

Interview Tips

"Interviews are where pageants are won . . . or lost."

Donna Axum, former Miss America

- Conversation** The interview is a conversation. Use it to tell the judges as much about yourself as possible. No matter what they ask, use it to your advantage. Also, the judges are real people. Treat them that way.
- Stories/Anecdotes** Use stories to get your points across. Philosophical answers are boring, but everybody likes a story. People relate to them better, and it will humanize you. Stories are a good way to help the judges get to know you and to make them laugh.
- Confidence** Smile, walk in confidently, and look the judges in the eyes. It may be wise to address the judge who asked you the question while answering. Have an "open face."
- Fidgeting** Don't do it! Talk into a mirror or video yourself. Do you pull your hair or jiggle your knees when talking or nervous? Fix it!
- Elocution** Speak clearly and loud enough so the judges can hear you. **DO NOT CHEW GUM!** Keep answers to the point. Do not ramble.
- Current Events** Watch the news and read the paper. Know what is going on (even the morning of the pageant) and form opinions.
- Attire/Overall Look** Wear an outfit that is age appropriate, but something you could wear to a job interview. Be professional, but act your age.
- Be Yourself** It is okay to not know the answer to every question the judges ask. Say, "I don't know." Do not try to lie or make up an answer. Also, don't change who you are. Say what you think and mean it. Stand up for what you believe. The judges will admire your genuineness.
- Spontaneity** The interview should be fun. Don't hesitate to say something funny or spontaneous. Show your personality.
- Don't Memorize** If you memorize your answer, you will sound like a robot. You may also forget what you memorized and get flustered. Learn to speak extemporaneously.
- Practice** The best way to improve your interviewing skills is to practice. Have family members, friends, the pageant committee, co-workers, and roommates hold mock interviews with you. Practice talking as much as you can, even to the grocery store clerk!
- Closing Statement** At the end of the interview, you will have 30 seconds to close. Use this time to say something that you wanted them to know but they didn't ask. Make it count: say something memorable that distinguishes you from everybody else!