Wash hands *using soap and water*

Introduce self

Check name with patient and on name band

Ask permission to take blood sample, offer to explain the procedure, and be prepared to answer their questions about what you're testing for

Don gloves

Gather and set up equipment (in a tray cleaned with an alcohol wipe from inside-out first)
  - Chlorhexidine swabs
  - Barrel
  - Needle/Butterfly (depending on Medical School/Hospital Trust policy)
  - Blood tubes (ensure you know the correct colors for the tests you need, and ensure you know the 'order of drawer' for the tests - this can vary so look it up locally)
  - Tourniquet
  - Gloves
  - Cotton wool/gauze
  - Tape

Return to patient

Expose the area up to 3 inches about the antecubital fossa

Reposition patient's forearm with palm facing upwards

Apply tourniquet and find suitable vein

Wash hands and don new pair of gloves

Wipe vein with alcohol swab - slowly and only once

Open the needle/butterfly and attach the barrel (you may need a converted attachment for butterfly needles)

Warn patient of a sharp scratch and insert needle

If you are in the vein (you may see flash-back in the tube), insert the ends of the tubes into the barrel and fill as appropriate

When all tubes filled, remove the tourniquet

Take out the needle and dispose of in sharps bin

Apply cotton wool/gauze and tape

Invert the tubes for a number of times to ensure that the blood mixes with the additives in the tubes

Label the tubes at the patient's bedside with at least 3 components of patient data

Thank patient and tidy area

Wash hands and send the samples

**Top Tips for finding blood:**

1. Positioning: sit the patient upright with their arms hanging loose by their sides, and ensure that you are comfortable

2. Patient factors: if they have difficult veins, then you can try to i) keep them well hydrated before the blood test, ii) keep them warm, iii) warm their hands with a sealed glove full of mildly warm water
3. Know your anatomy (or at least where veins can be found!) - the best areas include: antecubital fossa, radial aspect of wrist, hand.
4. Firmly tapping the vein can increase your chances, but warn the patient first and check that it's not uncomfortable for them.
5. If the patient has small veins then go for small needles.
6. Go for veins which you can feel are spongy. If you can see a vein but can't feel it then forget it.
7. If you have repeated attempts, make sure that the patient is happy for you to do so. If not, see if a colleague can help.

As the anaesthetists say - your first attempt is your best chance!