

# SKILLSUSA TEXAS

## STATE LEADERSHIP & SKILLS CONFERENCE

### JOB INTERVIEW CONTEST GUIDE

**BRING SIX (6) COPIES OF YOUR ONE PAGE RESUME AND ATTACHED REFERENCE PAGE WHEN YOU REPORT TO THE SKILLSUSA JOB INTERVIEW STATE CONTEST ORIENTATION.**

The first thing a contestant needs to do is read the Job Interview contest rules. This information is comprehensive. District and state judges' scoring have shown that contestants often lose points for the little things they could have prevented had they read the Job Interview contest rules. Preparation and practice is the key to doing well in this contest.

SkillsUSA Texas requires contestants take a professional development test. It will be based on Career Essentials Foundations and the SkillsUSA Leadership Handbook. Job Interview contestants will be required to take the exam after turning in their applications, and the scores will be used in the event of tying contestant scores. For more information on the test, click [here](#).

#### **Common mistakes on resumes that cost points include:**

- Resumes that are more than 1 page
- Resumes that do not include attached reference page
- Poor font selection, too small font (nothing under 10 pt)
- Failure to develop a solid one page informative resume
- Inconsistencies with bullet points, indentations, headers, and date formats
- Poorly written objective or qualification summary
- Poorly written information in subheadings
- Use of I and my statements
- Poor or lack of punctuation and grammar
- Failure to format resume properly according to accepted standards
- Failure to proof read resume and references
- Colored paper is not recommended – use white or off-white
- If using a MS Word Resume template, remove these { [ ] } symbols

*Tip – Bring extra resume paper with you to State Orientation in case of any last minute updates*

## **Dress code requirements are absolute.**

This is an interview; your presentation of yourself must be perfection.

**GENTLEMEN:** If you need a haircut, get one; you are expected to look neat and professional. Take the time for a well-groomed look. Hair needs to be out your face. The top button on your shirt under the tie must be buttoned, ties are to be worn correctly according to SkillsUSA official dress. White long sleeve shirts must be pressed to perfection. Your shirt is to be tucked in and a black belt worn. Trousers must be professionally pressed with a crease line that should be visible.

**LADIES:** Limit your jewelry to the minimum. Hoop earrings are not appropriate, avoid 3-inch heels, and slacks/ dress trousers that are too long and drag. Your pants/dress trousers should be professionally pressed with a crease that is visible. Wear the appropriate blouse as SkillsUSA Clothing Requirements dictate, a white tee-shirt does not meet clothing requirements, do not wear a tank or camisole of a different color under your blouse, and nail polish half-on and half-off, will cost you points. Revealed cleavage is not professional and will cost you points.

**ALL:** Please use the iron in the hotel room and press trousers, steam wrinkles from jackets, shirts, blouses, and skirts. Buttons are to be sewn to jackets and not attached by a safety pin or hanging by a thread. Clean, trimmed and manicured nails are a sign that you took the time to prepare for the interview. Polished black shoes are always noticed as a stand-out.

## **You cannot make up a background or experience that fits the job you want to interview for.**

Please do not present yourself, application, and resume for a position where you lack the required qualifications. Example: You cannot speak to and articulate your skills sets as it applies to an aircraft pilot for a major airline because you lack the education, licenses, and flight experiences.

## **Sell yourself during the interview.**

The interview will consist of open-ended questions. Contestants should take the time to answer questions and sell their skills sets and accomplishments. This is not the time for yes and no answers. Go into the interview equipped to discuss examples of your experiences and how they relate to the job you seek.

*How to Succeed in Your Job Interview VIDEO - <https://youtu.be/6aO6cGTcnUg>*

# SKILLSUSA JOB INTERVIEW 101

DREW CARMONA

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## INTRODUCTION

I first joined SkillsUSA in 2008 and competed in Job Interview at the district, state, and national levels. Now as a SkillsUSA Alum, I lead the SkillsUSA Texas State Leadership & Skills Conference Job Interview contest to pay it forward by providing students a valuable learning experience and the opportunity to practice and perfect their job interview, leadership, and personal skills.

I made this guide to present my thought process of the SkillsUSA Job Interview contest. It includes all the tips, tricks, and advice I learned throughout each step of the competition. Although this information is helpful, it should by no means replace perfect practice.

Job Interview is a process that everyone experiences at some point in time. SkillsUSA and the Job Interview contest will provide you with critical experiences that will empower you to become world-class workers, leaders, and responsible American citizens. I hope this information proves to be of great value and that SkillsUSA impacts your life like it has impacted mine.

## PREPARATION

**Preparation for the interview is crucial. Perfect practice makes perfect performance.**

- Know your one-page resume front and back. Referring to your resume during the interview shows you came prepared.
- Research online about the company you are applying for. Know the company's motto, objectives, vision, recent news, etc.
- Make sure your uniform is flawless. No wrinkles, loose strings, missing buttons or lint. Iron shirt, coat, pants/skirt the night before. Shoes shined. No cologne or perfume.
- Your appearance is *everything*. Clean haircut (keep all hair off your face), trimmed facial hair, bright smile, fingernails and eyebrows manicured, face washed, and ears cleaned. You only have one chance to make a first impression!
- Gentlemen, make sure the top button of your white dress shirt is buttoned and your tie is straight and pushed all the way up.
- Ladies, keep the jewelry to a minimum. Hoop earrings are not appropriate, avoid 3-inch heels and slacks/ dress trousers that are too long and drag.
- Plan, prepare, practice, and rehearse. I found it very helpful to sit in front of a mirror and answer practice questions. Even when practicing by yourself, keep good posture, good eye contact, and a good smile.
- Prepare mentally. The judges are looking for that one contestant that has a *sparkle* or *charm*. You should be confident in yourself and it should show in your actions and answers. Walk and talk like you already own the business. The judges want someone whom they can trust to step up and lead their company to a successful future.

## WHAT TO CARRY

**These items are a good idea to carry in your pockets/jacket to use just before the interview.**

- Watch – A nice watch looks professional and will help you keep track of time during the job application portion.
- Chapstick – The judges and receptionist will be analyzing every little detail of your appearance. Do not let dried/cracked lips cost you points.
- Mints – It is a good idea to have a mint just before the competition begins. Do not use gum. I recommend Listerine Breath Strips.
- Handkerchief/Tissue – Just in case you sneeze or experience a runny nose.
- Comb – Your hair should always be fixed and out of your face.
- Oil Absorbing Sheets – This is optional but something I found very useful right before my competition. Nerves will cause your oil glands to overproduce and make your forehead, cheeks, and nose appear shiny. One small sheet takes two seconds to wipe across your face and make your charming appearance look fresh.
- Required Items – Bring extra copies of your resume and references in a portfolio or folder to use as a guideline for the application. Bring two or three black pens (I recommend *Pilot G-2 Ultra/Extra Fine Gel Roller*) and your contestant badge.

## CHECKLIST

### Just for your reference.

- Copies of resumes and references in a nice portfolio or folder
- 2 to 3 black pens
- Teeth cleared of food
- Fresh breath
- No loose strings or wrinkles in uniform
- Gentlemen, make sure tie is straight
- Watch
- Nails trimmed and cleaned
- Chapstick
- Handkerchief or Tissues
- Comb
- Hair fixed and out of face
- Nose clear
- Good posture and smile
- Phone off

## RECEPTIONIST

**The receptionist is a judge and therefore, you should walk through the door ready to be judged. They will be watching your every move until the interview process.**

- Walk through the door with a strong and confident posture.
- Smile the entire time. Look happy to be there. Be the contestant that brightens the receptionist's day.
- First, let the receptionist acknowledge your presence. Do not interrupt.
- Shake their hand firmly. A handshake says a lot about a person.
- Greet the receptionist with a hello and small talk (optional). State your name and your reason for being there. "My name is Andrew Carmona and I am here for the twelve-thirty interview with Mr. Brister for the shift manager's position." Including name of the company is optional.
- Take the application and thank them.
- Although you may take a seat after receiving the application, it is a plus to ask the receptionist if you may sit anywhere. This shows you acknowledge their authority within the room and that you are courteous and polite. Be sure to use "May I...?" and not "Can I...?"
- Jacket buttons: The most common way is to have the top button of your jacket buttoned at all times. When it is time for you to sit in any chair, you just naturally undo the button.
- Sitting in the chair: Right hand down to pull the chair out, feel the seat-bottom for stability, ease in, feet flat on the floor, confident/comfortable posture, and fill out the application with a smile.

## JOB APPLICATION

**The receptionist will judge your application on neatness, accuracy, and professionalism.**

- Your handwriting needs to be clear and legible (print, not cursive). Connect all of your letters and numbers. This shows you are a person who will follow through completely in everything that you do. In addition, cross your t's high for high self-esteem.
- Do not slouch or hunch over in the chair to write neatly. If practiced, you should not have to break your confident posture to write legibly.
- Fill in every blank. If you do not have an answer, write N/A. Putting something down shows you did not overlook the question.
- When it comes to work experience or another section with a lot of N/A's, you may use " in the blank below N/A to indicate the same applies vertically.
- Use your watch to keep track of how much time you have to fill out the application. It is not frowned upon to use most of the 30 minutes. Do not go over.
- Know the date!
- Every answer needs to be as accurate as possible. Use your resume and references as a guide.
- For Driver's License put all 2's for competition purposes. Remember there are 8 digits in an official Texas driver's license! 22222222
- Social Security put all 7's. Remember there are 9 digits and a specific layout in a federal issued social security number. 777-77-7777
- Read ALL instructions and sections carefully. There will be a long paragraph at the end that you should read cautiously. Then sign. Cursive is acceptable here.
- After you stand up to turn the application in, push the chair in back to the position you found it.
- Turn in your application with a smile and thank the receptionist for their time.
- Do not forget! The receptionist will watch you walk back to your seat and analyze how you sit in your chair. Have open hand placement (do not cross hands) and wait patiently with a smile for an interview that you will rock!

## OPENING THE INTERVIEW

### **You finally made it to the interview. This is YOUR opportunity to sell YOURSELF.**

- Relax. Think of this interview as an opportunity to show the judges why they should hire you. This is where you need to shine and stand out from the rest of the group.
- Remember to shake the interviewer's hand with a firm handshake. This major interaction will be reported to the judges. A good handshake should be about 2 to 3 shakes and let go. *No wavy noodle.*
- Another handshaking tip! You can never practice shaking too many hands. Always remember to "connect the hooks." Hold up your right hand and look where your thumb and index finger connect. This is your hook. You should always aim to hook your hand in with the other person's hook for a solid handshake. This prevents a *fingershake*.
- After the handshake, wait until you are asked to be seated. They may trick you and say nothing. In this case, kindly ask, "May I sit here?"
- Sit in the chair correctly with your feet flat on the floor. Do not tap your feet throughout the interview. The judges will notice a tapping foot and you do not want to distract them from your great responses.
- Keep a confident posture! You should not be straight as a board (tensed), but shoulders back, head high, and comfortable.
- Make sure hair stays out of your face – do not play with it.
- Slightly leaning forward in the seat shows you are interested in what the interviewer has to say. It also makes you more engaged with the process.

## DURING THE INTERVIEW

**Do not lose focus. Answer questions with power words and specific examples. Show how you are the one person who will save the company time and money.**

- It is important to control your breathing and movements during the interview. Do not take big breaths or sudden movements before answering a question. This shows that the question makes you feel uncomfortable. No twitching.
- Use your hands wisely. You are encouraged to talk with your hands but do not overdo it. At first your hands should rest comfortably in your lap (not crossed). If you feel the need to express a story or situation with your hands, make sure they are above the table where the judges can see them.
- Eye contact is *critical*. The judges expect you to look the interviewer in the eye when listening and answering. Tip: If you feel uncomfortable doing this, focus on the interviewer's eyebrows or forehead to relieve some of the awkwardness. If you are in a panel interview, make sure to make eye contact with each judge on every answer.
- The judges will also be analyzing your voice and tone. A strong voice shows that you are confident and persuasive.
- Speak up. The judges should not have to strain to hear your answers.
- Use silence to your advantage. When making a strong point, take a brief pause to let the judges think about what you just said. Also, when a hard question arises, do not be afraid to compliment them (in this case, the interviewer) for formulating a great question.
- The interviewer will have a copy of your resume on their desk. Use this opportunity to highlight specific points on your resume. This technique will strengthen your answers and show the judges you came prepared.
- Combine your listening AND hearing skills to effectively find hidden messages within the questions. Most questions like, "Don't you think you might be overqualified?" are really asking, "Will you cost me too much money?" The judges want to hear what you can do to save the company money, time, and resources.
- Calling the interviewer by their title or name can work to your advantage. We all like the sound of our own names. Be careful not to overdo it.

## CLOSING THE INTERVIEW

**This is your chance to impress the judges with your thoughtful questions. Usually the interviewer will ask if you have any questions; however, they may try to trick you and end the interview quickly. Do not be afraid to kindly request an opportunity for questions.**

- Ask two questions that are not benefits-related. Make sure your questions are as job specific as possible to try to 'stump' the interviewer. With the question you should also use this opportunity to: (1) highlight a positive characteristic and (2) ask for the job. Do not ask for the job in the literal sense; however, do show that you are very interested in hearing back from the employer and ask when and how they will be contacting you for the position.
- With a big smile, thank the interviewer for their time and consideration.
- Wish them a great day!
- Step out of the chair; place it back into the position that you found it.
- Leave the room with a confident posture, a nice smile, and a strong walk.
- Close the door quietly. Some doors tend to slam behind you.
- Go back to greet and thank the receptionist for their help.
- And finally, enjoy the rest of your day knowing you professionally rocked the SkillsUSA Job Interview competition!

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Finally, I wish to thank my family for their love and care. They are truly outstanding, and I am very blessed to have such people in my life.

All the best,  
Drew