

The dreaded telephone interview!

Ring ring ring

Grace: Hello?

Gabby: Guess what?

Grace: What?

Gabby: Remember the job I told you I applied for?

Grace: Yeah?

Gabby: Well they want to interview me!

Grace: That's great!

Gabby: Yeah well here's the bad news...it's a telephone interview!

Grace: What's wrong with that?

Gabby: Oh I just don't understand why we have to do it by phone.

Grace: Well, I can think of several reasons why a prospective employer might want to do a phone interview. First of all, it could be a "screening" interview that helps them decide if they really want to meet you in person.

Gabby: gee thanks!

Grace: No seriously. It could also save time and money. Nobody has to buy gas, or spend time to drive or fly.

Gabby: Oh yeah I guess anybody that's bought gas recently might know why that would make sense.

Grace: Also, an employer who uses the phone for at least some of their interviews can expand their recruiting area.

Gabby: I didn't think of that. I guess it could benefit me too if the company was willing to talk to me even though I'm half way across the continent.

Grace: Exactly!

Gabby: Well Miss Know-it-all, if you know so much about this then how about you telling me how to prepare for this interview?

Grace: All right. How would you prepare for this interview if it were a face-to-face interview?

Gabby: Oh, that wouldn't be so hard. I would research the company in advance. Because the more I know, the more likely I'll understand what they're looking for.

Grace: Awesome! Do the exact same thing for the phone interview.

Gabby: Really? OK. Then I'll start from the company's website and get familiar with their history, mission, and focus.

Grace: And don't forget the job description! If you do your homework, they will notice that you are well prepared and serious about the job!

Gabby: Plus, I'll be able to ask meaningful questions about the job and the company.

Grace: Yes but don't ask about salary, benefits, or work hours. Save those questions until after they offer you the job!

Gabby: I can do that. That's it?

Grace: Nope. You really should go to a phone interview workshop at the Career Development Center on campus and do a mock interview.

Gabby: The Career Development Center? How do I find them?

Grace: That's easy, just go to career.uark.edu. Phone interviewing skills are just one of the ways that they can help you prepare for life beyond college.

Gabby: Okay. I'll check it out. Do you have any other suggestions?

Grace: Well, of course you need to practice, practice, practice, but there are some other things you should do. Keep your resume, transcript, and the job description handy so you don't have to waste time trying to recall everything.

Gabby: That seems obvious enough.

Grace: Yes but it's something people often forget to prepare.

Gabby: What else?

Grace: Be enthusiastic! Show them that you are really interested in the job and the organization. Remember that your voice is the only thing the interviewers "see" during a phone interview.

Gabby: What should I do? Have a mirror in front of me and smile while I speak?

Grace: **Graces** a matter of fact, you should! Believe it or not, your smile will come through on the phone.

Gabby: Hum... okay. Since it has become apparent that you know EVERYTHING, do you have any advice about what I shouldn't do?

Grace: You bet I do.

Gabby: Such as?

Grace: NEVER play music or watch TV!

Gabby: Well of course not!

Grace: That goes for your computer too! Don't type, chat, or send messages. Keep focused on the interview.

Gabby: okay. Is that all?

Grace: Well I would think it would be obvious but don't eat or chew gum during the interview. There's no telling what that would sound like over the phone but you can bet it wouldn't be pretty.

Gabby: I guess not. But what if I get thirsty?

Grace: Keep a bottle of water handy. Just remember not to chug it in the interviewer's ear!

Gabby: Oh that would be great!

Grace: Exactly!

Gabby: Well Einstein, do you have any more suggestions?

Grace: Actually, I do. Make sure your phone service works and that your voice mail message is professional.

Gabby: Good point. I should also always answer my phone professionally. You NEVER know who will be calling.

Grace: And finally, if you are eavesdropping on this conversation...

Gabby: ...wait...there are people eavesdropping?

Grace: ...well maybe a few people...

Gabby: ...what people?

Grace: Don't worry about it. If you are looking for credit from the University of Arkansas Professional Development Institute, summarize what you've learned from our conversation and send it in an email message to your Career Coach. And of course, if you have more questions about this topic, contact the UA Career Development Center at career@uark.edu or visit their website at career.uark.edu