

# Advice for a journalism intern

## How to prepare for the job interview

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1. **Clips.** Gather your best clips -- at least five but no more than 10, to show the editor what you have done. (Your chances of landing a job or internship -- in journalism, PR and many other fields -- will be greatly diminished if you have made no effort to write for a publication such as the college newspaper.)

2. **Resume.** Prepare a simple resume that starts with your objective (such as "to gain experience in gathering and writing of news and feature stories.")

3. **Ideas.** Spend a day at the local library reading at least a month's worth of editions of the paper (or magazine, if that's your job target) to see the kinds of stories that have been running. Based on that review, come up with about five practical ideas for enterprise stories that could be done in the community. Keep this positive -- you are not doing this to point out gaps in coverage, but to suggest ways to offer readers additional coverage and show the editor you would contribute to the overall success of the news team.

4. **History.** Read up on the community to learn about historic events and people there. (For example, you wouldn't want to go to an interview in Oberlin, OH, without knowing about the "Underground Railroad.") Learn something about the market, including the identity of major employers and institutions in the community.

5. **Leaders.** Do some research on the paper; know who owns and publishes it and for how long. Get the names of the top editors and learn what they do in the newsroom.

6. **Competition.** Identify the competition; read those newspapers to see what they have covered recently in the territory served by your target newspaper.

7. **Journalism.** Read some recent editions of the magazines that focus on journalism, such as Columbia Journalism Review, American Journalism Review and Quill (the SPJ magazine, to learn what journalists are talking about. (For example, you should know who Jayson Blair is, where he worked and what he did.) Check out Poynter Online <http://www.poynter.org/>, particularly Romenesko and other commentaries.

8. **Current events.** Read current print editions or at least the web sites of several daily newspapers, including the closest metropolitan daily, USA Today and the New York Times, so you are aware of the news of the day. If you are applying to a financial newspaper, add the Wall Street Journal to that mix.

9. **NPR.** Listen to the news on NPR (FM 90.3) in the morning and to "All Things Considered" (also 90.3, at 5 p.m.) and "Fresh Air," the interview show by Terry Gross, on the same station from 7 to 8 p.m. daily).

10. **Appearance.** Dress up for the interview. For guys, that would be slacks, dress shoes, a long-sleeved dress shirt and a tie, though not necessarily a sport coat. For girls, dress shoes (not high heels), stockings, and a skirt or pants with a modest blouse. Keep colors simple, with warm tones and nothing flashy. You should look ready to start the job that day. (Don't be guided by the appearance of reporters already on the staff; they are no longer trying to get hired.)

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