

Georgia Department of Education
2013 Governor's Honors Program

How to prepare for your Governor's Honors Program interview

There will always be exciting, terrifying unknowns in a process like this. We cannot remove those for you, nor would it be a good thing if we did. But you can help calm your nerves by preparing in the following ways.

In general...

Know what you're in for: review the *Description & Criteria* for your area. It lists what we expect to see, and how we expect to find it. If there's anything you don't understand, ask your nominating teacher and/or counselor for help. (Knowing when to ask for help is actually a prime GHP trait.)

Get a good night's sleep—and eat a good breakfast (or lunch).

You should plan to arrive 20-30 minutes early to allow time to check in and for any problems along the way. Remember, the interstates around Atlanta often have traffic jams, so listen to radio traffic sites or find an app for that.

Your parent(s) may come with you. They will be asked to wait in a "parent area" where the one of the directors of GHP will tell them lots of info, answer questions, and show an informative video. (You are welcome to attend one of those sessions as well.)

Show enthusiasm: it's OK if you're the quiet type, but your interviewer needs to see that you have the skills, knowledge, and attitudes outlined in the *Description & Criteria*.

Dress neatly and appropriately; extremely casual wear may suggest to your interviewer that you are not serious about getting into the program.

Read up on your subject outside of class: books, magazine articles, blogs, etc. Be up-to-date in your field.

Be yourself. Give real answers, not answers you think the interviewer wants to hear. Insincerity

is worse than an "unpopular" opinion. We want *you* at GHP, not a simulacrum. As one interviewer put it, "If you pretend to be someone you aren't in order to get to GHP... what happens when that person is selected?"

In that vein, have a *conversation* with your interviewer(s). Take a moment before beginning your answer; it is totally acceptable for you to think about what you're going to say before beginning.

Make sure that you mention all the wonderful stuff that you put on the application; your interviewer may not have noticed everything while reading it, and he or she certainly does not have it memorized.

Relax—you are one of **1%** of Georgia's sophomores and juniors. To have made it this far is an incredible accomplishment, so enjoy the day!

Practice, practice, practice...

Practice answering these questions—out loud! Get a friend or parent or teacher to do a practice interview with you. (At least one of these questions is sure to show up in your actual interview.)

- Why do you want to attend GHP?
- What will you contribute to GHP?
- What scares you the most about GHP?
- What have you recently read or done about your subject in the classroom? Outside the classroom?
- Are your grades an accurate reflection of your potential?
- Which one of your activities is most rewarding? Why?
- What has been your biggest achievement?
- What's your opinion on [recent current event]?
- How did you spend last summer?

Georgia Department of Education 2013 Governor's Honors Program

- If you could change one thing about your high school, what would it be?
- Other students interviewing today may have more experience in your area and may be more skilled. Can you give any reasons why you should be selected over them?
- How do you react to failure?
- What happens when you're not the best in the room?
- Describe your dream project in your area.
- What questions do you have about GHP?

Take notes on your answers—write down your best answers, not to memorize them but to train your brain to respond to the same question if asked in the interview. And you know how you always have things you *wished* you'd said? Now's your chance to fill in that gap before the real thing!

Note that these are generic questions. You can expect to be asked questions about your area of nomination as well.

Also in your practice interview:

- Practice entering the room and sitting. It's better if you wait until your interviewer asks you to sit!
- Practice shaking hands.
- Practice sitting up straight—no folded arms, please—and looking your interviewers in the eye.
- It's always a good thing to thank your interviewers for the opportunity when you're finished.

Remember: the interviewer is on *your* side. He or she is looking for reasons to send you to GHP!

For more information...

There is a Facebook group called GHP Nominee Support, started by GHP alumni. The advice there is very good, although you should remember that it is advice from fellow students and not official GHP advice. When in doubt, check with the *Description & Criteria* and your local GHP coordinator.