



What is a telephone interview?

Often the first stage in the interview process, a telephone interview is a way for potential employers to trim down their shortlist and make sure they're only interviewing the people who are a right fit for the role. They're likely to be shorter than a face-to-face interview and the questions might be more general, asking for an overview of your skills and experience or finding out what you know about the company. Sometimes your telephone interview will be done by someone on the company's recruitment team, rather than the person you would manage you if your application is successful.

☆☆ Top tips

01

Be practical – make sure your phone is fully charged, you're in a quiet room and have a good signal. Ask a friend or family member to do a test call with you before your interview time to check that the line sounds clear.

02

Have a copy of the job description in front of you so you can highlight how your skills and experience match it, and feel free to take notes.

03

Don't worry about filling the silence – there might be a pause between questions, just like in a face-to-face interview, while the interviewer takes notes. When you've finished your answer, pause and wait for the next question unless you're prompted to expand.

04

Treat it like a face-to-face interview as much as you can, and be prepared to spend around 30 minutes on the phone.

05

Make sure you give examples for every question you're asked – be specific, and use the STAR* model if it helps:

Question: Can you tell us about a time you've shown leadership skills?

Situation	Task	Action	Results
During my time working at Homebase, I showed leadership skills by helping to train new team members.	This required me to show them how to operate the till and navigate the stockroom.	I offered to let the new team members shadow me while I demonstrated how to put transactions through, and then swapped with them so they could try it themselves with my support in case they needed it and offering encouragement to build their confidence.	As a result of this, new team members felt empowered to do their roles and were ready to start working independently more quickly.

What happens next?



After a telephone interview, the employer will decide whether you will go through to the next round of applications. Sometimes this might be an assessment centre, a face-to-face or virtual interview, or another telephone interview with someone else from the organisation.

Virtual interviews

What is a virtual interview?

A virtual interview are usually done in place of a face-to-face interview, using a platform like Skype, Zoom or Microsoft Teams. It's always a good idea to do a test run with a friend to make sure you're all set up and ready to go on the big day.

☆☆ Top tips

01

Check which platform the interview is taking place on ahead of time, and make sure your computer or mobile device can operate it. If not, see if you can borrow a device from someone else.

02

Find a quiet space to have your interview in, with limited distractions and a tidy background. Make sure you're not sat in front of a window or light source.

03

Look into the camera when you answer your questions and hide your own image so you don't have to watch yourself.

04

Dress smartly and don't make the mistake of many a newsreader – your pyjama bottoms can wait until after the interview!

05

If other people in the household are also using the internet, ask if they can avoid streaming videos or downloading documents for the duration of your interview, to maximise your bandwidth and avoid any technical difficulties.



A virtual interview is very similar to a face-to-face interview, so check out our interview guide for more top tips!