



## **Interview Preparation & Skills Workbook**

**This workbook is an individual preparation cum study tool to help candidates prepare for and do well in interviews. It contains information, examples as well as formats and templates that can help in interview preparation.**

- 1. Your Interview**
- 2. Before the interview**
- 3. During the interview**
- 4. After the interview**

With Gratitude:

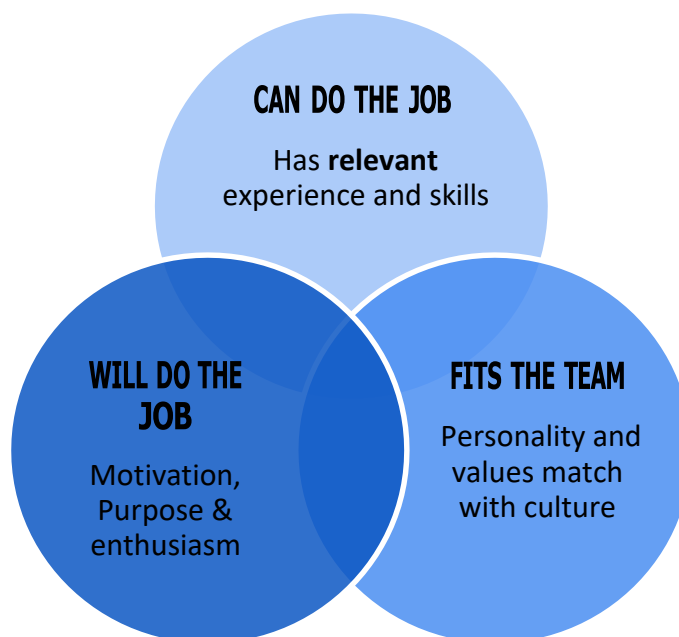
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## Your Interview

Congratulations! You've made it through a resume review and been shortlisted for an interview. The interview is an opportunity for both the employer and you to gather information.

**Employers want a person who:**



Similarly, you have the chance to evaluate the job and the organization and decide if they will fit into your career plans. The employer is promoting the organization to you, and you are marketing your skills, knowledge, and attributes to the employer.

Research and preparation are the keys to being successful in an interview. Use the tips in this workbook to fully prepare and practice for your interview.

## STEP 1: RESEARCH

### Know the Job and the Required Skills

The first step in preparing for an interview is to research the job. To convince the employer you have the necessary experience and skills, you must first know what those requirements and duties are.

**There are several ways to find out about the role:**

JOB DESCRIPTION	CHECK IN	PLACEMENT OFFICE	READ ARTICLES
Review the job description when you're offered an interview.	Speak to employees in the field / <b>seniors</b> to gain information.	Reach out to the Placement department at your University/ college	Read articles about the qualifications and skills required for the role and to better understand the industry.

### Know the Organization

The more you know about an organization, the better prepared you will be to discuss how you can meet its needs. Some of the characteristics that you should know about an organization are:



#### Activity:

- 1) List the Companies you are interested in
- 2) Use the prompts above to create an information map of each company

## STEP 2: Match the skills required with your own

The second step in preparing for an interview is to thoroughly assess your skills in relation to the job you are interviewing for.

### TIP:

**Start by studying your resumé:** it got you the interview after all. Consider which skills, experiences, and attributes you will want to expand upon in your interview.

**Here** is a brief overview of the process of reflecting on your skills as they apply to the position you are interviewing for (see **Appendix A** for a full explanation):

1	From your research and the job posting, list the employer's most desired skills in a candidate.	2	Use your resumé as a list of your experiences and skills, noting any additional required skills and where you got them.	3	Consider stories you could tell in the interview to demonstrate the skills required for the job.
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### Activity:

Fill Appendix A to identify the skills and competencies required for the role.

## Skills Employers Value

### Activity:

Reflect on your experiences and skills in relation to those identified through Appendix A. For a skills assessment, use **Appendix B**. Consider the following questions:

- How have I demonstrated the skills required in this position?
- Apart from my skills and experience, what can I bring to this job?
- What are my short term and long term goals?
- What can I offer this particular employer?
- What are my strong points and weak points?

**TIP:** Make a list of your key strengths that you want the interviewer to know. These points should relate to the skills you know the employer will want from you. Be sure to incorporate these in your answers. Reach out to family, friends and faculty to get their view

Now that you know the company, the role and your own strengths and skills its time to anticipate what you want to share with your prospective employer.

## STEP 3: ANTICIPATE AND PRACTICE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

You can never predict every question that you will encounter. What you can do is use the job posting and your research to anticipate what skills or competencies interest an employer and develop possible questions from there.

## TYPES OF QUESTIONS

Being aware of the many question types can help you to focus your answers to the skills the employer is looking for.

## TECHNICAL QUESTIONS

## BEHAVIOUR DESCRIPTIVE QUESTIONS

## HYPOTHETICAL QUESTIONS

### Tackling Technical Questions

Employers will ask you questions about specific skills related to the position or ask more general questions where you will need to be sure to tie in examples of specific skills you know the employer needs.

Most Interviewers will offer you the opportunity to set the tone by asking you: Tell me more about yourself? Or tell me something not in your resume? This is a good opportunity to **S.E.T** the stage. The SET model is also useful to answer any technical questions.

<b>S</b> SKILLS	Share 3 skills that you have which are central to the job and meet the employer's needs. Be sure to demonstrate how you gained them with specific examples.
<b>E</b> EDUCATION	Discuss your education and training. Explain why your education will help you excel in the position.
<b>T</b> TALENT	Share your talents: an interest, an activity, a hobby to reinforce your skills and impact.

### Tackling Behaviour Descriptive Questions:

This question seeks to consider examples of past performance to help predict future Impact. A model for answering behaviour descriptive questions is to tell the story using the "STAR" method.

<b>S</b> SITUATION	Explain the situation: set the scene with where and when the story took place. (10% time)
<b>T</b> TASK	Describe the task, problem, or challenge you encountered. (15% time)
<b>A</b> ACTION	What did you do? What actions did you take? Outline the specific steps you took to address the problem. This is the most important piece of your answer and should take up the most time. (50% time)
<b>R</b> RESULT	What was the end result? Did you receive any feedback or learn anything that can be applied to this position? Focus on the positives! (25% time)

**Activity:**

Now use the S.T.A.R model to answer the following question: “Tell me about a time you effectively led a team to success.”

<b>PRACTICE</b>	<b>Tell me about a time you effectively led a team to success.”</b>	
	<b>S</b>	
	<b>T</b>	
	<b>A</b>	
	<b>R</b>	

When preparing for this type of questioning, it is crucial that you review the skills and qualities that the position would require and identify specific examples from your past which demonstrated those traits. Use this method to create answer maps for other questions of this type.

### Tackling Hypothetical or Scenario Questions

When asking a hypothetical question, the interviewer describes a situation which you may encounter in the position and asks how you would react. In your answer, include the following:

<b>EXPLAIN HOW YOU WOULD GATHER INFORMATION</b>	<b>DESCRIBE YOUR ACTIONS</b>	<b>DEMONSTRATE THE SKILLS NEEDED IN THE JOB</b>	<b>DISCUSS EXPECTED RESULTS &amp; APPROPRIATE FOLLOW UP</b>
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**Activity:**

Answer the following question, “It is your first day at work and there is a crisis in the team (2 senior resources resign with immediate effect) your supervisor hands you a thumb drive with a few files and asks you to prepare a customer presentation for the next day. What will you do?.”

## ANSWERING INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Regardless of what type of question you are asked, you will find it easier to respond effectively if you keep in mind some basic question answering strategies:

USE YOUR RESUMÉ	PAUSE	ASK FOR CLARIFICATION	BE HONEST	EXPAND
Reviewing your resum� before the interview can remind you of the skills you plan to market to the employer. Do not leave anything out: never assume the employer has your resum� memorized.	Pausing before answering allows you to quickly plan a thoughtful, concise answer. If you're going off track in your answer or draw a blank, stop to think for a moment before continuing.	If you don't understand a question, ask for clarification. This is perfectly acceptable and normal.	The slightest stretching of the truth may result in you being screened out.	Never answer a question with simply a "yes" or "no." Always expand: it shows enthusiasm.
REPEAT POINTS	BE CONFIDENT	BE POSITIVE	SELL WHAT YOU HAVE	BODY LANGUAGE
Don't be afraid to repeat important points. In fact, it is a great idea to do this, just not too many times.	It's good to be confident. As long as you can back up what you are saying with examples which demonstrate that what you are saying is true, you are not bragging.	Be very positive. Don't complain about anything - from your former employer to the weather.  Positivity and enthusiasm are best.	Don't apologize for experience that you don't have. Sell what you do have and let the employer decide. For example, instead of "I have a little experience...", say "I have experience..."	Make and keep eye contact. Sit with an open posture. Avoid crossed arms, staring at your feet, or talking to the interviewer's shoulder.

### ACTIVITY: Interview practice.

Find a friend to practice with. Or use your mobile to record yourself practicing and review. Search online for list of questions relevant to your role. Go through the questions and answers. Use the checklist above to refine your answers and your body language. You are now ready to ace your interview!

## STEP 4: PREPARE QUESTIONS TO ASK THE EMPLOYER

Having completed your background research, you are now ready to prepare questions to ask the interviewer. This is your chance to know more about the role and organization. Intelligent, well-thought-out questions will demonstrate your genuine interest in the position. Here are some questions you can adapt.

### SAMPLE QUESTIONS FOR THE INTERVIEWER

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ What are the most significant factors affecting your business today?</li> <li>▪ How has your company grown or changed in the last couple of years?</li> <li>▪ What direction do you see the company taking?</li> <li>▪ What do you like most about working here?</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ How much travel is normally expected?</li> <li>▪ Will I work independently or as part of a team?</li> <li>▪ What are the career paths available in this company?</li> <li>▪ When can I expect to hear from you regarding this position?</li> </ul> |
|--|---|

## STEP 5: NAIL THE INTERVIEW

In addition to doing research and practicing your answers to common interview questions, you should be aware of general interview etiquette.

REVIEW YOUR RESUMÉ	BE 10 MINUTES EARLY	GET A GOOD SLEEP	EAT BEFOREHAND
Make sure that you can explain everything on your resumé. Use direct examples from your experience as proof of your skills.	Give yourself an opportunity to collect your thoughts and relax. If you rush in, an employer may doubt your ability to arrive on time for work.	You will think more effectively in the interview if you are rested. Beyond this, yawning will not impress anyone.	If you are worried about your stomach growling, you will not be able to concentrate. Have fresh breath: stay away from strong smelling foods.
DRESS APPROPRIATELY	LOOK YOUR BEST	COME PREPARED	TURN OFF YOUR PHONE
Dress for the position that you are applying to. If you are unsure, always dress more conservatively. You want the employer to notice you for what you say, not what you wear.	Make sure that you are clean, neat, and well groomed. Interviewers do notice your appearance, and first impressions are critical in an interview.	Bring a copy of your resumé, transcript, references, and perhaps work samples. Bring a pen and paper to record important information.	It needs to be off, not on vibrate.



## THE INTERVIEW PROCESS

There are many different types of interviews designed to serve different purposes or situations. Regardless of the type of interview, most will incorporate the following stages: Connect, Converse / Clarify, and Close.

### 1. Connect: establish rapport with your interviewer

As soon as you walk in the door, first impressions are made and the tone of the interview is set. Follow the interviewer's lead - if they are chatty, be chatty; if they are formal, be formal. Some employers use casual conversation to get to know you on a more personal level - this may be crucial to a hiring decision!

#### Tips:

Smile and make eye contact. Shake hands.

Know your interviewers, pay attention to their names and designations

Wait until the interviewer sits or offers you a seat before sitting down.

If the interviewer is making small talk, participate. Be positive.

### 2. Converse/ Clarify : exchange information

This is the bulk of the interview. It is your opportunity to let the interviewer know what you have to offer, and your chance to learn more about the organization.

#### Tips:

If he or she looks confused, ask if you can clarify anything.

Sit up straight and comfortably.

Ask questions to show interest

Use body language and facial expressions to demonstrate interest and engagement.

Control your nervous habits. Don't swing your foot, talk with your hands (to an extreme), or fiddle with jewellery, buttons, pens, etc.

### 3. Close the Interview

When the interviewer is done gathering information, you will be asked if you have anything to add, or if you have any questions. This is your opportunity to make sure that you have communicated everything that you wanted to.

#### Tips:

Ask the questions that you prepared.

Thank the Interviewers & Shake hands.

Ask for their contact details to check back on results.

## STEP 6: FOLLOWING UP AFTER THE INTERVIEW REFLECT

After every interview, evaluate your performance to learn from your experiences. Consider the following questions:

- What positive impressions did I make? Negative? Why did I make these impressions?
- Was there anything I wanted to say or ask about but didn't?
- What questions would I have answered differently? How would I have changed my answers?
- How do I feel about the interview?

This will help you improve your performance in subsequent interviews.

## Appendix A:

## Preparing for an Interview: How to Deconstruct a Job Posting

**QUALIFICATIONS****HOW DO YOU MEET THE CRITERIA?****SKILLS, ABILITIES OR DUTIES****HOW DO YOU MEET THE CRITERIA?**

Fill out this table and use it as a checklist for what needs to be emphasized in your interview. Consider the questions the employer might ask to determine if you have these skills. When formulating your answers, keep these skills in the back of your mind.

## APPENDIX B: SKILLS MATCHING WORKSHEET

**WRITTEN COMMUNICATION****I USE THIS SKILL WHEN...**

Condense information/produce concise summary notes accurately with correct grammar, punctuation and spelling.	
Write letters and reports that are logically structured and contain all relevant information.	
Adapt writing style in consideration of different audiences.	

**ORAL COMMUNICATION****I USE THIS SKILL WHEN...**

Ask and answer questions, clarify, and summarize what others are communicating.	
Provide clear explanations and directions while instructing, educating and providing feedback.	
Communicate with others using a variety of communication strategies to negotiate, mediate, resolve difficult issues and sell ideas.	

**TEAMWORK****I USE THIS SKILL WHEN...**

Demonstrate respect and care. Is open and supportive of the thoughts, opinions, and contributions of others.	
Actively contribute to team projects/tasks; fulfils required roles, participates in discussion to improve effectiveness.	
Accept and share responsibility. Learn from constructive criticism and give positive and constructive feedback.	

**LEADERSHIP****I USE THIS SKILL WHEN...**

Accept responsibility for decisions and display a positive attitude and perseverance.	
Models a strong desire to succeed by demonstrating adaptability to achieve goals.	
Take initiative in leading, supporting and motivating others in developing individual skills or tasks to achieve goals.	

**PLANNING AND ORGANIZING****I USE THIS SKILL WHEN...**

Effectively apply organizing and planning skills to manage work.	
Work effectively to complete deadlines when under pressure.	

Proactively plans and manages work; monitors results through to successfully complete plans.	
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**PROBLEM SOLVING SKILLS**
**I USE THIS SKILL WHEN...**

Make decisions in accordance to accepted practices and guidelines.	
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Use problem-solving strategies to identify and resolve problems, issues and determine solutions.	
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Recognize inconsistencies in reasoning. Makes decisions in situations that fall outside established guidelines or where the choice among options is less obvious.	
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**ANALYSIS AND RESEARCH****I USE THIS SKILL WHEN...**

Gather relevant secondary data and organize information in a logical manner.		
Collect primary data and/or assist in carrying out surveys, focus groups, and lab analysis.		
Analyze samples/surveys for quantitative/qualitative research.		

**NUMERACY**: able to carry out arithmetic operations/understand**I USE THIS SKILL WHEN...**

Perform calculations for adding, subtracting, multiplying and dividing, and converting between fractions and decimals.		
Perform complex calculations and operations that require using advanced multi-step mathematical strategies.		
Analyze or compare numerical data to identify trends or compare statistics.		

**DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY SKILLS****I USE THIS SKILL WHEN...**

Performs basic computer tasks, such as creating documents, saving files, and sending email.		
Design web pages and a wide range of software skills.		
Demonstrate in depth knowledge of computer software and information technology systems.		

**PRESENTATION SKILLS****I USE THIS SKILL WHEN...**

Present basic information to one or more people using appropriate resources, vocabulary, and non-verbal language.		
Prepare and present advanced information with clarity with the ability to respond to questions in a timely manner.		
Facilitate interactive presentations of advanced information customized to the interests and needs of the audience.		

**PERSONAL MANAGEMENT****I USE THIS SKILL WHEN...**

Demonstrate professionalism in recognizing expectations in work culture to maximize success in the workplace.		
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Embrace new opportunities, learn continuously, and identify importance in every job/task.		
Anticipate the unexpected and respond quickly to sudden changes in circumstances.		

OTHER

I USE THIS SKILL WHEN...


## Appendix C: Sample Interview Questions

Reviewing common interview questions can be an effective part of your preparation. Instead of trying to memorize ‘the best’ answers you can think of, we suggest putting yourself in the position of the employer, and imagining what type of a response would impress you. A question may be phrased in any number of ways so memorizing responses to specific questions may leave you unable to generalize your personal information to an unexpected question. Your best strategy is to review such questions, and become comfortable discussing yourself and your related skills.

### CONSIDER THE ANSWER TO THESE QUESTIONS:

1. What do you see yourself doing five years from now? (This really means, what are your goals within this organization? They want someone who is willing to stay and grow within their organization)
2. What motivates you to put forth your greatest effort?
3. In what ways do you think you can make a contribution to our company?
4. What have you learned from participation in extra-curricular activities?
5. In what kind of work environment are you most comfortable?
6. Why are you seeking a position with this company?
7. What are your strengths? What is your greatest weakness?
8. How do you spend your spare time? What are your hobbies?
9. In what type of position are you most interested?
10. What jobs have you held? How were they obtained and why did you leave?
11. What qualifications do you have that make you feel that you will be successful in your field?
12. Do you prefer any specific geographic location? Why?
13. What have you learned from some of the jobs you have held?
14. What interests you about our product (or service)?
15. What jobs have you enjoyed the most? What jobs have you enjoyed the least? Why?
16. What are your own special abilities?
17. What job in our company do you want to work toward?
18. What have you done which shows initiative and willingness to work?
19. Why should I hire you?
20. Give me an example of a work situation in which you were not proud of your performance. What did you learn from this mistake?
21. Tell me about a conflict with a co-worker, and how you resolved it.



