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# UNIT 1: PREPARING FOR INTERVIEWS

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## Structure

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## 1.0 OBJECTIVES

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In this unit you will learn what all steps one ought to take to prepare to face interviews skillfully and confidently. You will also learn about:

- two different types of interview in the business world
- various steps you must take after receiving the call letter
- why and how you can know about the company; and
- what a *mock interview* is and how to plan and practice it.

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## 1.1 WARM UP

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### Activity 1

- 1 Make a list of steps you would take if you receive a letter to appear after two weeks for an interview for a job you had applied for some time back.
- 2 Discuss your list with your partner/someone at home and add more steps if you want to.

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## 1.2 LISTENING COMPREHENSION

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### Check your progress 1

You are going to listen to a class lecture (tape script-1). Before listening to the audio recording read the following questions that you have to answer on the basis of the lecture.

- 1 The main aim of the speaker in this lecture is to:  
(Tick off the most suitable answer)
  - a Talk about interviews given by actors and politicians.
  - b Describe two types of interview in the business context.
  - c Explain how to face interviews for jobs.
  - d Suggest how to face journalists' interviews.
- 2 The following 5 steps summarize the structure of this talk. Put these steps in the order in which the talk is structured by marking them 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5).

The speaker:

- a describes the purpose of interviews given by celebrities and important persons.
- b talks of two types of interviews.
- c talks of the nature and purpose of interviews for selecting employees.
- d explains the purpose of interviews given by business people.
- e says that the art of interviewing and being interviewed requires training.

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### 1.3 READING COMPREHENSION

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Read the text given below and answer the questions that follow. (Read fast; do not stop at words/phrases you do not understand. Keep reading guessing the meanings of difficult words/phrases from their shape, form, and context and try to get the gist of what the writer has to say).

#### Reading text

- 1 When you receive an interview call letter/email, read it carefully to note down the venue of the interview, date and time and mark these in your calendar or diary including the nature and type of interview, for example whether it is face-to-face interview/walk-in or telephone interview. You ought to send a letter/e-mail confirming that you would be available for the interview even if the sender of the letter has not asked you to do so. Courtesy demands that you must inform him/her even if you are not able to make it.
- 2 If you decide to appear for the interview then send a letter/e-mail of confirmation. Also if you have to travel to another town/city to attend the interview then plan your journey and immediately make travel arrangements both for forward and return journey to ensure that there are no last minute problems.
- 3 Next, dig out the original advertisement for the post and the CV you sent to the company to see what qualifications, skills, competencies and experience the company demanded and how your CV claims to meet them. Obviously, the employer has found some merit in your CV and hence you have been short-listed for this interview. So collect all evidence – certificates, degrees, testimonials, photographs and other relevant documents to support your claims and arrange them properly in your portfolio. (See unit 2: Preparing a Portfolio of Block 1). Keep all the relevant documents in your Portfolio and update/improve upon it to suit this particular interview and take it along with you. A well-managed and neatly arranged portfolio makes a good impression on the selectors if it happens to be a face-to-face/walk-in interview. You must also carry with you photocopies of your degrees, certificates and testimonials.



- 4 Next try to know as much as you can about your prospective employer, the products they make and the services they render in the country and abroad. It is also necessary to know about their competitors in the field and their areas of business operations. All these make good sense to understand the standing and requirements and expectations of the employer from its employees.
- 5 One needs to hone one's communication skills that include the ability to use certain words and expressions to perform diverse functions appropriate to the interview. In addition, communication if done using appropriate pronunciation leaves a good impression on the interviewers. This suggests speaking in a neutral accent without mother tongue interference. Spoken English skills cannot be learnt in a few days or even few weeks but take time to be mastered and hence guidance, patience, and practice are required over a long period.
- 6 Many join some sort of coaching institutes to receive training in communication skills and preparing for interviews. It is a good idea if you can afford them. But even then you need to rehearse for each call. So what you can do before the interview is to anticipate likely questions that can be asked on the basis of your CV sent to this company and also on the basis of the competencies and generic skills we have described in Block 1 Unit 1. The mock interview can be designed in four stages: Stage 1 should be designed to 'greetings and seating' and checking personal details regarding general and technical qualifications. Parts 2 and 3 ought to focus on finding out competencies and generic skills, past and present employments and duties and responsibilities, and other traits of personality beneficial to the company.

You can then seek the help of a friend or colleague or someone at home to conduct a mock interview to sharpen your skills and gain confidence to face the real event. Remember, interviews conducted by experts are structured (see unit 2: Facing interviews) and a similar structure can be framed for mock interviews to give you practice. This mock interview must require you to perform the following communicative functions:

**narrate, justify, support, describe, evaluate, identify, assess, explain, agree/disagree; speculate, comment, suggest, compare, outline, predict, justify, consider, explain, and others.**

- 7 Finally, plan when and how you would leave your place for the venue. Ensure that you have kept all the documents you possess in support of your candidature/application ready in your portfolio – originals and one photocopy of each – along with passport size photographs of yours and the interview letter that contains the company's address and telephone number. If you do not know exactly the venue of the interview, then it is better to locate it one day in advance so that you do not have to look for it at the last moment. You can telephone the company's enquiry office and seek directions about its location if you want. Dress nicely and appropriately for the occasion, start well in time as there can be traffic jams or break downs on the way. Take it easy and go through your usual chores. If you do all these, you would feel confident and relaxed and free from anxiety and fear and are sure to stand out from the rest.



**Check your progress 2**

- 1 Which of the following do you think is the most suitable title for this text?
  - i How to face interviews
  - ii Dressing nicely for the occasion
  - iii Preparing for the interview
  - iv Sharpen your communication skills
  
- 2 Read the text once again, slowly this time and attempt the following:-
 

The following can be suitable sub-headings for the reading text. Write these sub-headings at their appropriate places within the text.

  - i Hone your communication skills.
  - ii Know the Prospective Employer
  - iii Plan and Practice Mock interviews
  - iv Collect documents and up-date your portfolio
  
- 3 Complete the following sentences in your own words:-
  - i We should inform the company even if we cannot attend the interview because .....
  - ii We should book our tickets well in advance if the venue of the interview is in another town/city .....
  - iii It is desirable to read the original ad and the CV we sent to the company when we receive an interview call from it. It helps us to .....

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**1.4 SPEAKING**


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**Activity 2**

Speak for about two to three minutes on the following topic. You can have two minutes to prepare for this topic and make notes if you want to before you start speaking. (Speak in front of a mirror/someone at home or a friend).

Describe what the reading text means by 'mock interview'. You should say:

- What a mock interview is?
- How one can plan a mock interview
- The advantages of a mock interview.

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**1.5 WRITING**


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**Activity 3**

You have received a call letter from a company to appear for the interview for a post you applied for some time back. Unfortunately, you are unable to attend on this particular date. Write a letter/email to the Manager HR of the company. In your letter/email:

- Describe the purpose of writing
- Explain reasons for your inability to appear for the interview
- Enquire if phone interview/another date is possible.

## 1.6 VOCABULARY

English has a large number of prefixes of foreign origin (from Greek, Latin, French or Old English) that are very useful in forming words or understanding meanings of various words commonly used in speech and writing. Some of these are:

- anti- (Gr.): opposite to, against (e.g. anti-party; anti-govt.)
- arch- (Gr.): first, chief. (e.g. arch-enemy; arch-rival; arch-angel).
- auto- (Gr.): self. (e.g. automobile; auto-starter).
- bi- (L): twice. (e.g. bi-weekly; bicycle).
- demi- (Fr.): half (as demi-god; demi-official (D.O.))
- dis- (L): in two, asunder. (E.g. dislodge; dis-respect).
- en-, em- (Fr. – L): in, into. (E.g. enlarge; enlist; embolden).
- ex- (L): late, former. (e.g. ex-king; ex-minister).
- fore- (O.E.): before. (E.g. foretell; forewarn).
- hemi- (Gr.): half. E.g. Hemisphere.
- homo - (Gr.): same, (as in homonym; homo-sapiens; homo-sexual).
- hyper- (Gr.): over, above: (e.g. hyper-sensitive hyper-active).
- in- (L): not: (as insensitive; insane; inconvenience; infirm).
- in- (O.E.): in, into (as inland).
- inter- (L): in the midst of; between (as inter-state; inter-caste).
- intra- (L): within (as intra-departmental enquiry).
- male- (L); mal- (Fr.): badly; ill (as malefactor, maladjustment).

### Activity 4

Add prefixes to the following words:

|         |         |           |             |         |
|---------|---------|-----------|-------------|---------|
| able    | code    | bearable  | national    | lateral |
| sponsor | compose | colonial  | allow       | noon    |
| connect | legal   | associate | calculation |         |

## 1.7 GRAMMAR: MODALS INDICATING OBLIGATION

Modals are auxiliary verbs that indicate the functions of the language. They express functions such as suggestions, advice, capability, possibility and so on.

In this Unit we will look at the modals which express “suggestions” and “obligations”

The modals are *should*, *must*, *have to*, *have got to*, *ought to*, *need to*. Examples:

- You *ought to* send a letter/email confirming that you would be available for the interview even if the sender of the letter has not asked you to do so.

- Courtesy demands that you *should* inform him/her even if you are not able to make it.
- You *must* also carry with you photocopies of your degrees, certificates and testimonials.

| Suggestion        | Obligation | No obligation | Prohibition |
|-------------------|------------|---------------|-------------|
| should            | must       | needn't       | mustn't     |
| ought to (strong) | have to    | don't have to | can't       |
| need to           |            |               | shouldn't   |

### Activity 5

Fill in the gaps in the following sentences using the words given below:

|        |           |                |               |
|--------|-----------|----------------|---------------|
| should | shouldn't | have to/has to | don't have to |
| must   | mustn't   | need(s)        |               |

- Although you ..... make a portfolio to apply for a job, it helps to represent your skills and competencies better.
- You ..... mail your portfolio to the organization, and also take it with you to the interview.
- One ..... preserve and file all records and proofs of achievement in all fields in order to create an impressive portfolio.
- The first document in the portfolio..... be the resume.
- The candidate ..... make adjustments in the portfolio for each position sought.
- One ..... try to dress up the portfolio with unnecessary frills. It ..... look professional.
- It ..... be put in a proper binder as this allows you to add and delete documents when needed.

### Activity 6

Choose the correct phrase /words in italics to complete each of the following sentences:

- Applicant *must /need to* include the names of two referees.
- You *needn't/mustn't* stay back late, we have cancelled the meeting.
- You *needn't/mustn't* send that reminder to Khalid and Sons; they paid their dues this morning.
- Airline pilots *should/have to* have excellent eyesight.
- You *should/must* save the file before you turn the computer off, or you will lose the data.
- Employees are reminded that they *mustn't/needn't* use the office phone to make personal calls.
- You *must not/don't have to* come to the meeting if you have more important things to do.
- University teachers *must/should* be graduates in their respective areas.
- They *must/should* have a Ph. D if possible.
- They *need/should* have several publications in referred journals.

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## 1.8 LET US SUM UP

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In this unit we have told you of some important steps one ought to take to prepare to face interviews skillfully and confidently. While giving you these tips we have described the two different types of interview in the business world, their purpose and functions and how they differ from each other. We have also explained why it is desirable to know as much about the prospective company as you can and

how you can do so. You have also learnt what ‘mock interview’ is and how to plan and practice it so that you can face the live interview confidently. While you are learning the competencies of preparing for interview, you have also been given training and practice in the four skills of English language viz. listening, speaking, reading, and writing; vocabulary and grammar.

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## **1.9 ANSWERS**

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### **1.2 Listening comprehension (tape script-1)**

Today I’ll talk to you about two different types of interview in the business world. You might have come across this word ‘interview’ quite often in journalism. Journalists often interview politicians, actors, sports persons and other celebrities, and publish their interviews in the print media – newspapers, magazines and journals or telecast them on the electronic media. These important personalities also give interviews on their own to newspapers and television channels. The aim of this form of ‘interview’ is to seek or give information, views, news or comments for their benefit and for the benefit of the people at large and the media become the tool through which their views are conveyed to the people. These kinds of interviews are also common in the world of business where businessmen and companies’ CEOs do give interviews to reporters and journalists on such matters and issues that might benefit their business e.g. some important clarification, new venture, foreign collaboration, mergers or new product and so on.

There is another sense in which the word ‘interview’ is used – a process of screening and selecting the best - and it is in this sense that the word is understood by young students and job seekers. We are living in a world where there is stiff competition for almost everything everywhere. When there is more supply and less demand, we resort to ‘pick and choose’ and, in order to select the best, we must choose the best that meets our needs. There are different ways of making this selection and one of these is called ‘interview’ particularly when we are choosing human resource. In a way it is a process of filtering out and picking up the best to serve our purpose. Both the interviewers and the interviewee therefore need to be thoroughly trained if the job is to be executed professionally.

In the world of business the art of interviewing and being interviewed is important and hence the task requires training and professional competence.

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### **Check your progress 1**

1- b, 2- (b – a – d – c – e)

### **Check your progress 2**

- 1        iii
- 2        Collect documents: at the beginning of Paragraph 3  
           Know your Employer: at the beginning of paragraph 4  
           Hone your Communication Skills: at the beginning of paragraph 5  
           Practice Mock interviews: at the beginning of paragraph 6
- 3        i-courtesy demands it. ii-to avoid last minute hassles. iii-see what qualifications, skills, competencies & experiences the company demands.

### **Activity 2**

#### **Mock interview**

Good Morning Ladies and Gentlemen.

All of us must have at some stage faced interviews and may have to do so at some point in life. This requires one to be well prepared. Many a time people opt for professional training to enhance communication skills and preparation for the interview. But if one doesn't have the time and finances to support that what does one do?

Herein lays the importance of mock interviews. They simulate an interview setting and train the person in facing the actual interview with confidence. There is a predictable structure to most interviews which can be followed in the mock interview. The interviewer in the mock interview could be a friend or relative who could ask the anticipated questions and one can practice suitable responses to that and improvise based on the feedback received....

### Activity 3

To: swethasharma@glcibank.org

Dear Ma'am,

I, Rohan Baxla, have received a call letter (Ref no: gcil/fghd/2..../344 dated 23/09/2.... from your organization to appear for an interview for the post of Relationship Manager which was advertised on Monster.com. I feel privileged to have been called for the interview. However due to some domestic urgency I will not be able to attend the interview scheduled on 10<sup>th</sup> December. I have to be in Ranchi and cannot travel to Delhi on the scheduled date due to certain unforeseen domestic commitments.

I would like to know if there is a possibility of a change of date for the interview or would you like to hold a phone interview on 10th October.

It is a golden opportunity to work in an organization like yours and I do not want to miss this chance.

I would be really obliged if you could do the needful.

Thank You.

Yours sincerely,

Rohan Baxla

### Activity 4

|                              |                        |            |
|------------------------------|------------------------|------------|
| Unable, disable              | Encode                 | Unbearable |
| International, Multinational | Unilateral, bi-lateral | Co-sponsor |
| Decompose                    | Post-colonial          | Disallow   |
| Forenoon, Afternoon          | Disconnect             | Illegal    |
| Disassociate                 | Miscalculation         |            |

### Activity 5

i- don't have to, ii- have to, iii- must, iv- must, v-ought to, vi-should not, must, vii- needs to,

### Activity 6

i- must, ii- needn't iii- mustn't iv- have to  
v- should vi-mustn't vii- don't have to viii- must  
ix- should x- should