



# INTERVIEWING 101

## Your guide to navigating interviews

### Introduction

Welcome to our comprehensive Interview Preparation Resource, your go-to guide for mastering the art of interviews! In the dynamic landscape of job seeking, preparation is your secret weapon, and this resource is designed to equip you with essential tips and tricks to ensure you stand out in any interview setting.



### Preparation

Interviews are not just opportunities to showcase your qualifications; they are windows into your professional character. How you present yourself, respond to questions, and engage with the interviewer can make a lasting impression. Preparation is the key to unlocking your full potential during these critical moments. Also, being well prepared will boost your confidence, allowing you to navigate interviews with poise and self-assurance. Refer to the Resources section below for examples on how to best prepare.

### What to Expect

Every organization has different recruiting and interview processes, sometimes you may know ahead of time who is interviewing you but often you don't. You may have an interview with just one person; it is also common to expect a team of interviewers (usually 2-4 people) with various backgrounds during your interview. These could be individuals from different departments, representing various perspectives within the organization.

For an engineering job, it will often be a mix of engineers and human resources representatives. Usually, interviews are between 30 minutes to 1.5 hours long depending on what type of interview it is and how much detail they require.

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### Multiple Interview Process

If there are multiple interviews the first interview is often a phone call, where they ask you generic questions about yourself to get to know you a bit better. If the employer feels that you may be the right candidate for the position, they will offer you a second (and usually more technical) interview in person or over video call. This is a chance for you to really demonstrate your knowledge of the role and responsibilities. If you have a third interview, it's essential to approach it with the same level of preparation and enthusiasm as earlier interviews.

Often, third and later interviews are more role specific. Research the company thoroughly, be ready to discuss your qualifications and experiences in detail and demonstrate your continued interest in the position. Additionally, use any interview as an opportunity to ask questions that will help you assess if the company is the right fit for you.

### Interview Attire

Choosing the right interview attire is essential as it contributes to the overall impression you make on a potential employer. Aim for clothing that is clean and appropriate for the industry and company culture. Generally, there are two types of interviews that you should dress for.

For a 'business formal' interview a classic option is a well-fitted suit in a neutral color such as black, navy, or charcoal gray, which you can pair with a button-down shirt or blouse.

'Business casual' workplaces have become much more common, think business attire, but not a suit. Common clothing includes button down shirts, blouses, khaki pants, and formal skirts. If you are unsure, try an image search online. It is a good idea to avoid jeans, once you secure a job you can always get a better understanding of the workplace's culture.

Avoid overly distracting accessories, opting instead for simple and understated pieces. For other more 'business casual' interviews Pay attention to grooming as well, ensuring that your hair is neat, nails are trimmed, and any facial hair is well-groomed. Ultimately, dressing professionally not only demonstrates your respect for the interview process but also reflects your commitment and seriousness about the opportunity.

### Company Knowledge

Knowing about the company before an interview is crucial. It shows you're genuinely interested, helps tailor your responses to what the company needs, and allows you to ask informed questions. Being informed demonstrates preparedness and can set you apart by showing your commitment and suitability for the position and the company's culture. If the employer asks you what you know about the company, but you don't really know, it will be an automatic red-flag for them, and it will be very unlikely they would proceed with them.

Often, the interviewers are interested to know why you want to work there. This is your chance to highlight the company's values that align with yours.



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### Types of Interviews

#### IN-PERSON

At an in-person interview, you'll typically meet with one or more representatives from the company you're interviewing with, ranging from hiring managers to potential colleagues. Be prepared to discuss your resume in detail, highlighting relevant experiences and skills. Expect behavioural questions that delve into how you've handled past situations and about your motivation, goals, and fit within the organization.

#### PHONE

Typically, you'll speak with a hiring manager or a member of the recruiting team. Since visual cues are absent, your tone of voice, clarity, and articulation become paramount. Have a quiet, distraction-free space and ensure your phone is fully charged. Since you won't have the benefit of body language, it's essential to convey enthusiasm and professionalism through your voice. Prepare notes or key points to reference but avoid sounding scripted. Lastly, express your gratitude for the opportunity and inquire about the next steps in the hiring process.

#### ONLINE

In an online video interview, you can expect a blend of the in-person and phone interview dynamics, with some unique considerations due to the virtual format. You'll likely connect via video conferencing platforms like Zoom or Microsoft Teams with one or more interviewers. Before the interview, ensure you have a reliable internet connection and test your audio and video settings. Dress professionally as you would for an in-person interview, paying attention to your background and lighting. Maintain eye contact by looking directly at the camera rather than the screen. Just like in a phone interview, your tone of voice and clarity are crucial. Utilize nonverbal cues, such as nodding and smiling, to convey engagement and interest.

#### ONE WAY VIDEO INTERVIEW

A one-way interview, also known as an asynchronous or pre-recorded interview, is a type of job interview where the candidate records their responses to interview questions without an interviewer present. The candidate typically receives a set of interview questions either written or presented via video, and they record their responses using a webcam or a designated recording platform. These recorded responses are then reviewed by the hiring team or recruiter later. One-way interviews are often used as an initial screening tool to assess candidates' communication skills and suitability for the role before advancing them to the next stage of the hiring process. They are convenient for both candidates and hiring teams as they eliminate coordinating live interviews and allow candidates to complete the interview at their convenience. However, some candidates may find one-way interviews challenging due to the lack of real-time interaction with an interviewer.

Ensure you are in a quiet space and ensure your microphone and speaker are working prior to the interview. Dress professionally as you would for an in-person interview. Paying attention to your background and lighting. Practice articulating your thoughts prior to the interview using the STAR method.

### Types of Questions

#### TRADITIONAL

Traditional interview questions are often more general and open-ended, focusing on the candidate's qualifications, experience, and motivations. These questions aim to assess the candidate's fit for the role and the organization based on their skills, knowledge, and personality. Some examples of traditional questions can be seen in the Resources section below.



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### BEHAVIOURAL

At an in-person interview, you'll typically meet with one or more representatives from the company you're interviewing with, ranging from hiring managers to potential colleagues. Be prepared to discuss your resume in detail, highlighting relevant experiences and skills. Expect behavioural questions that delve into how you've handled past situations and about your motivation, goals, and fit within the organization.

### SITUATIONAL

Situational interview questions present hypothetical scenarios related to the job role and assess how candidates would respond in those situations. These questions aim to evaluate the candidate's problem-solving abilities, decision-making skills, and alignment with the company's values and expectations. Some examples of situational questions can be seen in the Resources section below.

### TECHNICAL

Technical interview questions assess a candidate's knowledge, skills, and proficiency in specific technical areas relevant to the job role. These questions aim to evaluate the candidate's expertise and ability to apply technical concepts to real-world scenarios. Some examples of technical questions can be seen in the Resources section below.

### BRAIN TEASERS

A more rare question are brainteasers, which are unconventional interview questions designed to assess a candidate's problem-solving abilities, creativity, and critical thinking skills. These questions often have no right or wrong answers and are intended to gauge the candidate's thought process and approach to solving challenging or unusual problems. Some examples of brainteaser questions can be seen in the Resources section below.

## Technical Questions - Showcasing Your Best Self

When you are asked a technical question that you don't know the answer, try focusing on what you do know vs. what you don't. It is alright to let the interviewers know you don't know the answer, but you should still do your best to answer. You can say something like "I don't know the exact answer but here is what I think it could be" then walk them through your thoughts step by step (i.e. 'showing your work') and try to highlight some things you know related to the question.

Even if you get the question 'wrong' they will still be able to see your critical thinking, which in many cases is more important than having the 'right' answer. If you simply need more time to think of the answer, make sure you ask the interviewer for some time to think. This way, you can recollect your thoughts and give a concise answer. It is important to learn how to tailor your responses to highlight your strengths, experiences, and achievements effectively, making you the ideal candidate for the position.

## Your Questions for the Employer

Asking questions at the end of an interview is important because it shows you're interested, and you came prepared. It gives you a chance to learn more about the role, the team, and the company culture. It demonstrates that you've done your research and want to make an informed decision. Additionally, asking questions creates a positive two-way conversation, building rapport with the interviewer and leaving a lasting impression. Overall, it's an opportunity to show your enthusiasm and stand out as a thoughtful candidate.



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Some example questions you may use are:

- What are the opportunities for professional development or advancement within the company?
- How would you describe the company culture here?
- Can you share examples of how the company supports professional development and growth?
- How does success in this position contribute to the overall success of the team or company?
- Can you tell me more about the company's long-term goals and how this role contributes to them?
- What do you enjoy most about working for this company?

### Sample Interview Questions

#### TRADITIONAL - TELL ME ABOUT YOURSELF

If you have ever had an interview, you will know that employers' first question is "Tell me about yourself" 99% of the time. Since you can expect this question to appear often in interviews, you can practice your response ahead of time. Here is what you may want to include in your response to this question:

- Introduction of who you are professionally, including speaking about your educational background
- Your previous work experiences (2-3 sentence summary), highlighting your transferable skills and strengths
- Career Goals (optional)
- Your interests and activities outside of school (optional)

When answering, it's essential to strike a balance between being concise and informative.



#### OTHER TRADITIONAL QUESTIONS

- "What are your strengths and weaknesses?"
- "Why do you want to work for this company?"
- "What do you know about our company?"
- "Can you describe a challenge you've overcome in a previous role?"
- "Can you walk me through your resume?"
- "How do you handle pressure or stressful situations?"
- "Describe a time when you had to work as part of a team."
- "What do you consider your biggest accomplishment in your career so far?"

#### BEHAVIOURAL QUESTIONS

- "Tell me about a time when you had to deal with a difficult coworker or client. How did you handle the situation?"
- "Describe a project or task where you had to meet a tight deadline. How did you prioritize your work and manage your time?"
- "Tell me about a situation where you had to resolve a conflict within a team. What steps did you take to find a resolution?"
- "Describe a time when you demonstrated leadership skills. What was the outcome?"
- "Describe a situation where you had to handle a high-pressure task or project. How did you manage the stress and what was the result?"
- "Can you give me an example of a time when you had to take initiative to solve a problem without being asked?"
- "Tell me about a successful teamwork experience. What was your role, and how did you contribute to the team's success?"





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### SITUATIONAL QUESTIONS

- "Imagine you're working on a project with a tight deadline, and a team member suddenly falls ill. How would you handle this situation?"
- "Picture yourself in a scenario where you're working on a task that requires a specific skill you're not proficient in. How would you approach learning and mastering this skill quickly?"
- "Suppose you're in a meeting with senior leadership, and they ask for your opinion on a strategic decision that you disagree with. How would you handle expressing your dissent?"
- "Imagine you're working on a team where communication breakdowns are hindering progress. How would you improve communication and collaboration within the team?"
- "Suppose you're assigned to work with a colleague who has a different working style and personality from yours. How would you adapt your approach to effectively collaborate with them?"
- "Picture yourself in a situation where you're managing multiple competing priorities. How would you prioritize your tasks and ensure that all critical deadlines are met?"

### Non Verbal Communication

- Maintain good eye contact with the interviewer(s) to convey confidence and attentiveness.
- Smile genuinely to appear approachable and friendly.
- Use facial expressions to express interest, enthusiasm, and understanding.
- Sit up straight with good posture to convey professionalism and engagement.
- Avoid slouching or fidgeting, as it can convey nervousness or lack of confidence.
- Use hand gestures sparingly and purposefully to emphasize key points or add emphasis to your speech.
- Keep your movements calm and controlled, avoiding excessive gestures or erratic movements.
- Pay attention to the tone and volume of your voice, speaking clearly and confidently.
- Practice active listening by nodding occasionally, using verbal cues (e.g., "yes," "I see"), and avoiding interrupting the interviewer(s).

### INTERVIEW PREPARATION CHECKLIST

#### COMPANY RESEARCH

- Learn about the company's history, mission, values, products/services, and recent news.
- Understand the company culture and work environment.
- Familiarize yourself with the job description, including responsibilities, qualifications, and requirements.

#### SELF-RESEARCH

- Reflect on your skills, experiences, strengths, and weaknesses.
- Identify relevant examples from your past experiences to showcase during the interview.
- Practice articulating your achievements, skills, and career goals.

#### PRACTICE

- Practice answering common interview questions, including behavioural and situational questions (listed above).
- Conduct mock interviews with a career advisor to gain feedback.
- Practice your body language, eye contact, and speaking tone.

#### INTERVIEW LOGISTICS

- Date, time, location (in-person or virtually)
- If it's a virtual interview, test your internet connection, audio, and video setup in advance.

#### ATTIRE AND GROOMING

- Choose attire appropriate for the company culture and industry.
- Ensure your clothes are clean and well-fitting.
- Pay attention to grooming, including hair, nails, and overall presentation.



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### LOGISTICS AND TIMING

- Plan your route to the interview location (if in-person) and allow extra time for potential traffic or delays.
- Aim to arrive 10-15 minutes early for in-person interviews or log in a few minutes early for virtual interviews.
- Confirm any necessary parking or transportation arrangements.

### QUESTIONS FOR THE INTERVIEWER

- Prepare thoughtful questions to ask the interviewer about the company, role, team dynamics, and future opportunities.
- Avoid asking questions that can be easily answered by researching the company beforehand.

### FOLLOW UP

- Send a thank-you email or note to the interviewer(s) within 24 hours of the interview, expressing gratitude for the opportunity and reiterating your interest in the position.

