



Secrets to Finding the Perfect Pageant Interview Suit

By Valerie Hayes, The Pageant Coach™

So now that you've signed up for your pageant, you're going to need a pageant interview outfit. While some pageants are suggesting casual, trendy clothing for interview, most contestants still want to purchase a "wow" pageant interview suit. So how do you pick out a fabulous interview suit that creates the perfect impression? Just follow these simple pageant interview suit guidelines and you'll look like the top contestant that you really are!

1. **Style** – Select an interview suit that is fashionable, without being too trendy. Don't pick a suit that has tons of embellishments, is an unusual color, or is so "loud" that the judges notice the suit, but not the girl! Look for classic styles with a few fashionable embellishments such as a flounce at the hem (to highlight great legs!), interesting detailing on the sleeves (great for standing panel interviews!), or an interesting neckline (particularly attractive for seated one-on-one interviews). Think Jackie O or Audrey Hepburn here. Watch the popular morning news shows such as *Today* and *Good Morning America!* for ideas. Pick a suit that highlights your strengths without being too boring or too trendy, that's the key to pageant suit style!
2. **Color** – When selecting your suit, pay particular attention to how the color works with your skin tone and hair coloring. Make sure the color is neither too bright nor too dull. If you close your eyes and the first thing you see when you open them is the suit, the color might be too bright (the first thing you should see is your face). If, when you wear certain colors, you always get compliments from others, consider purchasing a suit in one of those colors. While, generally speaking, teens don't wear black and Mrs. don't wear pink, go ahead and bend the rules if the suit looks age appropriate for your division. The important thing here is to wear a color that flatters you!



3. **Fit** – There’s nothing more disappointing than a fabulous contestant in a suit that obviously doesn’t fit. The judges will get the impression that you really didn’t pay attention to your competition wardrobe and that you won’t pay attention while you’re the Queen either. Allow time in your pageant prep schedule to take your suit to a good tailor and have it fitted; your suit should be neither too big, nor too tight. If you have a seated interview, make certain there’s enough width in the skirt to sit comfortably. If it’s too tight, it will wrinkle and pucker when you sit. Make certain the jacket fits well in the bust and waist area to show off the fabulous physique you’ve worked so hard to achieve. Generally speaking the hem should be just below the knee, dead-center on the knee, or just above the knee; mid-thigh hems are no longer in style. Make sure the sleeves are not too long or too short. By getting the fit right, you’ll leave a positive impression with the judges!
4. **Price** – I’ve had contestants win in \$1,500 suits as well as \$99 clearance suits. The trick is to make sure you are purchasing a suit with good quality fabric that’s well constructed. Look for a suit that has a full lining in both the jacket and the skirt. (If you must wear an unlined jacket, wear a camisole underneath the jacket and a half-slip underneath the skirt.) Look for fabric that holds its’ shape and doesn’t wrinkle easily. Check the shoulder area to make sure the seams don’t pucker. It really doesn’t matter if you spend a fortune or buy something off the sale rack, the important thing is to find a suit that will hold its shape, lay well on the body, and hold up to any necessary tailoring.
5. **Shop Early** – Have you ever had the experience when you absolutely needed a new dress, but couldn’t find a thing at the mall? And then when you’re “just browsing”, you find tons of fabulous outfits? Well, don’t put your pageant interview suit shopping off until the last minute. Start shopping early and allow plenty of time to find the perfect suit and matching accessories!

Now that you know the secrets to finding the perfect pageant interview suit, get out your keys, jump in the car, and head to your favorite mall or boutique. Use your new pageant interview suit knowledge to create the image of a well-dressed, confident pageant interview contestant. And don’t forget to listen to my internet talk radio show, Pageant Talk Radio, where we’re often discussing shopping for a winning competition wardrobe. Here’s the link to listen: www.PageantTalkRadio.com. Happy Shopping!