



Tips for Oral Exams

The oral exam is an opportunity for you to demonstrate your knowledge, your presentation/speaking skills, as well as your ability to communicate. They can also be good practice for job interviews!

The exam can be formal or informal, but you should consider all exams formal exchanges in order to make a good impression. For both types, you must listen carefully to the question, and answer directly.

- Formal exams follow a list of questions in a prepared format. The criteria for evaluation is usually set in a right/wrong format and can be competitive. For this type of exam, if you wish to add “related” or qualified information, ask permission first as a courtesy.
- Informal exams are more open, your responses are usually longer, and evaluations can be more subjective. Answers are often less exact (right/wrong), and value is added for problem solving analysis and method, as well as interpersonal communication and presentation.

There are three components to a successful oral exam:

Preparation

Ask your teacher what will be on the exam. Study. If you do not study, you will not do well.

Write out questions you expect to be asked, then:

- Discuss answering techniques with people in the field or who have had the test
- Practice answering with classmates
- Practice in a similar setting, in front of a mirror, to evaluate your "manner"

Verify the date, time and location; confirm these with your instructor.

If you use computing, projection, or media systems, practice with the equipment the day before, and verify an hour or so before the test if possible.

The Exam

Look and act professional! Create a good impression. Dress well and appropriately, turn off cell phones and pagers.

Arrive at the location early to collect yourself and check out the situation, but wait until your scheduled time to keep the appointment. This is a time for relaxed focus, not cramming or review.

The exam begins the minute you walk in:

Introduce yourself immediately

Give the instructor all of your attention; look interested and smile!

Keep good posture and eye contact;

If there are distractions (noise outside, etc,) you may mention your distraction and/or nervousness.

Stay focused through the interview. Be an intelligent listener as well as talker.

Staff Article

Do not ramble if you do not know an answer.

State directly that you do not know the answer but ask if you could outline how you would find the answer, solve the problem, or the method you would employ.

Maintain your self-confidence and composure if you feel the interview is not going well. The interviewer may be testing you.

Answer questions with more than "yes" or "no". Stress the positive and not the negative. Use two or three key points or examples to demonstrate your knowledge

Watch for signs that the test is over (i.e., the interviewer looks at the clock, moves the chair back, or completes a set of questions)

Ask if there is anything you could answer that would add to your evaluation.

Thank the instructor.

Follow-Up

Summarize your performance; where you did well or poorly. Keep a written record

Note how you could do better for the next time.

Note if there was a significant "event" during the interview.

If you have questions or comments on either the material or your performance, do not hesitate to speak with the instructor. Do not challenge the teacher, but seek to understand your performance.

If you have concerns about an inappropriate evaluation after raising concerns with your teacher, discuss them with that department's, or your school's, academic counseling center or a higher authority.

Reference:
www.studygs.net



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