

ACCOUNTING INTERVIEWS 101:

How to show up with confidence



You've already impressed them on paper. Now it's time to show them who you are beyond the résumé. To help you prepare, the AICPA partnered with the talent solutions experts at Robert Half to share **10 practical interview tips** based on real-world accounting hiring insights.

1 Understand the career paths.
You don't need your entire career mapped out, but you do need a basic understanding of which areas you would like to explore, such as:

- Public accounting
- Corporate accounting
- Forensic accounting
- Not-for-profit
- Government
- Consulting

2 Research the organization.
Before your interview, understand:

- What services the company offers and who their clients are
- Their industry focus or niche
- Recent company news, growth, or initiatives
- How accounting supports the business (especially for corporate roles)

3 Build your "story" bank.
Accounting interviews are full of behavioral questions like: "Tell me about a time you had to meet a tight deadline."

Prepare 4–6 solid stories that demonstrate:

- Attention to detail (catching an error, improving accuracy)
- Teamwork (group projects, internships, athletics)
- Time management (balancing classes, work, deadlines)
- Problem-solving or judgment

Use the STAR method: Situation, Task, Action, Result

More Tips



4 Show professional maturity.

Employers aren't expecting perfection, but they are looking for professionalism.

That means:

- Listening carefully instead of rushing answers
- Speaking clearly and concisely
- Avoiding overly casual language
- Being respectful of different communication styles

If you need a moment to think, respond with: "That's a great question. Let me take a second to think about that."

5 Highlight your tech skills.

Accounting today is as much about tools as it is about numbers.

Be ready to discuss:

- Excel (formulas, pivot tables, data organization)
- Accounting software
- Data visualization or analytics tools
- Enterprise resource planning (ERP) systems (if you've used them)
- Collaboration tools like Teams or SharePoint
- How you've responsibly used AI in your coursework

Don't just list tools. Explain how you use them and what impact they have.

6 Lead with integrity.

In accounting, trust is everything. Be prepared to talk about situations where you:

- Handled sensitive or confidential information
- Faced an ethical decision
- Spoke up when something didn't seem right

7 Ask questions that matter.

When the interviewer asks, "Do you have any questions?" you should.

Strong questions might include:

- "What does success look like in this role during the first year?"

- "What kind of training or mentorship is available?"
- "How do teams collaborate during busy seasons?"
- "What career paths have others in this role taken?"

Avoid jumping straight into salary and benefits. Save that for later rounds.

8 Share your goals, but stay flexible.

It's completely OK if you're still figuring things out.

What employers want to hear is:

- You're motivated to learn
- You're open to growth
- You're thinking about your future

9 Nail the details.

First impressions aren't just about what you say. They're about how you show up. Make sure you:

- Dress professionally
- Test your tech ahead of virtual interviews
- Bring extra copies of your résumé
- Arrive early (or log in early)

These small actions signal reliability, something every accounting team values.

10 Follow up like a professional.

A thoughtful thank-you email can set you apart.

Send it within 24 hours and include:

- A specific takeaway from your conversation
- Why you're excited about the role
- Appreciation for their time

Keep it concise, genuine, and professional.