus admissions folks often have back-to-back appointments scheduled. Lateness disrupts schedules and shows irresponsibility on your part.

2. Underdress

Business casual is your safest bet, but the main thing is to look neat and put-together. You'll look like you don't care if you show up wearing ripped jeans or saran wrap.

3. Talk Too Little

Your interviewer wants to get to know you. If you answer every question with a "yes," "no," or a grunt, you're not impressing anyone, and you're not demonstrating that you can contribute to the intellectual life of the campus.

4. Make a Prepared Speech

You want to sound like yourself during your interview. If you have prepared answers to questions, you might come off sounding artificial and insincere.

5. Chew Gum

It's distracting and annoying.

6. Bring Your Parents

Your interviewer wants to get to know you, not your parents. Also, it's hard to look like you're mature enough for college if Dad is asking all the questions for you.

7. Show Disinterest

This should be a no-brainer, but you'd be surprised what some students will say. A comment like "you're my back-up school" or "I'm here because my parents told me to apply" is an easy way to lose points during the interview.

8. Fail to Research the College

If you ask questions that could easily be answered by the college's website, you'll send the message that you don't care enough about the school to do a little research. Ask questions that show you know the place: "I'm interested in your Honors Program; could you tell me more about it?"

9. Lie

This should be obvious, but some students do get themselves in trouble by fabricating half truths or exaggerating during the interview.

10. Be Rude

Good manners go a long way. Shake hands. Address your interviewer by name. Say "thank you." Introduce your parents if they are in the waiting area. Say "thank you" again. Send a thank you note.