



## Interviews

**Do I need an interview?** It depends on the college. Some require an interview, either with an alumnus/a of the college in your area, or with an admissions representative who comes to your area or school, or at the college's admissions office. You are responsible for knowing what each college requires or recommends. Generally, having an interview works to your advantage.

**How do I schedule an interview?** It depends on the college. If you will be visiting the campus, let the admissions office know your plans; they will schedule you for an interview if necessary or if you request it. If you receive notification from a college that you should schedule an interview with an alumnus/a in your area, instructions for contacting that person will be given to you. Some colleges have the alumnus/a contact you, usually by phone or e-mail.

**Can my parents set up these interviews for me?** They can, but they shouldn't. It makes you look like you aren't ready to go to college yet. Do it yourself. Role-play with Mrs. Schweber or another teacher if you're nervous.

**My parent(s) will be driving me to the interview. What should they do then?** One thing they should not do is to accompany you to the interview or speak to the interviewer on your behalf. Have your parent(s) drop you off and then use your cell phone to call them when you're ready to be picked up. (Turn off your phone during the interview!) Interviews usually last between 30 and 60 minutes.

**If I have an interview locally, where will it be?** You might be interviewed at the person's home, place of work, or at a café. The Café at Barnes and Noble is a popular place for college interviews, as are Starbucks and other coffee places. Many colleges discourage interviews at the interviewer's home.

**What should I wear?** Look professional. The higher end of the MCDS dress code is fine.

**If we meet in a café, who pays?** Probably the interviewer. But have some money just in case, and be ready to pay for your own. Then if he/she says, "It's on me," don't protest; just say "Thank you" and put your money away. If you are an athlete who is being recruited, however, the interviewer isn't permitted to pay for your snack. If you are not sure whether you are a recruited athlete or not, check with Mrs. Schweber.

**What should I say?** Be yourself. Don't ramble on and on; let the interviewer move on with a follow-up or new question by pausing for breath ever now and then. The interviewer wants to find out what makes you special—what your passions are, what you are looking for in a college, even what kind of roommate you'll be. Will you be a contributor to life in the college community? In what ways? Re-read your essays for a little inspiration before the interview, but don't just repeat what you've written. This is your opportunity to put a real person next to all those scores, grades, essays, and other paperwork.

**Will the interviewer know my grades or test scores? Will he/she have read my essays?** Not if it is an alumnus/a conducting the interview. If you are interviewed by an admissions office representative on campus, they will have access to your application. If you are interviewed by an admissions representative here at school, they may have seen your application, but they may not have it with them. You do not have to tell your grades or test scores in an alumni interview, although some colleges encourage alumni to ask (they are supposed to say that answering is optional, though). If you are worried about this or are considering talking about your scores, etc., talk with Mrs. Schweber and/or Mr. Felker about it and plan what you could say.

**What if an alumni interviewer asks where else I am applying?** You should be vague about this, particularly if you are worried about leaving the interviewer with the idea that the college is your safety school. Check with Mrs. Schweber before your interview for advice on this. Most interviewers will expect that you are applying to one of your state university's campuses, so saying you're applying to UW-Madison is a good answer in most cases.

**Can I ask the interviewer questions about the college?** Yes; most colleges make sure that their interviewers have some current knowledge about campus life, programs of study, and the area in which the college is located. Keep in mind, though, that some interviewers haven't been back to campus in many years. Balance whatever they tell you with information supplied by the college, by what you hear from current students or more recent graduates, and by a visit to the college if possible.

**Is there anything I should not ask?** Do not ask the interviewer what your chances of getting in are. Do not ask questions for which the answers are on the website.

**Can I do a practice interview?** Either Mrs. Schweber or Mr. Felker would be happy to do a mock interview with you. Both of us have been alumni interviewers.

**Should I send a thank you note?** It would be appropriate to do so. Check with Mrs. Schweber for some examples if you don't know what to write.