

You've got the interview- now, what do you wear?!

It only takes a few seconds for an interviewer to decide how they feel about you... so, however perfect you may be for the job, make sure you make a great first impression and choose the right outfit!

Do your homework!

Sorry, there's that word again! (There's a reason your teachers always nagged you about it). If you do some research, you can make sure you don't look out of place. While it's really important to have your own style, you do want to work in this company. So, start by looking like you belong there!

If you turn up to an interview in a formal suit and everyone you encounter in the company wears jeans, for example, you'll probably feel (and look) uncomfortable. As part of your interview research into the company culture, find out what the employees wear before you go. Check out the company's website and employers LinkedIn profile pics for an indication as to what they consider to be work wear.

Your research tells you that the company has a 'casual' dress code or they wear a variety of clothing, then keep it simple. Wear a 'classic' outfit (see below) or something you feel most confident in!

You may have seen that the company favours a suited employee, but you haven't worn one since your Aunt's wedding? Chinos, a shirt and jacket would be an acceptable alternative. If you are going to wear a suit, make sure you are comfortable in it...

Have a dress rehearsal!

You want to be confident and comfortable so, choose something that makes you feel that way and don't wear a brand-new outfit!

Whatever you choose to wear, in your trial-run, check: Can I sit down in it? Does it cut in anywhere? Is it itchy or restrictive? Am I likely to get too hot or sweaty in it? Will it look creased by the time I've got to the interview? Have I got layers I can take off if I get too hot, or put on if the building is air conditioned? If I take off my jacket, is top underneath, clean and ironed?!

Ask someone you trust: "How do I look?"

- ✚ Keep it simple and don't forget the little details!
- ✚ Don't wear anything that will be too distracting- you want them to remember you for your skills and ability to do the job, not your fashion sense.
- ✚ Wear no more than two or three different colours.
- ✚ Remember to polish your shoes and iron your clothes.
- ✚ Keep make-up to a minimum.
- ✚ Avoid strong-smelling perfume. Fragrance can be very emotive and an overpowering scent in a confined interview room can be massively off-putting!
- ✚ Make sure your nails are clean and cut.

Check that your belt, bag, umbrella, note pad (basically anything you may take with you into the interview) is clean and suitable also.

Remember to brush your hair and, if it tends to fall in your face, tie it back! You don't want to be tempted to fiddle with it.

Keep jewellery simple. Rather than showing your individuality or style, large, chunky, cheap or jangly jewellery may only serve as a distraction!

The most important accessories? Good posture and a smile. Be someone the interviewer wants to talk to. Even if you don't feel it, appearing confident and approachable will make the interviewers perceive you that way!

If in doubt the following classic outfit works for most interviews:

- ✚ A crisp white button-down shirt or a blouse in a block colour. Cotton is timeless, but wear whatever material you feel most comfortable in.
- ✚ A well-tailored blazer/jacket (in case the air-con is on high or you don't feel 'smart enough'). This can be a different colour to your trousers (but make sure it compliments rather than clashes!)
- ✚ Smart trousers, chinos or 'cigarette pants'/ power dress or smart skirt.
- ✚ Polished boots, brogues or loafers/ court shoes.

By sticking to simple refined basics, you'll ensure your interviewer focuses on you, and is not distracted by your clothes. This outfit of combined separates is classic and mature, showing more personality than a suit.

Feeling confident and comfortable? Go in there and 'own' that interview!