

Interview Tips for South African Job Seekers

A practical checklist from SA Easy — prepare once, use for private and government interviews.

1. Before the interview

- Read the full job advert again. Note duties, requirements and the reference number.
- Research the employer: what they do, where the office is, recent news if relevant.
- Prepare 4–6 examples from your experience using a simple structure: Situation → Action → Result.
- Print or save: CV, ID copy, certificates, and Z83 if it was a government application.
- Plan your route. Aim to arrive 10–15 minutes early. Have a backup plan for transport.
- Choose neat, professional clothes suitable for the role (office, security, warehouse, etc.).

Tip: Practise answering out loud. Timing yourself helps you stay clear and concise.

2. Common questions — prepare short answers

- Tell us about yourself (60–90 seconds: background, skills, why this role).
- Why do you want this job / to work here?
- What are your strengths? Give one example.
- What is a weakness? Choose something real and how you manage it.
- Describe a time you solved a problem or worked in a team.
- Where do you see yourself in 2–3 years? (realistic and related to the work)
- Do you have any questions for us? (prepare 1–2 serious questions)

Tip: For government panels, answers should be honest, structured and linked to the advert requirements.

3. During the interview

- Greet the panel, sit when invited, keep your phone on silent and out of sight.
- Listen to the full question. Pause briefly if you need to think.
- Speak clearly. Avoid slang and long rambling stories.
- If you do not know something, say so honestly and how you would find out or learn.
- Stay calm if there is a written test, practical task or competency assessment.
- Thank the panel at the end.

4. Questions you can ask

- What does a typical day in this role look like?
- What are the next steps and expected timeline after this interview?
- What skills help someone succeed in this team?

Avoid asking only about salary in the first interview unless they raise it.

5. After the interview

- Note what went well and what to improve next time.
- If they asked for extra documents, send them promptly through the official channel.
- Continue applying for other suitable roles while you wait.
- If unsuccessful, treat it as practice. Many people succeed on a later application.

6. Red flags and safety

- Never pay for an interview, a “placement fee”, or to “secure” a government job.
- Confirm the interview venue is official (department building, company office, known agency).
- Be cautious of interviews only on WhatsApp with no formal invite or reference number.
- Do not hand over original ID or certificates permanently unless required for onboarding after an offer.

Quick day-of checklist

- CV and documents packed ■ Phone charged / silent
- Outfit ready ■ Transport planned ■ Water / small snack
- Job title & company name remembered ■ 1–2 questions prepared

SA Easy — free interview tips for South African job seekers. Also see our free CV template, cover letter template and Z83 guide on saeasy.co.za. This is general guidance, not a guarantee of employment.