

COUNTDOWN TO THE crown

In just a little over two weeks, you will be meeting your judges for the first time in the interview room! If the thought of your interview stresses you out, don't worry - you're not alone! We all want to make a good first impression and

show them that we're the right one for the job. But there's more to it than having perfect answers...take it from our formers! This week's Top 10 list features the best tips, tricks, and insight from our former Miss Missouri and Miss America's Outstanding Teens. I hope this motivates and inspires you to be the best version of yourself you can possibly be!

- Charlee Bisch, Miss Missouri's Outstanding Teen 2014



Top 10 Tips for an Incredible Interview



1 Know what you stand for. Think of some of today's hottest topics - gay marriage, war, healthcare, religion - and make a list. Beside each topic, write down your perspective and at least three reasons to back up your belief, based on your own personal conviction, not what is popular. The judges aren't looking for a right or wrong answer; they are looking for the woman who knows what she believes and why. **{Taylor Fitch, MAOT 2009}**



2 Focus on creating a genuine relationship with the judges to give them a sense of who you truly are and what you believe in. Remember that there are no "right answers." **{McKensie Garber, MMOT 2011}**



3 Don't stress about trying to memorize last minute details about a current event or cram facts off your paperwork - you've already done your homework and you know this information! In the moments before your interview, just relax. I like to listen to music or read a chapter from my favorite book. It keeps me calm and in a positive mental state. **{Sydnee Stottlemire, MMOT 2008}**



4 Talk to as many different people as possible, build relationships, and listen and learn from others. Gain real-life experiences advocating, fundraising for, and working with your platform through service. **{Mary Bauer, MMOT 2007}**



5 Maintain a list or blog of things you have done in preparation for MMOT, such as events or charity work. Keep the interview centered around who you're there to serve as MMOT rather than what the title can give to you. **{Lauren McCreight, MMOT 2009}**



6 Come up with a list of questions you may be asked based off of your resume and platform essay. For me, it was helpful to write my answers out in list form, not to be rehearsed, but to really know the things I wanted the judges to know about me. Think of your answers like a paper - intro, three points, closing. **{Caitlin Brunell, MAOT 2008}**



7 It's important to be aware of current events and social issues, but it's more important to know how you feel about them rather than facts and figures. **{Jeanette Morelan, MAOT 2010}**



8 Look at the experience less as a formal job interview and more as a candid conversation. Whether that entails sharing a personal story you've never had the courage to before, or telling a goofy joke - keep it real! **{Shelby Steingraeber, MMOT 2012}**



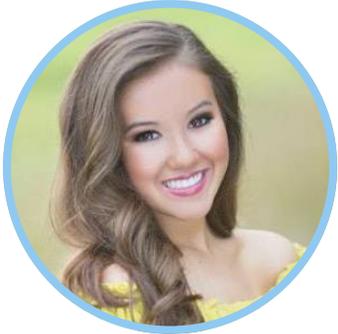
9 Make the judges laugh! Every contestant can come in and rattle off their platform accomplishments or current events. Leave them smiling to make a lasting impression. **{Melanie Collier, MMOT 2006}**



10 Prepare for interview like you're preparing for a test - study yourself, your platform, and the world around you. Great interviews don't just happen; they are well-earned! **{Tess Mandoli, MMOT 2013}**



FEATURED FORMER



Miss Missouri's Outstanding Teen 2013 *Tess Mandoli*

LOCAL TITLE: Miss Metro St. Louis' Outstanding Teen

TALENT: Classical Piano - Schubert's Impromptu #2 in E Minor

PLATFORM: National Diversity Alliance

YEARS COMPETED: 2

MAOT AWARDS: Preliminary Active Wear Winner and 3rd Runner Up to Miss America's Outstanding Teen

WHAT ARE YOU UP TO NOW? I just finished my senior year of high school and will be majoring in Political Science and Musical Theatre at Washington University next year. I have continued my platform work with the National Diversity Alliance, an organization I founded in 2013, as well as my philanthropy work, volunteering as a tutor for kids at City Academy in North St. Louis every week and serving as Co-President of my school's community service committee. Recently, I played the role of Princess Fiona in the STAGES St. Louis production of Shrek The Musical and have been involved in several other school and community theatre productions.

WHAT WAS IT LIKE TO MAKE TOP 5 AT THE NATIONAL PAGEANT? I don't think I've ever worked harder for anything than I did for Miss America's Outstanding Teen. I probably spent over 15 hours a week on interview prep, modeling and talent practice alone, not including the time spent on my platform, volunteering, or other appearances. Making Top 5 was proof that hard work can get you anywhere, and it was an honor to be recognized among a field of incredible girls.

HOW HAS YOUR PARTICIPATION IN MMOT HELPED TO GET YOU WHERE YOU ARE TODAY? I can honestly say that if I hadn't been a contestant, regardless of my placement at the actual pageant, I would not be the same person today. I owe who I am today to the preparation for competition, especially for interview, and the many role models I was consistently surrounded by. The independence and strong will that I took away from being involved in the organization have especially come in handy lately, as I've been busy with college interviews!

WHAT IS ONE THING THAT HAS CHANGED SINCE YOU COMPETED? I find that when I'm at the mall, I always see clothes and think, "That would be a good appearance dress!" or "That top would be perfect for headshots." I also cannot go anywhere without noticing the "mall arm"! I guess you can take the girl out of the pageant, but you can't take the pageant out of the girl!

SPONSOR SPOTLIGHT

Miss Missouri's Outstanding Teen would like to thank **Lance Tilford & Limelight Studio** for providing Miss Missouri's Outstanding Teen's official headshots and promotional photos!

QUESTION OF THE WEEK

Do you feel that issues relating to sex education should be taught in schools?

WORDS TO LIVE BY

"At the end of the day, realize that any opportunity you prepare for has the potential to succeed or fail, no matter how much you might prepare for it. This program is incredible and you are a completely wonderful representation of the MAOTeen Organization, with or without a crown on your head. So if things don't work out the way you hope for, remember this: The moments I thought I was actually failing in life were the ones where God was redirecting me to do something better. Trust Him and do your best!"
- Taylor Fitch, MAOTeen 2009

Questions or suggestions for an upcoming article?
Email your submissions to MissMissouriOT@gmail.com.

