

100+ of the Toughest Interview Questions Law Firm Ask Attorneys and Law Students and How to Answer Them

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Summary: Make sure you are prepared for any question a law firm might throw at you by reading through this comprehensive list of questions and answers.

When you are interviewing with a law firm, you always need to be prepared to answer any question they throw at you. Here, you will find a list of the most common law firm interview questions. Many of the questions may overlap in certain aspects, but the key to acing your law firm job interview is to be ready and to answer each question in a clear, concise, and specific manner.

Interview Questions to Ask a Lawyer

Prepare by carefully thinking through possible answers to questions they may be asked in advance is highly recommended. It is often suggested that physically writing out your answers and practicing them by speaking them out loud is also an excellent strategy. The goal is not to memorize answers by rote but rather for you to become so conversant and comfortable with your answers that no question will rattle you during the interview. Ideally, your answers should roll effortlessly off your tongue as they would expect from a seasoned trial attorney.

The following interview questions for attorneys are organized according to the following categories. Click to go directly to a specific section:

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Lawyer Interview Questions: Self-Description

These are open-ended questions that ask you to describe or characterize yourself. In a law firm interview, the interviewer will be interested in the substance of what you say. Through this, they will get a feel for what kind of person you are. The interviewer will also be interested in how and why you give the answers you give. The best answers will be short, simple, and articulate. At best, your answers will reveal the necessary qualities they are looking for based on the particular characteristics, traits, or experiences you choose to discuss over others.

Tell me about yourself.

How would your friends/co-workers describe you?

How would you describe yourself as a person?

What is important to you in life?

Who is your hero/heroine?

Why did you choose your undergraduate major?

How have you changed in the last five years?

What experiences most influenced your career choice?

What constitutes success in your mind?

Do you see yourself as a litigator or transactional lawyer? Why?

What do I need to know about you that is not on your resume?

Questions About Your Strengths, Weaknesses, And Professional Attributes

These typical law firm interview questions are designed to illuminate your strengths and weaknesses in ways relevant to the employer. For your strengths, be honest and confident; do not be boastful or arrogant. The firm is looking to fill a position that requires certain skills and you will want them to know straight away that those are indeed the skills you have.

Why would a firm hire a [litigator](#) who is not fully confident in their [writing ability](#), for example? When it comes to weaknesses, you should be forthright -but be mindful that you can almost always "spin" a "weakness" into a "positive." You can do this by demonstrating the willingness to acknowledge that weakness, how hard you have worked to overcome it, or even better, how you have learned to use it to your advantage.

What are your weaknesses?

What are your strengths?

What is the biggest mistake you have ever made?

How do you get the best out of people?

How do you go about handling difficult people?

How would you go about building a trusting relationship with a client?

How do you work under pressure?

How strong are your writing skills?

What sort of management skills do you have?

Would make you a good trial advocate?

Questions about Your Career Path and Goals

Law firm job interview questions can reach as far back as the beginnings of your desire to pursue law. This can include anything along your career path right up to the present - including high school, college, law school, past jobs, and past professions. The interviewer wants to see a logical progression in your career arc so they feel confident that you have the mindset and experience necessary to do the job and be a part of the legal profession. The interviewer may also want to see that you are a "goal-minded" person with an overarching career plan. [Lawyers with plans and goals are considered assets to firms](#), as opposed to those who may seem to drift aimlessly through jobs and life without a structured or reasoned plan.

For these law office interview questions, imagine your answers as a story with a beginning, middle, and end, even if you feel there is much more story to come.

Why did you choose law?

Why did you go to law school? Have your goals changed since then?

How has your education and experience prepared you for the practice of law?

Why did you choose to work at these specific organizations on your resume?

What did you particularly like/dislike about that work?

Why did you leave your prior jobs?

What did you do between college and law school?

Why did you decide to switch from your previous field to law?

What goals have you set for yourself? How are you planning to achieve them?

What are your short-/long-term career goals?

How are you planning to achieve these goals?

Where do you see yourself in 5 (or 10) years?

In what way do you see yourself needing further development in order for you to be fully effective in your career?

Questions About Your Job Qualifications And Suitability For The Position

This list of [legal interview questions](#) is designed to assess whether you are qualified for the position being

offered and whether you are suitable for the firm offering it. Your answers should demonstrate an understanding of the nature of the job, that you can do the work, and are interested in the relevant area of law. This is your opportunity to show how you would approach the job as opposed to pursuing the job simply because it is available.

As you address questions in your interview, it is also an opportunity to demonstrate to the interviewer that you have done your research on the firm and have a good basis for wanting to be there. In your answers, you can extoll on the firm's great reputation in the field and how it attracts the best clients with high quality of work. You can even mention your interest in the firm because it is located where you want to live. Whatever your reasons, have something prepared. You want your interviewer to understand that - due to your experience, background, expertise, personal goals, and commitment--there is simply no better candidate for the position and the firm.

How would you describe your ideal job?

What kinds of things give you the most satisfaction in your work?

What do you know about our organization?

Why do you want to work at our office?

Why do you want to work in our office, as opposed to other offices that do similar work?

What do you like most about this firm/practice group/organization?

Which of our [legal practice areas](#) and/or areas of interest are you most interested in?

Why are you looking at this area of specialization?

How did you become interested in X practice area/subject matter?

How much experience have you had in your field of interest?

What fields interest you other than the one you are in?

Why our practice setting? Why our issues?

What is your geographical preference? What ties do you have to our area?

What qualifications do you have that will make you successful at this job?

What sets you apart from other candidates?

Why should we select you over all the other candidates?

What can you bring to this organization?

What would you look forward to most in this job?

What would the greatest drawback of this job be for you?

What do you think will be the hardest part of this job for you?

What kind of training or supervision are you looking for in a job?

What criteria are you using to evaluate the employer for which you hope to work?

What is your ultimate career goal? How does this job fit into those goals?

Why did you come to us through an agency?

What are you expecting from this firm in the future?

What sort of salary are you expecting?

If offered the position, how long do you plan to stay at this company?

What challenges are you looking for in this position?

How do you feel about long working hours?

What other firms have you applied to, and why?

Why did you decide to switch from the private sector to public interest work?

How much experience have you had with public interest organizations?

Questions About Your Personality, Values, And Views on Law

These interview questions are designed to assess your personality, values, and views on the law to ensure that you are a good fit for the kind of work they do and the unique environment of the firm for which you are interviewing. Some questions will be directed at whether you are a team player--important for any law firm. Others are designed to assess your politics, awareness of current events, and the quality of other "lawyering" skills such as analytical thinking, debating skills, advocacy, and commitment to a cause.

What qualities do you think a good lawyer should have?
 What two or three things are most important to you in a job?
 Are you a team player or do you prefer to work on your own?
 Do you like working by yourself?
 What type of people do you work with best or would have trouble working with?
 How are you prepared to work with clients/colleagues who are different from you?
 In what environment do you work best?
 How do you get things done?
 How do you deal with stress?
 Describe how you would handle a disagreement between you and your supervisor about the direction a case should take.
 What do you feel are things that help a person become successful?
 How do you feel about accountability versus reconciliation?
 How do you feel about representing alleged child abusers?
 Is there any crime you would have trouble defending?
 How do you feel when the defense of the First Amendment conflicts with other rights?
 If you were not in law school, what would you be doing?
 Tell me about a recent Supreme Court case you disagreed with and why.
 If you were a court, how would you rule on the following issue...?
 How committed are you to service the underrepresented?
 What interest do you have in service to the public generally?
 What was an interesting legal issue you dealt with in your job last summer?
 If you had a completely free choice, which law would you like to change and why?
 In your view, what are the major problems/opportunities facing the legal industry?
 Why do you not want to be a counselor at law?

Questions About Your Specific Accomplishments

If you have made it this far through the interview, congratulations! You have gone a long way. These next questions will also be very important.

Next, the interviewers will want to see you showcase specific accomplishments. The key to successful answers is to be precise--offerconcretedetails--and proud without arrogance. And, of course, be honest. You want your interviewer to feel that they have learned something new, real, and exceptional about you. You also want your interviewer to understand that there is "meat on the bones" of your rsum and that you will accomplish great things for your [new firm](#) just as you have done for your past firms, at school, and in other areas of your life. You want your interviewer to be impressed with you-all of you-and to consider you a "winner." When they are able to appreciate the value you will bring to their team, they will not help but hire you.

What is your biggest accomplishment?
 What is the one thing have you done that you are most proud of?
 What is the most difficult/rewarding thing you have ever accomplished?
 What type of responsibilities have you had in prior work experiences?
 Tell me about your [legal writing sample](#)/note.
 Tell me about a legal memo you wrote this year.
 Tell me about a complex legal issue you worked on.
 Describe a situation where you had to convince someone of your viewpoint.
 Describe the project or situation that best demonstrated your analytical skills.
 What has been the greatest challenge you have faced during your volunteer efforts? How did you overcome such a challenge?
 Describe a professional failure and how you handled it.
 What community service project do you believe allowed you to make the greatest impact and how?

Questions About Your Law School Experience

As part of the hiring process, the type of common [law firm interview questions](#) you will encounter may include those about your law school experience. Depending on the type of position you are applying for, whether you are facing requisite small firm interview questions, law internship questions, legal intern questions, or legal job [interview questions for law students](#)--all will ask you to speak about your law school experience.

Until you have gained some experience in practice for some years, you will not have much to evaluate but your law school accomplishments.

Consider the following questions to help prepare:

What do/did you like most about law school? What do/did you find most challenging?

What was your favorite class in law school? Why?

Who was your favorite professor in law school? Why?

Tell me about your hardest law school exam question.

What extracurricular activities have you participated in during law school?

What was the issue you argued in Moot Court? What was the argument on the other side?

What clinical work have you done in law school?

Tell me about your participation in the journal, in your externship, your clinical program, or your research project.

Tell me about your thesis/journal article.

Do you think your grades are a good indication of your academic achievement? Are they an indication of your ability to do a good job at this organization?

Have you enjoyed law school?

Questions About Outside Interests And Hobbies

Of all of the interview questions you will be given and return, do not dismiss questions about hobbies or personal interests as either unimportant or superfluous. Your answers will reveal a lot about you. Sometimes these questions are used as icebreakers and sometimes they are used to assess whether a candidate is a well-rounded person with interests outside of work. But beware--while on one hand firms want to hire people who have balance and texture in their lives, on the other (and often more important), firms want to hire people who will do the work asked of them, assimilate into their particular [firm culture](#), and for the most part leave their outside interests and hobbies at the door. The way to handle these questions is to show that you are a rounded and interesting person while also one who has their priorities straight. Do not let the interviewer believe there is anything in your life that will keep you from being a team player or extremely productive.

What are your outside interests?

What are your hobbies?

How do you spend your free time?

What is the latest non-legal book you have read?

What is something interesting that is not on your resume?

Tell me about your interest in rock climbing, the course on Islamic law, etc.

Would your social life infringe on your work commitment?

Frequently Asked Questions

How Do I Prepare For An Attorney Interview?

No matter where you are in your career, a job interview can be a daunting experience, even in the legal field. Having strong interview skills is crucial to your career - regardless of whether you are just starting or have many years of experience behind you.

Follow these simple tips from industry experts to eliminate any interview anxiety:

Showcase Your Successful Career

A law candidate's resume gives them a chance to market themselves to prospective employers. So they must take full advantage of this opportunity. You might also want to include a few career success stories along with a few key points about each in your resume if you are an experienced candidate. In addition to highlighting your work history and qualifications, this will help build your personal brand and show hiring managers that you are someone they want to hire.

Know What You Have Done

Your resume should be brief and concise. Even if you worked on high-profile matters, do not list them all on your resume. Ideally, you should only mention those jobs in which you have had a significant role, the ones you feel comfortable discussing in detail. A hiring manager will not be interested in hearing about a matter you only took the minutes for.

Before an interview, prepare a clear and concise explanation of each of your previous roles, even if they are only briefly mentioned on your resume. You should discuss these roles with the hiring manager once you have explained their roles. Most likely, they will not, but it demonstrates your ability to express yourself clearly.

The Experience You Bring To The Role

Candidates should frame their experience and personal beliefs in a way that is tailored to the position when applying for a new job. Whenever possible, you should refrain from criticizing your employer. It looks unprofessional and will not convince hiring managers you are serious about working for them.

As an alternative, if your current role at a [large firm](#) does not offer much in terms of working on a complex legal issue or mentoring others, [in job interviews use that to explain why you are now looking to expand your responsibilities in an entrepreneurial role](#).

Be Aware of What is Going on

Keep abreast of all the latest market developments in the legal industry before an interview with a prospective employer. Doing so will help you stand out in your first interview compared to other candidates.

Engage in several online forums and conversations to ensure your knowledge stays current and up-to-date. A wide professional network could open up doors to further opportunities in the future, in addition to demonstrating your expertise to potential employers.

Selling Your Soft Skills

Hard skills and soft skills must be balanced for candidates to succeed. These days, it is not just about technical know-how and skills - legal candidates need to show that they can deal with different stakeholders. Legal counsels need to demonstrate their legal expertise and their ability to work with multiple teams within the company to help the business grow. A good lawyer is great at everything from time management to legal research and writing to client relations.

Ask Questions And Prepare Your Responses

In an interview, asking the right questions is one of the best ways for candidates to demonstrate their ambition for the role, but they should also prepare the right answers. In case the interviewer turns it around and asks you for your opinion, you should also have an answer prepared for your question just in case it is turned around. Make sure you can answer any questions you ask.

You Should Dress To Impress

In interviews for legal positions, the first impression matters a lot. For hiring managers to know that a

candidate is serious about the position, candidates should dress professionally. The best course of action is to ask your recruiter beforehand or, if you are unsure, opt for appropriate business attire if the company has a dress-down policy.

Do Not Worry, Just Relax

Remember to remain level-headed when assisting candidates with their interview preparations. Remember that a senior [partner in a law firm](#) once walked in your shoes if you are being interviewed by one. Whether or not you succeed in your interview depends on you building rapport with the interviewer, so do not be too mechanical or let the interviewer feel like they are draining information from you. Communicate openly.

What Are The Common Law Interview Questions?

When you are interviewing for a firm, partners ask you questions to gauge your understanding of the specific field, to understand how you balance your caseload, and to learn about your client interaction process. For you to be prepared for your interview, you need to know what kind of questions you can expect. Detail-oriented answers can help you make a lasting impression on partners, increasing your chances of getting an offer.

An example question and answer is provided, along with some interview tips below:

General Questions

The following questions help a hiring partner get to know you a little better by learning about your passions, interests, and how you might fit into the firm's culture:

What adjectives would your friends use to describe you?

What are your biggest strengths?

How do you handle feedback?

What is your biggest accomplishment so far?

What are you passionate about?

How do you handle stressful work situations?

What is your biggest weakness and how are you working on improving it?

Why do you want to work at this firm?

Where do you see yourself in five years?

How do you prioritize your work?

What made you pursue a career in the legal field?

Experience and Background Questions

An interviewer can learn more about your educational background and previous work experience by asking you the following questions:

What was your favorite course in law school and why?

Tell me about a difficult case you were lead on that substantially broadened your understanding of the legal field.

Which extracurricular groups were you involved in during law school?

Tell me about your law school internship or externship.

Describe a complex case you were in charge of.

How would you work with a difficult client or court member?

Why do you think it is important to be detail-oriented as an attorney?

Describe a court case that did not go your way. What lessons did you learn from it?

Describe any legal papers you have written.

Questions That Go Into Detail

In an interview, you may be asked these questions to understand how you connect with clients and resolve legal matters. You can also use these questions to explain your processes and to display the features of your

personality that are a great fit for the position.

How do you build trust with a client?

How would you keep clients informed about the status of their cases?

Describe how you would approach a client who is unhappy with a judge's ruling.

What resources do you use when writing your complaint or defense on behalf of your client?

How do you hope to serve your clients and the community?

What would you do if you had to take on a case that went against your values?

How can the legal system improve to make sure all people get a fair trial?

How do you manage your caseload?

Which area of law is the most interesting to you and why?

Question And Answer Samples For Interviews

Take a look at these sample interview questions and answers to help you prepare:

Why do you want to practice law?

You can use this question to explain why you became a lawyer. You need to respond to this question in a way that positions you as the best candidate and can provide the hiring partner with an idea of your knowledge and experience. When answering a question, demonstrate your genuine interest in law to employers.

What are your strengths as a lawyer?

The employer wants to learn how you can contribute to their current team by knowing your strengths. Your response can be used to make you stand out from the competition because your strengths are unique. You should answer this question by identifying your strengths and connecting them with the tasks you will perform. Use the STAR technique to provide specific examples of your strengths.

What do you want your clients to know about you?

Hiring partners can learn more about how you deal with clients by asking this question. In the office or courtroom, consider how you want clients to feel about their interaction with you. If you want to make a client happy, think of what attributes you possess and how you work. Employers want to know that their firm is being represented well and that you provide excellent service to their clients.

Describe your approach in the courtroom

In court, your performance can determine the outcome of your case. You are invited to share how you interact with court members, how you present your case, and how you represent your clients. You should provide a detailed, step-by-step answer showing exactly how you prepare and work in a courtroom.

Law Firm Interview Tips

You may want to consider some of the following tips to have a successful career when presenting yourself to the employer:

Keep Up With The Latest Court Decisions

To ensure you have up-to-date knowledge in your field, the law firm's hiring partners may ask you questions about recent court rulings. You will demonstrate your commitment to your career if you talk to them and express your thoughts.

Do Your Research On The Law Firm

Particularly if the firm is well established in the community, the partners want to ensure that you will continue to provide them with quality representation. Researching the firm and showing excitement about working there is important. Also, you can explain why you chose the firm as your new employer and why you see yourself as a good fit.

Bring Examples Of Your Writing

Working at a law firm requires the ability to articulate your case clearly, concisely, and professionally. Provide examples of your writing, as prospective employers may want to see them. You may have prepared court documents, written a lengthy legal research paper in school, or drafted a legal memo.

What Should I Say In An Attorney Interview?

Questions to prepare for during an attorney interview includes:

A. "Tell me about yourself."

In an interview, this is often the first question asked: "Why are you the best person for this position?". The answers you provide should be brief and relevant to your qualifications and experience for the position you are applying for. Describe your education, work history, and skills. Assist the interviewer in following along chronologically with your resume. Always stay on topic and keep the subject matter professional.

B. "Why did you leave your most recent job?"

Why you are leaving should not be an exhaustive list. In no matter what circumstances you were employed, refrain from using negative statements. Negative remarks about your past employers or employees will negatively affect your candidacy. Concentrate on how you can put those skills to use in your new position based on what you learned in the previous role.

C. "Where do you see yourself in five years?"

The interviewer wants to know how long you plan to work for the company and how realistic your expectations are. Especially if they are promoting employees from within, offices do not hire employees who will not last more than a year. If you want career stability, tell the interviewer. As well, let them know you are willing to learn new skills and take on additional responsibilities if needed. Employees desire continuity from their employers, so be sincere.

D. "What are your weak points?"

Interviewers are interested in finding out how you identify areas for improvement and how you have accomplished this in the past. A negative must be turned into a positive. To grow in both your professional and personal life, it is critical to identify areas for improvement. Identify an area in which you have improved, as well as where you wish to improve further. It is important to emphasize your eagerness to gain experience and skills so that you can be more effective at work.

E. "What do you know about our law firm?"

One of the most important questions in an [attorney interview](#) is this one. When you act seriously about an opportunity, it demonstrates your commitment. Preparing for the interview means doing your homework. Research the law firm online (Google the company, read recent articles, etc.) or at the library.

F. "Why should we hire you?"

Focus on what you can do for the law firm, the particular group of attorneys, or the management. You should talk about any similarities between your previous position and the one you are applying for if your strength is litigation, corporate law, aviation, marketing, or real estate. Because of your legal knowledge, abilities, legal experience, and skills, you should be hired by the law firm. For their employee treatment and work environment, some law firms have outstanding reputations. Be sure that the firm knows about your knowledge of their reputation if you are interviewing with them. Working for a top law firm is a privilege. Understanding why certain firms are special is crucial to getting into these firms. Answers should highlight your strengths and past experience as a successful employee.

G. "What would you do for us? What can you do for us that someone else cannot?"

Describe past experiences in other law firms that demonstrate your success with similar responsibilities. Neither you nor your prior employer, law firm, coworker, or attorney should say anything negative. Be complimentary at all times, and others will respect you for it. Honesty and humility are the keys to being successful in an interview, so talk about your skills and work ethic honestly. Do not exaggerate your skills or experience.

H. "What do you look for in a job?"

Real achievers are looking for opportunities to use their skills, contribute to the firm, and be recognized for a job well done. Here, it is not permissible to discuss salaries, benefits, or vacations. By focusing on your desire for a vacation rather than your career aspirations, you demonstrate a profound lack of maturity. Thus, you should find out what your professional interests are that are pertinent to the needs of the law firm or the executive you will report directly to.

I. "If you could choose any company to work for, where would you work?"

A big part of your application will be your desire to work for their law firm. The things you admire and appreciate from your research on the law firm are what you will discuss. Tell them honestly and without the fluff. It is always good to work for a firm with a good reputation, stability, and a chance to be recognized for your work. As you prove yourself, some companies will offer more responsibilities. Benefits, wages, and vacation time should not be the focus here. You should always focus on what the experience will be like in the office... not outside of it.

Closing or Ending the Legal Interview

When they ask, "Do you have any questions for us?" they are sometimes asking, "How interested are you in this position?"

Your question(s) here can be very negative or very positive. Do not question them if the firm has new computers after just talking about the firm's new computer system for an hour? You will be asked if you conducted the interview together. Take care. If you ask questions during the interview, it will demonstrate that you have been paying attention and listening. Think about how you can improve your candidacy and ask a question related to it.

It is best to say what you want honestly and directly: "I am interested in the position. How can I improve my chances of getting hired by this firm?"

Thank You Note

Thank you notes are always appreciated. Regardless of what happens! Your follow-up skills and social decorum are evident during a legal job interview, thus reinforcing your candidacy. It has been a pleasure to spend time with the interviewer. Remember to thank someone politely for their time and consideration; both are very valuable.

Why Should We Hire You?

In every legal interview question, the goal is to gather the information that will inform the hiring decision. You will also be asked to make your case with one of these questions:

Why would you be a good fit for this position?

What makes you unique?

Why are you the best person for this job?

Explain why your background and experience would be a good fit for this job.

A concise summary of your strongest points is required to close the deal on a job offer. If your interviewer does not ask one of these questions in so many words, you should be prepared to tell them about yourself and explain why you are the best candidate for the job.

Choosing the best candidate to fill the position is the interviewer's job. The majority of attorneys who are interviewed for the job are qualified for it. In such a competitive job market, a candidate must exceed expectations.

Bringing on a new employee involves a risk for the company. In recommending a particular candidate for hire, your interviewer is also taking a risk for his/her own career. A good interviewer looks great (and maybe gets a bigger annual bonus) when the candidate performs well. Interviewers who do not know what they are doing (slow, difficult, leaves the job prematurely, etc.) look like dummies and damage their professional reputation.

You are being asked to sell yourself as the best person for the job by answering this question. You can make his job easier by convincing him that:

You can do the work and deliver exceptional results.

You will fit in beautifully and be a great addition to the team.

You possess a combination of skills and experience that make you stand out.

Hiring you will make him look smart and make his life easier.

What Should I Wear To An Interview At A Law Firm?

One of the most common questions we get from both aspiring and experienced lawyers is: What should I wear to an interview at a law firm? While this is a difficult question without a simple answer, here are some guidelines for your big day.

As an attorney interviewing for jobs with law firms, you need to make sure you look respectable and clean. You also need to make sure that what you wear is not distracting and shows that you understand that this is a business meeting.

The standard for job applicants in all industries is fairly casual, so definitely do not wear anything too formal or traditional to an interview with a law firm. Men's suits are traditionally black or dark blue, but a dark gray or charcoal will do in a pinch. Women should wear either a standard black, navy blue, brown, or gray skirt suit.

Your shoes should be simple and not distracting; business loafers are perfectly fine. Your socks should fall below the shoe line (avoid socks with big patterns). Wear dress shoes that you would not mind never wearing again once the interview is over.

You should wear a pressed shirt with a tie or understated pattern in muted colors. If you are interviewing in Florida, do not wear a tie. On your first day of work, you will probably have to take it off anyway when they make you partner. Go easy on the cologne or perfume.

Do not wear jeans, t-shirts, sandals/flip-flops, shorts, or jerseys to an interview with a law firm. If you are thinking of wearing something trendy for the interview (e.g., Vans), then do not do it. You want to look like you can fit into their existing culture and not like the punk kid they would be hiring for a summer associate position.

Because you want to make sure that your outfit is not distracting, choose an outfit and practice wearing it somewhere where there is some silence. You might even do this with someone who will give you an honest opinion if they think that what you are wearing is too much or too casual.