

МІНІСТЕРСТВО ОСВІТИ І НАУКИ УКРАЇНИ
НАЦІОНАЛЬНИЙ ТЕХНІЧНИЙ УНІВЕРСИТЕТ
«ХАРКІВСЬКИЙ ПОЛІТЕХНІЧНИЙ ІНСТИТУТ»

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ЯК ПІДГОТУВАТИСЬ ДО ПЕРШОЇ РОБОЧОЇ СПІВБЕСІДИ

Навчальний посібник для студентів та молодих фахівців
з підготовки до успішного працевлаштування за фахом

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GET READY FOR YOUR FIRST JOB INTERVIEW

Manual for students and junior specialists to prepare for
successful job application in appropriate fields

Рекомендовано вченою радою НТУ «ХПІ»

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Рекомендовано вченою радою НТУ «ХПІ» як навчальний посібник для студентів з курсу «Ділова іноземна мова та переклад» та молодих фахівців з підготовки до успішного працевлаштування за фахом, протокол № 1 від 16.01.2019 р.

Навчальний посібник містить комплекс навчально-методичного забезпечення для практичних індивідуальних та групових занять, різноманітні вправи, блок матеріалів для організації навчального спілкування студентів та практики перекладу, а також список рекомендованих джерел. Зазначені навчальні матеріали дозволять читачам поглибити уявлення про процес працевлаштування, ґрунтовно підійти до питань, пов'язаних з підготовкою та проходженням робочої співбесіди з потенційним роботодавцем, а також удосконалити набуті навички спілкування англійською мовою.

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The manual is made up of a set of materials for practical individual and group classes, various exercises, a module for teaching students communication and translation, as well as a list of recommended references. The present teaching materials enable the readers to have a deeper insight into their knowledge of a job application process, tackle the problem solution dealing with their preparation and behaviour during a job interview, and improve the acquired skills of communication in English.

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Передмова

Шановні читачі! Ми сподіваємося, що вам сподобається подорож до знань за допомогою книги **Get ready for your first job interview (Як підготуватись до першої робочої співбесіди)**. Ця книга є ідеальним помічником для студентів та молодих фахівців, які добре володіють англійською мовою та готуються вперше зустрітися з потенційними роботодавцями. Головною метою її авторів – викладачів вищих навчальних закладів (ВНЗ) і фахівців в області ділової комунікації – було підготувати вичерпний навчальний матеріал для формування у студентів випускних курсів навичок ефективного ділового спілкування англійською мовою з потенційним роботодавцем та надати їм необхідні знання для успішного проходження робочої співбесіди. Посібник є дуже корисним для всіх молодих людей, які добре володіють англійською мовою та прагнуть підготуватися до роботи в сучасних міжнародних компаніях та підприємствах.

Формування фахової компетентності сучасних спеціалістів включає засвоєння знань про умови, послідовність, особливості та процес проходження співбесіди з працевлаштування, яку більшість роботодавців проводять англійською мовою. Це, в свою чергу, передбачає ознайомлення з характерною термінологією та провідними поняттями цієї сфери, а також формування загальної комунікативної компетентності. Саме тому матеріал посібника викладений переважно англійською мовою, щоб надати читачам можливість розвивати навички володіння сучасною діловою англійською мовою.

Посібник складається з семи тематичних частин і однієї додаткової загально-інформаційної частини. Кожна частина об'єднує тематичний матеріал кількох розділів ("юнітів") і має чітку структуру:

- містить експертні пояснення про характер питання і цілі, які переслідує роботодавець, ставлячи це питання;
- вказує на можливі помилки у відповідях і пропонує ідеї, як їх уникнути;
- пропонує стратегію розробки своєї особистої відповіді на питання роботодавця:
 - надає зразки та приклади вдалих відповідей англійською мовою;
 - містить блок вправ для засвоєння тематичного матеріалу кожного розділу;
 - передбачає виконання великої кількості завдань, вправ та рольових ігор, націлених на формування навичок ділової комунікації;
 - містить велику кількість матеріалів для самостійного навчання;
 - включає вправи, що передбачають проведення імітаційних/ рольових ігор під час аудиторних занять.

Навчальний матеріал посібника охоплює 50 традиційних питань роботодавців та надає цінну інформацію про такі важливі моменти як написання резюме, загальний процес працевлаштування, особливості спілкування з потенційним роботодавцем, підготовка до зустрічі з інтерв'юером, самопрезентація та поведінка під час співбесіди.

Кожен з 53-х інформаційних розділів посібника містить вправи для тренування навичок ділового спілкування англійською мовою (Practice Section). У цьому секторі:

- вправа 1 стосується загального ознайомлення з матеріалом і пропонує вивчити, засвоїти або переказати основну інформацію за темою розділу;

- вправа 2 передбачає уважне вивчення нової лексики;

- вправа 3 розрахована на засвоєння стратегії відповіді на питання роботодавця і одночасно на вивчення фразеології, яку рекомендовано використовувати під час відповіді;

- вправа 4 допомагає студенту запам'ятати, яких помилок слід уникати і яку вибрати стилістику відповіді, щоб задовольнити очікуванням роботодавця;

- вправу 5 адресовано до прикладів успішних відповідей кандидатів на працевлаштування, вона допомагає студенту уважно вивчити їх мову, стиль і логіку;

- вправа 6 пропонує студенту написати "заготовку" своєї відповіді на можливе запитання роботодавця і презентувати свою відповідь групі під час заняття.

Залежно від змісту розділів, в деяких з них практична частина складається з більш ніж 5 вправ, в деяких – з 3-4 вправ.

Наведені вправи призначені як для групової роботи студентів, так і для самостійного навчання.

Навчальний матеріал посібника організований таким чином, щоб його можна було додавати до програм різних навчальних дисциплін. Саме тому кожна тематична частина являє собою самостійну методичну розробку. Кожна тематична частина посібника охоплює матеріал конкретної тематики, а методична складова побудована у чіткій послідовності дій викладача і студентів як під час аудиторних занять, так і при самостійному вивченні матеріалу студентами.

Перевірка знань та оцінка розвитку навичок комунікації студентів здійснюється протягом заняття шляхом організації навчальної діяльності в мікрогрупах, в парах та індивідуально за допомогою комунікативних методів (типів) навчальної діяльності, а також шляхом надання студентам завдань на швидке виконання письмових та усних вправ.

Структура кожного заняття за матеріалом посібника обумовлена метою, структурою та змістом навчального курсу і має такий розподіл:

Доля навчального часу	Вид навчальної діяльності	Тип навчальної діяльності
10%	Швидка перевірка знань та якості виконання студентами завдань, виконаних самостійно. Загальне усне обговорення матеріалу попереднього заняття між викладачем та студентами англійською мовою. Відповіді на питання.	Діалог. Питання студентів та відповіді викладача.
20%	Огляд нового матеріалу заняття. Усне обговорення англійською мовою матеріалу підрозділів, з якими студенти ознайомились самостійно. Творча бесіда між викладачем та студентами англійською мовою. Оцінка комунікативної діяльності студентів та розгляд можливих помилок; обмін ідеями, як їх уникнути	Діалог, рольова гра, імітація ситуацій ділової комунікації
20%	Розгляд і обговорення англійською мовою прикладів успішних відповідей на питання роботодавця. Розгляд стратегії складання відповіді на питання роботодавця та розробка особистих відповідей та презентація їх в групі	Діалог; бесіда; робота індивідуально, в парах і в групі
20%	Виконання вправ сектору Practice Section	Рольова гра; робота в мікрогрупах; складання та презентація діалогів за темою заняття
25%	Виконання перекладу текстів з української мови на англійську;	Рольова гра; виконання творчого перекладу в діалогах
5%	Підведення підсумків заняття. Завдання для самостійної роботи студентів. Загальні питання.	—

Система контролю якості навчання студентів передбачає проведення поточного контролю якості засвоєння матеріалу навчального курсу; він

здійснюється під час практичних занять. Підсумковий контроль проводиться одразу після закінчення вивчення кожного тематичного розділу в формі проведення контрольних робіт. Кожному студенту надається письмове завдання написати есе умовному роботодавцю як відповідь на питання, розглянуті під час вивчення відповідного тематичного блоку, що передбачає перевірку рівнів володіння бізнес-лексикою, стилем ділового мовлення і певними граматичними структурами.

В цілому, ця книга призначена відкрити для студентів "секрети" успішного процесу працевлаштування та показати, як вступити на шлях будівництва успішної кар'єри.

Список джерел, використаних під час складання посібника, додається в кінці книги.

Preface

As recently as thirty years ago, good luck and personal connections too often played a large part in getting a professional job with major, international corporations. Then, suddenly everything changed. As corporations reduced the size of their professional staffs, it became critical that every staff member be exactly the right person for the job and the right person for the corporation.

Further, corporations recognized that when a valued employee left, valuable skills and experience were lost. In addition, since the hiring process itself is expensive in both funds and resources, losing valued employees (whether from employees' voluntary departures for positions in other companies or from the firing of employees who did not work out) came to be viewed as a negative.

Consequently, corporations began to tie managers' salaries and bonuses to the quality of the people they hired to ensure that the hiring process delivered well-suited and competent employees capable of delivering long-term value and growing their careers within the corporation.

Structured interview systems, which also generally included behavioral interviewing techniques, became standard among international corporations, where they were intended to ensure that candidates were selected based on past achievements and that they were selected to meet the long-term benefit of the corporation and not just the preference of the immediate hiring manager.

Hiring quickly became systematized, with standard ways of evaluating resumes, conducting interviews, and making hiring decisions. Every step in the process was documented: job announcements became very detailed; they were posted on specific Web sites; every resume was judged against the job description and then filed so corporate executives could review the process; and interviews themselves became structured events intended to ensure that individuals were hired to benefit the long-term needs of the corporation. And most importantly, every interview was conducted in exactly the same way with careful records kept so that candidates could be accurately and fairly compared.

Elements of the new interviewing processes usually included multiple interviews by a carefully selected hiring team (some of whom were drawn from departments outside of the hiring manager's organization) and interview scripts used by hiring team members to focus on the capabilities and characteristics needed both for the immediate job being filled and the larger needs of the corporation.

As a result, applicants who both were qualified and understood the hiring process had a good chance of getting the job they wanted. But, unfortunately, applicants who were ignorant of the process, even though they were otherwise qualified, never had a real opportunity to demonstrate their qualifications.

This book is intended to explain the modern, hiring processes and systems and to show you how you can best prepare yourself to present your

competencies, characteristics and qualifications in an effective manner. By the time you have finished this course you can be confident that you will be able to:

Select jobs that are appropriate for your skills, experience and career objectives;

Prepare yourself fully for an interview; and

Effectively show interviewers why you are the right person for the job you want.

About The Book

Welcome to Prepare Yourself For The Job Interview; we hope you enjoy the journey of learning as we take you through the scenic yet sinuous highway of employment interview techniques. We are professional educators, managers and entrepreneurs who are going to reveal for you the ‘secrets’ of successful employment process and show you how to approach the world of building professional careers. You don’t have to suffer to be a success. You just have to prepare yourself well for the first job interview of your life.

As an important career event, the job interview is a chance for young people to ‘sell’ themselves to the employers, and the very first interview – when they have no experience and their resumes are still quite short – is the most responsible one. At the same time, the new candidates have wonderful advantages in the eyes of the employers: those who can prove that they are fast learners, focused workers and effective communicators, have very good chances to be employed.

The employment process, as well as the company’s selection criteria, may be different from one employer to another, but most of the interviews worldwide have more or less similar formats, structures and contents, because all employers have the same goal: to find and hire the best candidate who will perfectly fit into their team and quickly adapt to their working process. This book provides an overview of the most frequently asked questions, a short analysis of the common candidates’ mistakes, tips and advice on how to communicate with the interviewers, and numerous examples of successful interview answers.

Who Should Read This Book

This book is a guide to a job interview for entry level candidates, mainly for students and young people who are seeking employment and are preparing to meet their potential employers for the first time. In the current job market, competition is fierce; to withstand it, candidates need to be prepared to the best of their ability. Every candidate should know the ‘rules’ and features of the job interview process and try to present themselves to the interviewers in the most positive way.

‘Get Ready for Your First Job Interview’ is intended mainly for Ukrainian graduate students who have good knowledge of the English language and are seeking jobs with modern international employers. These candidates may expect to have their job interviews in English, which has been officially recognized as the language of global business communication. This is why all articles, expert advice, useful tips on the interview behavior and examples of interview answers, as well as discussion materials and practice sections are written in English.

How This Book Is Organized

The book consists of eight parts, which unite 55 thematic units into a complete job interview guide. It covers 50 most common job interview questions and provides valuable information about writing a resume, preparing to meet the interviewer, self-presentation and behavior during the interview. Every unit contains articles explaining why this or that question may be asked by interviewers, offers ideas how to answer the question, outlines points which should be emphasized and provides examples of successful answers to inspire candidates to compose their own sample answers. The exercises in the end of each unit are intended for both, group and individual activities; they were developed to help the learners memorize important information of the unit and study frequently used English terms, phrases, and businesslike style of the interview language.

The first part of the book, *Before You Apply for a Job*, provides information on how young candidates can market themselves, read job announcements, prepare resumes, and make the first contact with the employer.

Part Two, *Working Through Interview Questions Describing Yourself*, gives a detailed overview of how young people should present themselves in the best possible way to succeed at the interview.

Part Three, *Working Through Interview Questions Describing Your Goals*, deals with the interview questions like, Where do you see yourself in 5 years? 10 years? or What is your dream job? These questions require special attention, because by asking them, the interviewers intend to find out about the candidate’s general career goals and how they fit to the company’s strategy and requirements.

Part Four, *Working Through Interview Questions Describing Your Professional Skills and Potential*, offers tips and advice for the part of the job interview, where discussion of the candidates’ individual personality traits takes place.

Part Five, *Working Through Interview Questions Describing Your Social Skills*, will assist the learners in preparing answers about their motivation, leadership qualities, and ability for effective teamwork.

Part Six, *Working Through Interview Questions Related to Your Employer Company*, will lead the candidates through a series of questions related to the

conditions of work at their potential company-employer. Asking the right questions in the right moment may help the candidate to learn a lot and to avoid possible upsetting moments in the future.

Part Seven, *Working Through Some Unusual and Tricky Questions*, will help the candidates to prepare sample answers to questions like, How would you fire someone? or What are some of your leadership experiences? To succeed with such questions, the answers should be prepared beforehand, with smartly selected examples of real life situations and well-made conclusions.

Part Eight, *Additional Information and Useful Words*, deals with the candidate's actions after the interview and some important issues like the ethics of business correspondence, business letters samples, writing a follow-up letter, and others.

Preparing yourself for the first job interview is a task well worth your attention, one that offers ample rewards for the effort expended. So turn on to the next page, and prepare to learn and watch for those all-important techniques of verbal and nonverbal behavior that this book will be teaching you. It won't be long before you discover that you are well equipped to face the world of employment and start building

Part 1: Before You Apply for a Job



Unit 1. Market Yourself Well

- In this unit:**
- A few questions to ask yourself before applying for a job
 - Some tips about business ethics: Don't let your body language sink your job interview
 - A few important things to know before your first job interview
 - Practice section

A Few Questions to Ask Yourself Before Applying for a Job

Let's face it – the job search can be a frustrating process. Before you spend another minute filling out yet another tedious online job application, ask yourself the following questions to make sure it is worth your time.

Does the role fit into my long-term career plans?

Whenever possible, be strategic with the job positions you apply for. Each job should be a stepping stone towards your ideal career. When evaluating a position, consider if it will help you build the right skills for your dream job. Even if you're searching for part-time work to help pay the bills, look for opportunities that would allow you to work in your target industry or expose you to a field you want to pursue in the future.

If you're already established in your career and seeking full-time work, consider if the job plays to your strengths or will help you fill any skill gaps that are holding you back from getting ahead. While no job is perfect, do you find the majority of the job description enticing? Don't apply for a job which might leave you feeling bored, unmotivated, or just plain frustrated.

Do I meet the requirements? Am I over- or under-qualified for the role?

Remember, “almost” only counts in horseshoes and hand grenades. Before you apply for a job, carefully review the job description. Then read it over one more time. Some job postings will include a ridiculously long wish list of qualifications that the company would like the ideal candidate to possess. Your job is to identify which of those qualifications are on the hiring manager’s list of must-have requirements. In other words, what are the deal breakers? If an MBA and six years of management experience are required and you don’t have these, then the job application is a waste of your time and theirs.

Pay special attention to the number of years that are required for the role. If they’re looking for someone with 3-5 years of experience and you just graduated with little to no relevant internship experience, this job is not a good fit. The same goes if you have ten or more years of relevant experience. The required years of experience indicate the level of responsibility which the position holds; it also determines the pay range the company is willing to offer. If you’re over-qualified for the job, you can expect the pay to be less than what you’re accustomed to making. In addition, the organization may assume you will get bored in the position and jump ship as soon as a better opportunity comes around.

What do I know about the company culture?

You can possess all the qualifications for a role, but if you don’t mesh well with the organization’s culture, then you ultimately won’t be successful. Consider the work environments of the companies where you have thrived in the past; if this is going to be your very first employment, try to get a sense of what types of companies you should target during your current job search. Would you like to work for a large corporation or to devote yourself to working in a small team? Take steps to investigate the company culture of a prospective employer to make sure the job application is worth your time.

Is the commute reasonable?

If you took this position, how would you get to work? Would you need to relocate for the role (and if so, are you and your family willing and able to make such a move)? Would you be able to take public transportation or would you have to drive? How much would your commute cost you per year? How long would it take you to get to the office? Does the company have a reputation of offering flexible work schedules or telecommuting options?

While you may love the job opportunity, you have to be realistic. First, local candidates usually get preference over those who apply from out-of-state or city because employers are worried about relocation costs and getting burned by an impulsive candidate who turns into a costly flight risk. Second, the length and the cost of your commute must be taken into account. Both of these factors have an impact on your quality of life. Make sure the commute is feasible before you apply.

Do I know anyone who works at the company?

Studies have shown you're 10 times more likely to land the job when your application is accompanied by an employee referral. Before applying for the position, go through your network to see if you know anyone who currently works or previously worked at the organization. Oftentimes the online application will specifically ask you if you know someone at the company. I guarantee those candidates get some preferential treatment. Also, if you reach out to your connection, he or she may be able to pass a copy of your resume along to the hiring manager, helping you bypass some of the initial applicant screening processes.

As an added bonus, this person may be able to provide you with insights into the company culture and the organization's hiring practices to help you evaluate the position and customize your resume and cover letter accordingly.

Have I customized my resume and cover letter?

Even a professionally-written resume may require a few tweaks for a particular position. Take a look at the job description one more time. How does it define the role and its responsibilities? What specific language does it use to state the core requirements? If you possess those qualifications, make sure they are obvious to the reader.

You can also copy and paste the job description and your resume into a professional network like LinkedIn, to identify the most frequently used resume keywords and see how your application measures up.

Don't Let Your Body Language Sink Your Job Interview

You communicate with more than words in a job interview. Here's expert advice on how to effectively let your body do the talking in an interview.

Savvy job seekers know how important choosing the right words is when communicating with prospective employers. But what about nonverbal communication?

"You could be saying how great you are, but your body could be giving your true feelings away," says Alison Craig, image consultant and author of *Hello Job! How to Psych Up, Suit Up, & Show Up*. Mark Bowden, author of *Winning Body Language*, agrees with Craig—and with the highly regarded Mehrabian communication study, which found that if what's coming out of your mouth doesn't match what your body is saying, your audience is more likely to believe your body.

Here's some expert advice on how to effectively let your body do the talking in a job interview:

Making a great entrance

Craig and Bowden agree that the interview starts even before you get to the interview room. "You don't know who could be in the parking lot with you, looking at you from a window or standing next to you in the elevator," says Craig. "Your body should tell anyone who might be watching that you're confident and calm. It's not the time to be frantically searching through your portfolio for printouts of your resume."

Show your good side

Hiring managers often ask receptionists for their take on people who come to the office for interviews, so Bowden suggests letting them observe you without letting on that you know they're watching. "Sit with your profile to them," he says. "It makes them feel comfortable, and if they're comfortable, they're more likely to form a good impression."

Craig suggests trying to predict the direction your interviewer will come from, so you can sit facing that direction. It'll make the greeting more graceful.

First impressions

While waiting, don't hunch your shoulders or tuck your chin into your chest, which will make you seem closed off. Sit with your back straight and your chest open—signs that you're confident and assertive. "But don't take this to the extreme," cautions Bowen. "Elongating your legs or throwing your arm across the back of the chair can make you appear too comfortable, even arrogant."

Also, says Craig, don't have so much stuff on your lap that you're clumsily moving everything aside when you're called. You want to rise gracefully, without dropping things, so you can smoothly greet the person coming to get you.

Shake it, don't break it

Job interviews mean handshakes—so what are the secrets to the perfect handshake? The overly aggressive shake, or "death grip," as Craig calls it, can be as off-putting as the limp handshake, so practice with a friend before the interview to find the right balance.

You're going to be shaking with your right hand, so prepare by arranging your belongings on your left side. Offer your hand with the palm slightly up so that your interviewer's hand covers yours. "It's a sign that you're giving them status," says Bowden. And never cover the other person's hand with the hand you're not shaking with—it can be interpreted as a sign of domination.

Important steps

The walk to the interview is the perfect time to use body language. Always follow that person, whether the person is the hiring manager or an assistant, to show you understand the protocol. You're saying, 'I'm the job candidate, and you're the company representative—I follow your lead.' Bowen adds that you should try to "mirror" that person's tempo and demeanor. "It shows you can easily fit into the environment," he says.

At the interview desk

In the interview room, it's OK to place a slim portfolio on the table, especially if you'll be presenting its contents, but put your other belongings on the floor beside you. Holding a briefcase or handbag on your lap will make you seem as though you're trying to create a barrier around yourself, cautions Craig.

Avoid leaning forward, which makes you appear closed off, Bowden says. Instead, he advises sitting up straight and displaying your neck, chest and stomach area—to signal that you're open.

When gesturing with your hands, Craig says, you should always keep them above the desk and below the collarbone. "Any higher and you're going to appear frantic," she says.

Bowden advises that you keep your hands even lower, in what he calls the "truth plane"—an area that fans out 180 degrees from your navel. "Gesturing from here communicates that you're centered, controlled and calm—and that you want to help," he says.

It's fine to sit about a foot away from the table so that your gestures are visible, he says.

The art of departing

At the end of the interview, gather your belongings calmly, rise smoothly, smile and nod your head. If shaking hands with everyone in the room isn't convenient, at least shake hands with the hiring manager and the person who brought you to the interview space.

You may be tempted to try to read your interviewers' body language for signals about how the interview went, but don't, cautions Bowden—because they're likely trained not to give away too much. "Don't allow any thoughts into your mind that may [cause you to] leave the interview in a negative way," he says.

A Few Important Things To Know Before Your First Job Interview

For many companies, ethics is a key component of the employee screening and hiring process. Ethics is more than a set of policies, it is part of the company's organizational culture and must be instilled from the beginning of an employee's career. That career usually starts with the hiring process. Each employee has to be aligned with the core values of an organization which are typically:

character competence team-work

However, the core values of an organization vary from organization to organization. The CEO should have a good understanding of the organization's core values, so it is a good approach to check back with the CEO of the firm.

During the recruitment and hiring process the hiring managers must identify candidates with a strong character and high performance records through background checks, but of course, mistakes happen sometimes. To reduce the risk of hiring people who will not be the best match for the company, many companies set up probationary period for the new employees: this is a way to weed out poor and mediocre performers and people with poor or weak character. Hiring managers even have a professional motto: "Hire for character, train for skills."

Practice good nonverbal communication

It's about demonstrating confidence: standing straight, making eye contact and connecting with a firm handshake. That first nonverbal impression can be a great beginning—or quick ending—to your interview.

Dress for the job or company

Today's casual dress codes do not give you permission to dress as "they" do when you interview. It is important to know what to wear to an interview and to be well-groomed. Whether you wear a suit or something less formal depends on the company culture and the position you are seeking. If possible, call to find out about the company dress code before the interview.

Listen

From the very beginning of the interview, your interviewer is giving you information, either directly or indirectly. If you are not hearing it, you are missing a major opportunity. Good communication skills include listening and letting the person know you heard what was said. Observe your interviewer, and match that style and pace.

Don't talk too much

Telling the interviewer more than he needs to know could be a fatal mistake. When you have not prepared ahead of time, you may ramble when answering interview questions, sometimes talking yourself right out of the job. Prepare for the interview by reading through the job posting, matching your skills with the position's requirements and relating only that information.

Don't be too familiar

The interview is a professional meeting to talk business. This is not about making a new friend. Your level of familiarity should mimic the interviewer's demeanor. It is important to bring energy and enthusiasm to the interview and to ask questions, but do not overstep your place as a candidate looking for a job.

Use appropriate language

It's a given that you should use professional language during the interview. Be aware of any inappropriate slang words or references to age, race, religion, politics, or sexual orientation—these topics could send you out the door very quickly.

Don't be cocky

Attitude plays a key role in your interview success. There is a fine balance between confidence, professionalism, and modesty. Even if you're putting on a performance to demonstrate your ability, overconfidence is as bad, if not worse, as being too reserved.

Take care to answer the questions

When interviewers ask for an example of a time when you did something, they are asking behavioral interview questions, which are designed to elicit a sample of your past behavior. If you fail to relate a specific example, you not only don't answer the question, but you also miss an opportunity to prove your ability and talk about your skills.

Ask questions

When asked if they have any questions, most candidates answer, "No." Wrong answer. Part of knowing how to interview is being ready to ask questions that demonstrate an interest in what goes on in the company. Asking questions also gives you the opportunity to find out if this is the right place for you. The best questions come from listening to what you're asked during the interview and asking for additional information.

Don't appear desperate

When you interview with the "please, please hire me" approach, you appear desperate and less confident. Reflect the three Cs during the interview: cool, calm, and confident.

Remember that, from the moment you walk into an employer's office for an interview, you are being observed. Your posture, look, voice, and presence are all important, and you want to watch your every move to leave a great impression.

Finally, keep in mind these essential tips for correct gestures and ethics during a job interview:

- Once you meet your interviewer, greet with a FIRM handshake. This shows confidence and gives off a sign of top-quality professionalism. However, do not give too strong of a handshake that hurts your interviewer.
- When sitting, cross your ankles and keep your hands on your lap. Do not cross your legs, lean over on the table, or cross your arms. Sit up straight, and have presence!
- Maintain eye contact and nod your head often. This shows that you're paying full attention and giving your all.
- Beware of saying too many "um", "like", "uh", and "you know". You want to sound confident and sell yourself.
- When you are asked if you have any questions, definitely ask! Show genuine interest and that you want to learn more. Prepare your own questions to ask here.
- At the end of the interview, conclude with another FIRM handshake, and thank the interviewer for meeting with you. It's easy to forget this last gesture when you are overwhelmed. But this portrays real professionalism and respect.

Practice!

Exercise 1. Find the words and phrases from the list below in the article "A Few Questions to Ask Yourself Before Applying for a Job". Study and remember what they mean in the context of the article. Then, retell the article in a group dialogue, using the underlined words and phrases as keywords for your discussion.

job search
be worth (time)

pay special attention to
internship experience

fit into	job is (not) a good fit
long-term career plans	the required years of experience
be strategic with	pay range
apply for (a position)	be accustomed to
a stepping stone (towards career)	work environment
evaluating (a position)	employment
skills (for your dream job)	get a sense of (companies to target)
part-time work	take steps to investigate
pay the bills,	be worth (your time)
target industry	relocate
expose (to a field you want to pursue)	have a reputation of
(be) established in career	flexible work schedules
seek full-time work	local candidates
(the job) plays to your strengths	get preference over
skill gaps holding you back	apply from out-of-state or city
no job is perfect	relocation costs
feeling bored, unmotivated, or frustrated	(factors that) have an impact on
meet requirements	to land the job
over- or under-qualified	an employee referral
review the job description	get preferential treatment
job postings	hiring manager
wish list	initial applicant screening
(be) on the hiring manager's list	processes
must-have requirements	customize resume and cover letter
deal breakers	core requirements
job application	copy and paste (resume)
	resume keywords

Exercise 2. Memorize words and phrases listed in exercise 1; make up your own sentences with them.

Unit 2. Job Announcements and How To Read Them

- In this unit:**
- **Learn how to read job announcements**
 - **Study sample job announcements**
 - **A sample job description**
 - **Write a sample job announcement**
 - **Practice section**

Learn How to Read Job Announcements

Most of the job announcements have similar structure. Here we will take a look at the most typical sections which every job announcement has.

The details at the top of the job announcement tell you how much time you have to submit your application, the salary, work schedule and the type of appointment and service.

Opening and closing date

The opening date is the first day when you can submit an application. The closing date is the last day when candidates can apply for this position, meaning that the submission will be closed after 11:59pm EST (Eastern Standard Time) on that date.

Pay scale and grade

This tells you the type of pay system. The Federal Government has different pay systems, which helps determine the salary.

Appointment type

The appointment type tells you how long the job will last.. Permanent jobs don't have a time-limit. Temporary jobs do have a time-limit, which could be two years, four years or some other amount of time.

Salary

Each job announcement shows the starting salary and sometimes it will show a salary range.

The Requirements

The Requirements section describes the type of experience you need, certain conditions you need to agree to for the job and how the hiring agency will evaluate your application.

Conditions of Employment

This section lists 'conditions' that you must agree to, or qualify for, if you get hired and accept the job. The conditions may vary from job to job. A few examples include: type of citizenship, specific resume instructions, the need for a background investigation, etc.

Qualifications

The Qualifications section describes the experience, skills and other job related criteria. You must meet these qualifications to be considered for the job. It's important that you read the entire section; some job announcements include multiple qualifications.

How you will be evaluated

This section describes how the agency will evaluate your application. This section may include additional information on the evaluation criteria.

Preview job questionnaire

At the bottom of this section there will be a link allowing you to preview the job assessment questions. Read them carefully before you apply for the job and make sure that your resume provides answers to all those questions.

Study Sample Job Announcements

Writing a job announcement also requires some knowledge and skills. Here is a sample job ad format which many companies use worldwide.

Sell the Company

Provide a brief description of the organization and its purpose.

Key points about the job

Include a brief summary of job duties/responsibilities and required

qualifications.

Salary and Benefits

Provide the annual salary, salary range or hourly rate, hours of work and a brief statement about benefits. The information provided in this section is dependent upon the type of job and industry.

How to apply

Provide the applicants with specific information on how and where they apply.

Reference your website

This is an option but it may be a way for an applicant to obtain more detailed information about your organization and the job.

Practice!

Exercise 1. In the article “Learn How to Read Job Announcements” find equivalents for the following words and phrases:

apply (for); salary; work schedule; appointment; make an appointment; submit (an application); pay scale; (pay) grade; permanent; temporary; hire; hiring agency; employee; job announcement; salary range; requirement; required (level/skill, etc.); entire; evaluate; job assessment; make sure (that)

Exercise 2. Compose sentences with each of the words listed in ex.1. Put the sentences together into a text.

Exercise 3. Using the sample job announcement provided above, compose a job announcement for a job in your profession.

Unit 3. Prepare Your Resume

In this unit:

- Learn how to write a resume that will get you an interview
- Learn how to build a resume in 7 easy steps
- Learn what you should NOT include into your resume
- Practice section

How to Write a Resume That Will Get You an Interview

A well-written resume that highlights your most relevant qualifications for the job will help you get selected for an interview. Above all, your resume needs to be consistent, concise, and clear and easy to read.

If it's not, your resume and cover letter won't get a second glance from any hiring manager. Read below for information on how to write a resume that will get noticed and help you get invited for an interview.

Choose a resume type. There are several basic types of resumes used to apply for job openings. Depending on your personal circumstances, choose a chronological, functional, targeted resume, or a combination. A chronological resume (in reverse chronological order) is the simplest format to use, but there may be circumstances where you want to focus on your key accomplishments

and skills rather than your employment history. Taking the time to choose the best type of resume for your situation is well worth the effort.

Choose the right font and the font size. It's important to choose the legible ones and to leave enough white space on the page. You also want to keep style features (such as italics, underlining, bold, and the use of bullets) to a minimum; reserve the use of boldface for section headings and for quantifiable achievements that you would like to have “pop” on the page.

When you use a particular style, use it consistently.

Review resume examples. Read through samples that fit a variety of employment situations. These sample resumes will provide you with examples of resume formats that will work for almost every type of job seeker. They also help you see what kind of information to include.

However, whenever you use a resume example, be sure to customize your resume so it reflects your skills and abilities, and the jobs you are applying for.

Use a resume template. Along with resume examples, you can use a resume template as a starting point for creating your own resume. Add your information to the resume template, then tweak and edit it to personalize your resume so that it highlights your own unique skills and abilities.

Use resume keywords. Most companies use recruiting management software to screen candidates for job openings. In order to get found, your resume needs to contain keywords that directly target the jobs you are interested in. Spend some time matching your qualifications to the job to ensure you're including the appropriate keywords and skills. In addition to helping your resume get selected, it will also help the hiring manager see how your skills and experiences make you an ideal candidate for the specific job.

Jazz up your job descriptions. Review the descriptions you've written for each job. Are they going to show the hiring manager why you're a good match? Do they sound impressive?

Get resume advice. Writing a resume is hard work, and it's often a good idea to get help before you send it to employers. You can find resume writing advice and resume writing tips on the Internet. You can also meet with a college career counselor if you are a college student or alumnus.

Proof your resume. Be sure to thoroughly edit your resume before sending it. Check for grammar and spelling errors, as well as any style inconsistencies. Consider asking a friend or family member, or even a career counselor, to read over your cover letter.

Also review these proofing tips to ensure that your resume is consistent and error free.

How to Build a Resume in 7 Easy Steps

What's the easiest way to write a resume? If you look at resume building as a step-by-step process, it will be easier to do and much less overwhelming. Once you've created your first resume or refreshed your old one, you can simply tweak it to match it up with a job when you're applying for an open

position. Read on for how to build a resume, the components required in an interview-winning resume, examples of what to include in each section, how to format your resume, options for saving your document, and tips for writing a resume that will catch the attention of hiring managers.

Next, consider the basic framework of your resume. More isn't necessarily better, so aim for conciseness over length. Employers are looking for a synopsis of your credentials, not everything you have done in your career. In many cases, a one-page resume is sufficient. If you have extensive experience, longer may be necessary. In general, shorter is better, with a few bullet points for each job, brief sentences, descriptions that are action and accomplishment oriented, and plenty of white space on the page. Your goal is to wow the hiring manager and present a document that promotes you as an ideal candidate for the position. Review these tips for building a resume that will help you get job interviews.

Compile Your Personal and Employment Information

Collect all the information you need to include before you start writing your resume. It's much easier to write, edit, and format a document when you have all the details you need in front of you. Make a list of the contact information you want to use, all your jobs, your education, certifications, and other credentials.

Write Your Resume

When you have compiled all the information you need, it should be listed in the following order. Don't worry about fonts and formatting your document yet. Once you have everything down on paper, you will be able to adjust the font size and type, spacing, and add formatting options to your resume.

Resume Heading

Full Name (Jane M. Applicant or Jane Applicant)

Street Address

City, State, Zip

Email Address (*don't use your work email*)

Telephone Number (*make sure you have a professional voicemail message for missed calls*)

Profile or Objective

Adding a profile or an objective to your resume gives the employer a brief overview of your qualifications. This is an optional component of a resume. If you include it, focus on what prospective employers are seeking rather than what you want in your next job. Hiring managers want to know what you have to offer.

Summary of Qualifications

A summary of qualifications is another optional section of a resume. It's a statement that includes your skills, abilities, experience, and what qualifies you for the position.

Experience

Your work history is the most important component of your resume. Employers will want to know where you have worked, when you worked there, and what responsibilities you held in each role you have had. They will be looking to see how your experience lines up with what they are looking for in prospective employees.

- List the jobs and internships you have held in reverse chronological order, with the most recent positions first.
- For each position, include: job title, company, location, dates of employment, and a bulleted list of the strongest accomplishments for each job.
- Verb tense should be present tense for your current job if you are employed, and past tense for prior employment.

If you're not sure of employment dates, here's how to recreate your employment history. It's important to be accurate because employers do conduct background checks.

Volunteer Work

If you have volunteer experience that's related to the jobs you're applying for, or if you have volunteered to avoid an employment gap, list volunteering as you would the jobs you have held. Review these tips for including volunteer work on your resume.

Education

The education section generally comes next. You need only to list degrees earned, with the highest first, when you have been out of school for a few years.

If you're a student or recent graduate, the education section of your resume can be listed above your employment history. If you have work experience, list it below that section. Education should be listed in reverse chronological order, with the most recent and advanced education first. Include the name of the school, the degree earned, and the date you graduated.

Whether you include your GPA* on your resume depends on how long ago you graduated and how high your GPA is. Here's when to list your GPA on your resume.

Certifications

The next section of your resume includes any certifications you have.

Awards and Accomplishments

Don't be shy about mentioning awards and achievements you have earned. They show the employer that you are a well-credentialed candidate who has been recognized for your accomplishments.

Skills

This section of a resume includes the skills you have that are directly related to the job for which you're applying. Employers typically list required or preferred skills in job listings when itemizing the qualifications for the position. List your most closely related abilities here, using a bulleted list format.

Personal Interests

If you have personal interests that are strongly related to the position you're applying for, list them here. This can be helpful if you're applying for jobs where you don't have a lot of related work experience, but you do have expertise achieved in other ways.

* *GPA (Grade Point Average) is the measure used to summarize your academic achievement.*

What You Should NOT Include into Your Resume

The hiring manager should be able to skim through your resume and see your qualifications without knowing everything about you.

In fact, it often makes sense not to include information on your resume that could hinder your chance of getting an interview. The rule of thumb is, when in doubt, leave it out! Here is a list of items that should not be on your resume.

The Word "Resume"

Do not label your resume "resume." One look at your resume, and the employer should know exactly what type of document it is. Also don't simply name your resume "resume" when you save the file. Use your name, so the hiring manager will know whose resume it is at a glance. Here's how to name your resume.

The Date You Wrote the Resume

Some people make the mistake of dating their resumes. The employer does not need to know when you wrote your resume; the dates you include regarding past education and employment are the only dates you need to include.

Any Personal Data Beyond Your Contact Information

Do not include any personal information beyond your address, email, and phone number.

Leave out your age, date of birth, race, sex, sexual orientation, religion, political affiliation, and the names and ages of your spouse and children. While some of this information may be required in a CV, it should be left out of a resume.

You should also leave out important numbers that could allow someone to steal your identity, such as your social security number, driver's license number, and any credit card information. In some cases, you may wish to leave your address off your resume or only include part of it.

Photographs

While many companies outside of the United States require a photograph with each resume, those within the US do not. In fact, most companies prefer you not to include a photograph so they can safely adhere to the Equal Employment Opportunity legislation (which prohibits companies from making hiring decisions for discriminatory reasons). An exception would be if you were

applying for a modeling or acting job, where appearances inform hiring decisions.

Physical Characteristics (height, weight, etc.)

Like a photograph, including your physical characteristics on a resume opens the door to possible accusations of discrimination against the company. Companies, therefore, prefer that you do not include any physical descriptions.

Grammar School and High School

Grammar school is never included on a resume. If you are still in high school, are in your first couple of years of college, or if a high school diploma is your highest degree, you can certainly include your high school information. However, once you complete any other form of education, eliminate this information from your resume.

Low GPAs*

College students and recent graduates often include their GPA in their resume.

However, if you are worried about a low GPA, simply leave it off your resume. You can still include your school, graduation date, and any awards received.

** GPA (Grade Point Average) is the measure used to summarize your academic achievement.*

Unrelated Work Experience

You don't need to list every job you have held on your resume. Generally, you only want to include positions you have held in the past 10 to 15 years, unless an earlier job strongly demonstrates your qualifications. Leave out any positions that are unrelated to the job for which you are applying unless it will leave gaps on your resume.

However, if you have limited job experience, you can include slightly unrelated positions as long as you demonstrate how they prepared you for a job in your new field. For example, if you are applying for a job in sales, you can include your earlier job as a cashier if you explain that the job helped you develop your customer service skills.

Unrelated Hobbies

Most companies do not want to see your hobbies on your resume. However, if you have a hobby that relates to the company, you may include it. For example, if you are applying to work at a sporting goods store, you could list your interest in particular outdoor activities.

Obsolete* Skills

Make sure all the skills and attributes you list on your resume are current. If you list skills that are obsolete or not relevant to the position, it won't help you get an interview. Review this list of skills to exclude from your resume.

** obsolete – outdated, out-of-use*

Names and Contact Information for Former Employers

Because you will have a separate list of references, you do not need to include any contact information for your former employers on your resume.

Salary History

Salary is an issue you can discuss with the employer during an interview or once you have been offered the job; you do not want to establish a salary range before you have even been offered an interview. So, don't list your current salary or the salary you expect to earn at a new job.

Criminal Record

If you get hired, the company will likely conduct a search of your criminal record. However, there is no need to include this information on your resume.

"References Available Upon Request"

Generally, it is assumed that a job applicant will have references. Instead of including the references on your resume or saying "references available upon request," you can send the hiring manager a separate sheet of references or wait until you are asked to provide them.

Negative Words / Ideas

Avoid saying what you did not do or have not yet accomplished; focus on what you have done or are in the process of achieving. For example, if you are still in college, do not say "not yet graduated," but instead list the year in which you will graduate. If you didn't graduate, simply list the dates you attended.

Instead of saying that you have "limited experience" in administrative work, simply provide examples of your previous experience.

An Objective That Says What You Want

Rather than writing a resume objective that says what you are seeking in a job, write a career summary, profile or branding statement that highlights what you can offer the employer. Here's how:

Career Summary Branding Statement Resume Profile
--

More Things NOT to Include on a Resume:

- Personal pronouns
- Street addresses for schools and employers
- Statements about your health
- Spelling and grammatical errors
- Long descriptions
- Exaggerations or mistruths
- Acronyms
- Anything negative about you or an employer

Practice!

Exercise 1. Find these words in the above article and discuss what they mean in that particular context. Find equivalent translations of these words in your native language. Make up your own sentences with every word/phrase.

highlight	relevant	get selected for an interview
consistent	concise	cover letter
hiring manager	targeted resume	accomplishments
be well worth the effort	legible	italics

underlining	bullet(s)	reserve the use of...
boldface	section headings	sample(s)
variety	customize	reflects
resume	template	tweak
matching	hiring manager	job descriptions
to review	impressive	advice / to advise
career counselor	alumnus	to proof
thoroughly	cover letter	error free

Exercise 2. In the article ‘How to Write a Resume That Will Get You an Interview’, some words are underlined. Find definitions for each of them and write them down.

Exercise 3. Write down keywords for every passage in the article ‘How to Write a Resume That Will Get You an Interview’ and retell it using these keywords as a plan.

Exercise 4. Study the information provided in the article ‘How to Build a Resume in 7 Easy Steps’. Following the recommendations provided in it, create a resume template for yourself.

Exercise 5. Fill out your sample resume with information about your current skills, education and experiences. At this point in your life, do you have relevant information to put into every resume section? Prepare to exchange your thoughts with your group mates in the classroom.

Unit 4. Make the First Contact with the Employer

- In this unit:**
- How to impress a potential employer
 - Emailing a potential employer for the first time
 - Top 10 telephone tips for calling about a job
 - Practice section

How to Impress a Potential Employer

Looking for ways to impress a potential employer? Want to make your resume or job application stand out from the pack? During one two week time period, a Human Resources staff member reviewed 485 resumes and applications for 18 different positions. They interviewed 23 candidates and brought six back for a second, more intense round of interviews.

Believe me. The HR staff person can tell you what rang her chimes.

Some of this advice may surprise you. Some may even make you angry because it doesn't seem fair or right to you, but why take a chance in this job market? Here are a few tips for you to follow.

(1) First of all, you should **select the jobs for which you qualify**. HR's ‘no hire’ pile of applications is increasingly made up of people who don't even remotely qualify for the advertised position. These job applications frequently

consist of a resume in an envelope. Why waste the paper, the stamp and the time? If you find yourself applying because it's an area of work you might want to get into, or think you'd like, don't bother.

Unless you can make the stretch and fit between your qualifications and background and the described opening, you are wasting your time. Each application or resume gets less than five minutes of review time. You need to quickly qualify yourself as a potential candidate because the employer doesn't have or take the time to do it for you.

(2) Write a targeted cover letter that introduces your key qualifications and highlights your fit with the position for which you are applying. Address the letter to the person conducting the candidate search, when known. And, no, don't presume familiarity and write, "Dear Susan."

Until the employer knows you, her name is "Ms.Smith." Additionally, the cover letter needs to specifically address the available position. Spelling and correct grammar do count. So does the spacing of words on the page, an attractive overall appearance, and the feel of the paper.

Online applications, which are the norm these days, must be targeted and formatted appropriately. Pay just as much attention to spelling, grammar, and appearance. Recognize that some online application systems do not permit the submission of a cover letter and many employers don't want nor read cover letters anymore. If the employer does not state to submit a cover letter, it is optional.

(3) Target the resume to the job. Would you like to know how many people are looking for a "challenging opportunity to utilize my skills with a progressive employer who will provide opportunities for growth?" Don't even ask; the answer will break your heart if this is how you routinely describe the position you seek in your resume.

Even more importantly, in this day of instantaneous electronic publishing, no one needs to photocopy 100 resumes at an instant print store. Customization counts. Customization is everything when you are looking at substantially different opportunities, too.

Say, you are looking for a training position or a marketing position. The identical resume won't sell your skills for either field.

(4) Lead with your strengths. What makes you different from 40 other applicants? On your customized resume, start out with the background and experience most important for the position you seek. The stage of your career is also highly relevant to the placement of information on your resume. If you are just graduating from college, lead off the first portion of the resume with your education and degree.

A seasoned veteran will start with an accomplishment summary and then list jobs, titles, companies, and responsibilities chronologically. A network administration applicant should lead with his or her certifications (Microsoft

Certified Systems Engineer (MCSE) and list software and hardware experience (Microsoft Exchange, SQL Server) before listing jobs and education.

The key is to make it easy for the resume reviewer to see that you are qualified for the position. You want your resume in the coveted yes pile awaiting an interview or phone screening.

Looking for more ideas about getting your foot in the door for the face-to-face interview? You're unlikely to obtain a job offer without a highly effective interview. You have a couple more hurdles to cross, however, before you get that coveted opportunity to impress a potential employer.

(5) Not all employers may feel this way, but some hate fishing phone calls that have absolutely no purpose other than to make you notice an applicant.

Wonder how many people call an HR office each week to see if the office has received their resume? Lots—and only the people HR rarely calls back. It's a wonderful opportunity for you to make a lasting bad impression.

An HR staff person said to one caller, "You are calling to ask me to look through this pile of 200 resumes to see if I have received yours? If you are that uncertain, why don't you just send it again?" Fishing-for-attention phone calls rarely help and usually brand you as a pain.

They steal the company's time, irritate the resume screener and generally, accomplish nothing in your favor. In a client company, callers, and especially repeat callers, are known as stalkers.

(6) If you want a call from a recruiter or potential employer, give them a number at which you can be reached. The majority of resumes received by HR list only a home phone. Big mistake. HR staff members give up on candidates with whom they play phone tag for days.

No, don't give a potential employer your number at your current job. But, you really need to honor the potential employer's time by giving them your smartphone number. HR staff needs to reach you to set up a time and date for the phone screening.

(7) Yes, phone screening. Forward thinking employers don't waste their time or yours these days without an initial telephone interview.

Be prepared to schedule a date and time, usually during the 8-5 p.m. work day. (Your potential employer is already working ten hour days.) The phone interview eliminates most of the yes resumes from contention.

Be prepared for a mini-interview and to give the interviewer your salary expectations. People who play coy when they are asked about salary are not invited to visit in person. Why would the employer waste staff time interviewing an applicant who is making \$70,000 or more, currently, for a \$50,000 job?

And no, you are not going to be such a wonderful candidate that the employer blows away the salary range. In nine out of ten situations, the salary range is set with a large number of variables in mind including the local job market and the salaries of coworkers.

(8) Preparation counts for both the phone screening and the potential face-to-face interview. If the HR staff member has set up a time with you for a phone screening, **research the company in advance**. Visit the website to see what the employer does. Many organizations even describe their company culture on their websites. If you take just a few minutes to do your homework, the quality of the interview goes up exponentially.

Think about the HR staff person's time, too, as your potential employer. Imagine the decisions that are made about you when you ask for directions to the company while driving your car and talking on your smartphone. "Wait a couple of minutes," one candidate said, "while I get somewhere so that I can write this all down." Research the company location online first; call the company for directions as a last resort.

You've done the right things right. Your materials and credentials made a good impression. You passed the interview phone screening and you've been invited to the company for that all important interview. How do you continue to build the relationship with the potential employer that will lead to an eventual job offer?

(9) **Take time off work for the interview**; don't expect the potential employer to extend their day by several hours to accommodate your schedule.

If you're currently working and looking for a new position, hopefully, you've chosen the most ethical path and your employer knows. If you are unable to inform your employer, for any reason, hopefully, you've saved up your vacation time to use for your job search.

A recruiting employer is often willing to interview a good candidate late in the afternoon, but rarely will the interview extend past 6 p.m. (Remember, most potential employers started work by 8 a.m.) You don't want your potential to contribute as an employee assessed at the end of a ten hour day either.

(10) **Make the right, positive impression** at both the interview and with the company staff. Need the employer tell you to arrive early, dress up for the position for which you are applying and bring an additional resume with references? Remember to treat every person you encounter with dignity and respect.

The receptionist is reporting his impressions of you to the HR Director.

Count on it, especially in small- to mid-sized organizations. **Be unfailingly polite** throughout every interaction you have with the company. Each person is assessing your potential fit within their organization. Don't blow your chances by behaving boorishly.

(11) You will be asked to fill out an application, so **bring your resume** and other needed information to complete the document.

And, no, "See attached resume," doesn't cut it. It is likely your application information is entered into an employment database and used for company records, government reporting, and more.

The filled out application usually attests to the fact that all of the information you provided on it is true. It also allows the company to obtain your written permission to check your references, employment history, do criminal background checks if you are hired, and more.

(12) The actual interview is the subject of additional articles. For purposes of this one, remember that the purpose of the interview is to determine if you and the organization are a good fit.

The real purpose of an interview, sorry to tell you, is not to gain you a job offer. Do you feel confident that you can do the job and grow with the company? Have you conveyed this to the potential employer? If so, you'll be asked back for a more intensive second round of interviews at most companies.

(13) Follow up after the interview with a thank you letter, and perhaps a phone call. Good manners always count. The HR office received three thank you letters and a couple of phone calls from the 23 people who participated in the first interview with us.

Are thank you letters going the way of the dinosaurs? Not from candidates who count.

Doing the right things right will result in more interviews, better job offers, and a more successful career. Take a little more time at each step and your application will rise above the pack. This is a promise and true.

Practice!

Exercise 1. Read the above article and make sure you understand the meanings and remember the words and phrases from it, listed below. What information was new to you? How are you going to use it in preparing for your future job interview(s)?

stand out from the pack	customization	take time off work
staff member	background	accommodate
a round of interviews	relevant	encounter
remote(ly)	phone screening	(don't) blow your chances
a targeted cover letter	in your favor	fill out an application
highlight(s)	salary expectations	attest to the fact that
presume	salary range	convey
appropriate(ly)	the last resort	Good manners always count
utilize (skills)	eventual	rise above the pack

Exercise 2. Make up sentences with every word/phrase in the above list to practice them in various contexts.

Exercise 3. Retell the article 'How to Impress a Potential Employer' in writing; use the phrases highlighted in bold as a plan for your essay.

Unit 5. Right Before the Interview: Job Interview Dress Code and General Business Ethics

- In this unit:**
- Read about traditional job interview dress code
 - Practice section
 - General business ethics at the job interview
 - Learn how to arrange a meeting at work

Job Interview Dress Code

When preparing for an interview, think of selecting your interview attire as the icing on the cake – that final detail that pulls all your efforts together.

What to wear

When considering how to dress for an interview, use your best judgment and don't overthink it. You should choose clothes that make you feel comfortable and confident – nothing that you'd have to tug or pull at or something that would wrinkle easily on your commute to the interview.

Avoid revealing clothing and anything that doesn't fit properly.

Check for stains, snags, pet hair and holes. Make sure it's cleaned and ready a few days before your interview.

The night before the interview, lay out or hang up your outfit. It should be out of reach of children, housemates or pets.

How to match your outfit to the workplace

Because you've already researched the company, you should have a sense of the workplace and what level of formality is appropriate. Look at photos on their social media sites to get a sense of what people wear at the office.

For more casual workplaces, professional-looking casual job interview attire is appropriate. For women, this could mean:

Dark jeans, a blouse and cardigan

A knee-length skirt and button down shirt or blouse

Both options can be worn with flats or heels, avoid open-toe shoes

For men, this could mean:

Dark jeans or slacks and button down shirt or polo

This can be worn with any closed-toe shoes that are neat and clean.

For a business casual environment, you'll need to dress up a bit more. For women, this could mean:

Black or navy dress pants or pencil skirt

Button down shirt and cardigan or jacket

Flats or heels are appropriate

For men, this could mean,

Black or navy dress slacks with a belt, button down shirt and tie

A blazer is optional

Oxfords or loafers

For a formal workplace, wear a dark-colored suit. For women this can be a tailored dress with matching jacket or suit pants or skirt with matching jacket. For men, this means suit pants and jacket with a button down shirt and tie.

Summary: How to dress for an interview

1. Use your best judgement and don't overthink it.
2. Choose clothes that make you feel comfortable and confident.
3. Avoid revealing clothing.
4. Check for stains, snags, pet hairs and holes.
5. Match your outfit to the workplace.

Practice!

Exercise 1. Make a list of all names of clothes mentioned in the article "Job Interview Dress Code". Cut it so that each name is written on a separate piece of paper. Shuffle the pieces. Then, group them together into three smaller lists for a) casual workplace wear; b) business casual environment wear; c) formal workplace wear.

Exercise 2. Find names for each piece of clothes listed below in your native language. Discuss whether it is traditional to wear these kinds of clothes in similar work environments in your country.

dark jeans – a blouse and cardigan – a knee-length skirt – a button down shirt/blouse – flats heels – open-toe shoes – slacks – a polo – closed-toe shoes – dress pants – a pencil skirt – jacket slacks with a belt – a tie – a blazer – Oxfords – loafers – a dark-colored suit – a tailored dress – suit pants – a skirt with matching jacket

**Unit 6. Right before the interview:
Arranging the Meeting, Speaking to HR, etc.**

- In this unit:**
- **Scheduling a meeting the right way**
 - **Getting the most out of your first interview with a recruiter**
 - **Practice section**

Scheduling a Meeting the Right Way

by Jodi Glickman

Jodi Glickman is a keynote speaker and founder of communication training and leadership development firm Great on the Job. She is the author of Great on the Job and a contributor to the HBR Guide to Getting the Right Job.

Back in the days of Mad Men, there were clear delineations between administrative and professional roles. Secretaries, as they were then called, existed expressly to type memos, fetch coffee, serve lunch and schedule meetings.

Today, the once-clear lines between administrative and professional roles have changed. **While it would have been unthinkable to ask an assistant**

account manager to schedule a meeting at Sterling Cooper in the 1960s, today it is not only common, it arguably commands a degree of respect and aptitude. (1)

When your boss asks you to schedule an important meeting with Boeing executives, it is a reflection of your competence: you can handle this. **Yet the honor goes hand-in-hand with the misery of being in charge of the administrative tasks involved – how in the world are you supposed to find a time that works for fourteen professionals across three firms in two different time zones? (2)**

No doubt the scheduling of meetings has become the bane of many a junior professional's existence. **This role didn't use to fall in our court and in theory shouldn't be that hard. (3)** Yet coordinating calendars can become treacherous.

The first and most important question to ask is this – whose priorities come first? Who is the most important person to schedule the meeting around?

If you work in the client service business, the answer is easy: the client comes first. If you're including members of your own team along with outside vendors or service providers, then the most senior person in your organization typically holds the trump card. **And if you're an attorney trying to get three managing partners on the line, you'll generally have to tap dance delicately to make sure all three are held in similar regard. (4)**

If you're unsure, go ahead and ask your manager ("Who is the most critical person that needs to attend/whose schedule I should accommodate?") Try and offer up your own suggestions of what you think that order of precedence should be and why.

Once you know your hierarchy, you have two options for proceeding:

What works for you?

Here are three times that work for the team, please let us know which is best for you.

What works for you?

Often, there are one or two VIPs on a call who everyone else needs to jump through hoops to accommodate. In that case, start your search with that person's assistant and ask for several times that will work for them. Then go back to the rest of your team with the possibilities and ask which one works best for everyone. You may have to side with the majority or circle back to people to double-check if everyone can't agree the first time around.

Here are some times that work

The second option is to query your internal team first and then reach out to your client or external participants with two or three options of dates and times that work. **This option still puts the priority party in the driver's seat but sets the table for them: you're messaging that they have first choice of a date/time but you've already worked the back channels to ensure that those options work for your team. (5)**

The caveat is that if none of the times you mention work for the other party, you need to give them free reign to suggest an alternative. Then you and your team must scramble/change/adjust priorities to meet the client's needs. You've done your best to make the meeting work on your terms, but sometimes it's just not possible. Finally, a few additional pointers to keep in mind:

- **Don't ask all attendees blindly for times that work – it's too ambiguous and open-ended.** (6) Give your team some ideas/options that they can respond to – it will prompt them to check their calendars and really make sure Tuesday afternoon is open or Monday before 9 am is off-limits.

- **Don't commit to a date or time without making sure you have sign-off from the key players.** (7) You never want to have to go back to a senior person and tell them their preferred date/time doesn't work.

- Keep a paper trail – save emails with people's availability to make sure you cover your bases in the event someone comes back and complains about a time they OK'ed.

Practice!

Exercise 1. Study the use of the underlined words and phrases in the article "Scheduling a Meeting the Right Way". What are their meanings in the context of the article? To practice using these words, make up your own sentences with each of them.

Exercise 2. Take a look at the sentences, marked in the text with numbers from (1) to (7). Write down their translations in your native language. Then, working with a partner, discuss possible options of translating the same meanings back into English, using other words and phrases.

(1) While it would have been unthinkable to ask an assistant account manager to schedule a meeting at Sterling Cooper in the 1960s, today it is not only common, it arguably commands a degree of respect and aptitude.

(2) Yet the honor goes hand-in-hand with the misery of being in charge of the administrative tasks involved – how in the world are you supposed to find a time that works for fourteen professionals across three firms in two different time zones?

(3) This role didn't use to fall in our court and in theory shouldn't be that hard.

(4) If you're an attorney trying to get three managing partners on the line, you'll generally have to tap dance delicately to make sure all three are held in similar regard.

(5) This option still puts the priority party in the driver's seat but sets the table for them: you're messaging that they have first choice of a date/time but you've already worked the back channels to ensure that those options work for your team.

(6) Don't ask all attendees blindly for times that work – it's too ambiguous and open-ended.

(7) Don't commit to a date or time without making sure you have sign-off from the key players.

Part 2: Working Through Interview Questions

Describing Yourself



Unit 7. Interview Question: Describe Yourself

- In this unit:**
- How to describe yourself at a job interview
 - Practice section
 - How to answer the question: “Tell me about yourself”
 - Describing yourself: a few sample answers

How to Describe Yourself at a Job Interview

Of all questions that you may have to answer during your job interview the request “Tell me about yourself” is the trickiest one, so before we start crafting the perfect answer, let us cover some of the most common mistakes the candidates make.

1. The Resume Rehash

Many candidates respond by retelling their resume from the very beginning. That can turn into a very long monologue that starts with one’s oldest and probably least relevant experience, so by the time you get to the good stuff, your interviewer has zoned out and is thinking about lunch.

To avoid such situation, it is important to prepare a brief summary of the high points of each of your past positions. It is likely that you will be asked about your accomplishments and day-to-day responsibilities in previous roles. Ideally, this should come out in an engaging conversation, though, not a long monologue at the beginning of the interview. You will only confuse your interviewer with information overload.

Even if the interviewer specifically asks you to “*walk him through your resume,*” do not take the suggestion too literally. You can still lead with your elevator pitch and then provide a brief overview of your most recent position, leaving plenty of opportunities for the interviewer to jump in and engage with you.

2. Mr./Ms. Modesty

Many interview candidates make the mistake of being too modest. They reply with a humble or vague introduction that fails to clearly communicate their strongest qualifications. Some of them are just humble people who aren’t comfortable with “selling” themselves. Others have never really had to worry about a strong pitch – they were always courted for new opportunities when the job market was stronger.

Today, the competition for any good job is fierce. Do not rely on the interviewer to see past your humble exterior and figure out how great you are. If you take time to prepare, you can find a way to present yourself to full advantage while staying true to your personality. For modest types, focusing on factual statements would be a good recommendation.

When you speak about yourself, there is no need to brag, “*I’m the best salesperson in the world.*” Instead, you can say, “*I led my division in sales for the last three years and had the opportunity to bring in more than \$18 million worth of new business during that time.*”

3. The First Date Approach

The job interview is not a first date. Your interviewer does not want to hear that you like singing to guitar and getting caught in the rain. Many candidates make the mistake of talking too much about their personal lives and hobbies. In job interviews, you need to focus on who you are as a professional unless asked about hobbies or outside pursuits.

4. The Clueless Ramble

Surprisingly, it happens quite often that a smart candidate flubs this question because of overthinking. Their answers sound like this: “*You mean about my job experience or about my schooling, or what kind of information are you looking for?*”

Of course, the “*Tell me about yourself*” request can be interpreted in many different ways. However, asking for too much clarification only makes you look hesitant and confused. Dive right in with the approach that we outlined for you above. If they are looking for something else, they will ask you for it.

Practice!

Exercise 1. Find these words in the article “How to Describe Yourself at a Job Interview” and study their meaning in the particular context. Find equivalents for them in your native language. Make up your own sentences with each of the words.

request

humble

to dive in

to craft	vague	clue(less)
to cover	introduction	to ramble
common (mistakes)	fierce (competition)	to prepare in advance
relevant	statement	brief(ly)
accomplishment	to rely on	to highlight
an engaging conversation	hesitant	challenge
modest	confused	challenging assignment

Exercise 2. Develop your best sample answer and write it down for further revision. When you come to the end of this unit, revise your sample answer and make improvements to it. You will probably need to make such revisions again and again in the future.

Exercise 3. In the article ‘How to Describe Yourself at a Job Interview’ some words and phrases are underlined. Study their meanings and compose your own sentences with each of the words/phrases.

Unit 8. Interview Question: What Are Your Strengths?

- In this unit:**
- **Prepare to answer the question “What are your strengths?”**
 - **Why ask about your strengths at the interview?**
 - **Practice section**
 - **The best skills to include into your resume**
 - **Why do employers care about soft skills?**
 - **How to answer the "what are your strengths" interview question**
 - **Examples of the best answers for the "what are your strengths" question**
 - **Answers to avoid**
 - **Examples of strengths you can use**

Prepare to answer the question “What are your strengths?”

This question requires a lot of your attention before the interview. First of all, assess your skills to identify your strengths. Make a list of your skills, dividing them into three categories:

- Knowledge-based skills, which were acquired from education and experience (computer skills, languages, degrees, training and technical ability);
- Transferable skills, those which you can transfer from one project to another (communication and people skills, analytical problem solving and planning skills);
- Personal traits, or your unique qualities (dependable, flexible, friendly, hard working, expressive, punctual, a team player, etc.)

Some examples of the strengths you might want to mention include:

Enthusiasm, trustworthiness, creativity, discipline, patience, respectfulness, determination, dedication, honesty, versatility, etc.

When you complete this list, choose three to five of those strengths that match what the employer is seeking in the job posting. Make sure you can give specific examples to demonstrate why you say that is your strength if probed further.

The "what are your strengths" interview question is a staple. You're going to get this question, and it's best if you prepare.

That's because most job seekers don't answer this question well. And they don't answer well because they make the mistake of thinking that this question is easy.

Okay, it is easy. But it takes some preparation to get it right.

Here's what happens to candidates who don't think about how to answer the "what are your strengths" question:

They are either arrogant:

"What are my strengths? Where do I begin? I'm Superman. I mean... look. I take off my glasses – Superman. I put them back on – Clark Kent. You can see it. Yeah, you can! Plus, I'm so good at stuff that you'll think I'm a psychic. I'll get work done before there is work to do. I can already guarantee you that I'm better than all your other employees combined."

Or they are too humble:

"What are my strengths? Well, I guess I'm pretty good at breathing? I don't know. That's what my mom said. She's usually right about stuff. So, I guess yeah. I guess I could say I'm a good breather."

The answer the interviewer is looking for is both self-aware and confident."

Every professional hiring manager knows the three basic things:

- Your greatest strength happens to be a skill you need to do the job.
- Your greatest strength sets you apart from other candidates.
- You show off your communication skills when you provide the answer.

You should keep these three statements in mind when you prepare to answer this question. To illustrate how they work, let us take a look at some examples. This is an example of a good answer where the candidate tailored her strongest skills to match those requested in the job offer:

A GOOD ANSWER:

"I noticed that the job offer listed attention to detail as a desirable skill for the position. I'd say that attention to detail is, in fact, my greatest strength."

In the next example, a couple of the candidate's strongest, most relevant skills are backed up with success stories:

"My greatest strength is my writing skills. I can also work to tight deadlines under pressure. For example, I was once asked to complete a

project that fell through the cracks. My editor discovered the mistake two hours before the deadline.

It was an important piece that gave our publication a scoop on the topic in question. Not only did the piece have to go out on time, but it had to be perfect. I hunkered down and wrote. The result? The article was on time and acclaimed.”

At the same time, a humble answer may point to a weaker skill.

NOT A WINNING ANSWER:

“I guess that I’m a strong people person as long as I don’t have to write emails and can talk to that person face-to-face.”

In the following example, a laundry list of random skills with no examples of strengths or what it looks like when you put those skills to use.

“My strengths? Where do I start? I’m great at customer service, organizing stuff, writing, sales, and marketing. Oh! I almost forgot. I can also administer medication to large domestic animals.”

To make sure you don’t make a mistake like this during your interview, think over and prepare your answer well in advance. Then, return to it when it comes to applying for a particular job and customize your sample to the requirements of the job description.

Here’s a list of alternative versions of the "what are your strengths" question:

What is your greatest strength?

What is your biggest strength?

What strengths would you bring to our company?

What are three strengths that you bring to this position?

What are your greatest professional strengths?

What is your greatest accomplishment or the project you’re most proud of completing?

What do you do best in your current position?

What would your co-workers say is your strongest area of expertise?

You’ll want to prepare for potential follow-up questions:

Can you explain how you’ve used that strength to achieve results in your current position?

Notice that some of the questions asked in an interview refer to your “current position.” You’ll want to prepare a couple of examples of success that are recent.

You’ll also want to prepare for the what is your greatest strength AND weakness question.

Practice!

Exercise 1. Make a list of your current skills and characteristics. Divide them into three categories: knowledge-based skills, transferable skills, your personal traits. In the classroom, show your list to your group mates and let

them share their lists with you. Are there many similarities? Which of the three categories do you find many similarities? What are the differences and why? Discuss this with your group mates in the classroom.

Exercise 2. Write down your own answer to the question about your greatest strengths. Pick out 2-3 characteristics from the list above and illustrate them with examples of your successful performance.

Exercise 3. Study the underlined words in the article above. Write down synonyms for these words and make up sentences with each of the words.

Unit 9. Interview Question: What Are Your Weaknesses?

- In this unit:**
- **Interview question: What are your weaknesses?**
 - **Some typical mistakes that candidates make**
 - **Follow-up questions about weaknesses**
 - **Why interviewers ask about your greatest weaknesses**
 - **How to answer “What’s your greatest weakness?”**
 - **How to demonstrate that you are working on your weakness**
 - **Examples of strong answers to “What is your greatest weakness?”**
 - **Practice section**

Interview Question: What Are Your Weaknesses?

Everyone has weaknesses, but who wants to admit to them, especially in an interview? Some examples of weaknesses you might mention include:

- Being too critical of yourself
- Attempting to please everyone
- Being unfamiliar with the latest software

The best way to handle this question is to minimize the trait and emphasize the positive. Select a trait and come up with a solution to overcome your weakness. Stay away from personal qualities and concentrate more on professional traits. For example: "I pride myself on being a 'big-picture' guy. I have to admit I sometimes miss small details, but I always make sure I have someone who is detail-oriented on my team."

Most candidates hate this question and consider it pointless. After all, they aren't about to confess candidly to their biggest flaws in the middle of a job interview.

However, this question has become a cliché for a reason. Interviewers continue to ask it even though they know they are unlikely to get answers that are 100% honest.

Why? Because the way you answer a question about your weaknesses is very telling. You may not even realize what you are communicating when you answer this question.

And let's face it, you're probably doing it wrong. Most people do. I say that as an interview coach who has now worked with thousands of job seekers. At least 90% of my clients need help with answering the weakness question.

Some typical mistakes that candidates make

1. Trying to turn a negative into a positive. You will find many books and articles that advise you to "turn a negative into a positive" by sharing a supposed weakness that is actually a desirable quality in an employee. A few examples:

I am too much of a perfectionist.

- I work too hard sometimes.
- I care too much about my work.

Clever idea. At this point, though, it's an old trick and the interviewer sees right through it. She has seen many candidates try the same song and dance. In fact, this approach will likely make her think you are hiding something.

2. Refusing to answer the question. Some candidates will assert that they can't think of a single weakness. This is probably because they don't prepare for the question properly and freeze up, afraid to say the wrong thing. This answer also makes you look like you are hiding something.

3. Revealing a weakness that raises red flags. Being too candid and confessing to a weakness that would hinder your ability to excel in the role may also be a mistake at the interview. An answer like: "I have trouble getting up in the morning and getting to work on time." is regarded by a hiring manager as a real weakness and certainly works against the candidate.

You may face a whole variety of questions about weaknesses during your interview. Here are some of the questions that are regularly asked in job interviews:

- What is your greatest weakness? This is probably the most common phrasing.

- What are some of your weaknesses? Here you are being asked for more than one. The interviewer knows you have that one B.S. weakness prepared and wants to push you for more.

- What are your strengths and weaknesses? Some interviewers will ask you to sum up both strengths and weaknesses in one answer.

- If I called your current/previous manager, what would he/she say that you need to work on?

This phrasing is tricky. By planting the idea of calling your current/last manager, the interviewer is trying to subconsciously encourage more honesty (Some candidates immediately start thinking, "What if he actually calls her?")

- Tell me about a development goal that you have set.

This question probes for weakness, but also emphasizes your ability to proactively set development goals.

- If you could change one thing about yourself, what would it be?

Here's another phrasing – again asking for your GREATEST weakness, or at least the one that you feel is most limiting.

- What do you most want to improve in the next year?

This phrasing takes a more positive approach, but it is still a question about weaknesses.

Follow-up Questions About Weaknesses:

You should also be prepared for follow-up or probing questions, especially if your answer to the original weakness question was vague or unconvincing.

- But how has that weakness negatively affected you?

You'll often hear this follow-up question if you've failed to describe a REAL weakness (see “turning a negative into a positive” strategy above”)

- OK, how about a real weakness?

This is a more pointed follow-up when the interviewer is skeptical about your answer.

- Can you share another weakness or area for development?

A tough interviewer may ask for more than one weakness, especially if the first one provided sounds false or over-rehearsed. Some interviewers just know that candidates often prepare only one weakness and want to see what they come up with on the spot.

Why Interviewers Ask About Your Greatest Weaknesses

Why do interviewers ask about weaknesses when they know that most candidates don't answer honestly?

They're trying to get past your nice, presentable interview facade and get a sense of what you're really like to work with – the good, the bad, and the ugly.

Even if you don't answer honestly, your answer tells them something about you. If you dodge the question or try to fake your way through, the interviewer will wonder if:

You've got a secret weaknesses that you won't discuss;

You think you're perfect because you have no self-awareness;

You think you're perfect because your standards are very low; or

You are simply a con artist (this may be okay if you're in politics or public relations)

Even very strong interviewers sometimes get tripped up with the weakness question. It can be very difficult to talk about your flaws in a stressful situation like a job interview. Negative topics require added diplomacy.

Meanwhile, you're nervous and thinking about 1,000 other things (*Is my hair sticking up? Is my breath okay? Why did he just frown like that? What am I going to say if he asks why I left my last job? How am I going to remember that teamwork example? Can he tell that I'm sweating?*)

However, there is a way to answer that is honest and authentic and still increases your odds of getting a job offer.

How to Answer “What's Your Greatest Weakness?”

A good weakness answer has two important parts:

(1) share about your weakness briefly describe a real weakness that wouldn't be a major handicap on the job	(2) tell how you are already working on it discuss your proactive efforts to improve and illustrate your words with an example of action
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This shows that you are self-aware, have a drive to be your best, and that the weakness will not slow you down.

How to Choose a “Good” Weakness

Be authentic

Do not select a weakness just because it sounds good. You will make a better impression with sincerity. That doesn't mean you have to share a weakness that makes you look bad. If you're like most of us, you have several weaknesses and at least one of them will be interview-friendly as defined by the additional guidelines below.

Pick a weakness that is acceptable for the job at hand

Be aware of the job requirements and don't cite a weakness related to any of the required skills or desired qualities. If you're an accountant, don't talk about hating math or lack of attention to detail. If you're in sales, don't confess to being too reserved or lacking persistence.

Select a weakness that is relatively minor and “fixable”

It means it should be something that you can improve through work and motivation, for example:

A fixable weakness: *“I get nervous when speaking in front of large groups.”* You can get better through practice and learning new skills – and this is a common development area.

A weakness that is harder to fix: *“I am very shy, so I often have trouble speaking up in meetings.”* While there's nothing wrong with being shy, an interviewer could assume that the candidate would have trouble collaborating in a team environment. This is a preference or personality quality that would be more difficult to change.)

Describe your weakness in a concise, neutral way. You should not feel like you have to go into great detail. Be brief and, most importantly, avoid sounding defensive or overly negative.

How to Demonstrate That You Are Working on Your Weakness

In the second part of your answer, you need to describe how you have already taken steps to improve in your area of weakness. Here's why:

- A great candidate is always looking for ways to learn and grow.
- A fabulous candidate then takes the initiative to improve.

Use your answer to demonstrate your motivation to be the best at what you do. This is how to truly emphasize the positive when talking about your weakness.

Examples of Strong Answers to “What Is Your Greatest Weakness?”

Let us take a look at a few examples of good answers and analyze them.

(1) Skills delegation

“I think one area I could work on is my delegation skills. I am always so concerned about everything being done right and on time that I can get stuck in that mentality of “If you want it done right, do it yourself.” Unfortunately, that’s not always possible and I’ve realized that I can slow things down if I am too controlling.

I learned this recently when given the opportunity to manage the department’s summer interns. I had never managed direct reports before, so this was a hugely educational experience in many different ways. It definitely taught me how to delegate and my manager noticed the difference in my management style at the end of the summer. I know that I can benefit from additional development in this area, so I signed up for a management skills training course and am always looking for opportunities to manage projects for our group.”

Why this kind of answer works well:

This is a great example for a junior-level employee in a role in which delegation abilities are not critical. Please note that the last sentence in the first paragraph is important because it acknowledges how the weakness can be a problem and why it’s worth working on.

The weakness is acknowledged and described, but the emphasis is more on how the candidate has sought out ways to improve.

Keep in mind that this is not such a terrific answer if you’re applying for a job that requires you to manage people.

The next example shows an answer by a candidate who thinks she may have to work on her diplomacy skills:

(2) A bit too honest

“Sometimes I can be a bit too honest when I provide feedback to coworkers. My personality is naturally very straightforward and to the point, and most of my colleagues really value that, but I have learned that there are times on the job when more diplomacy is required.

I took a training class on conflict management and it really opened my eyes to the need to communicate differently with different people. So now I am much better at providing constructive feedback, even if it doesn’t always come naturally.”

Why this kind of answer works well:

This weakness is described well. The candidate notes how directness has been a weakness while also making it clear that he is not a raging jerk to his coworkers.

In the second part, he talks about concrete steps that he has taken and how he has improved.

This candidate has difficulty speaking in front of big groups of people.

(3) Speaking in public

“Honestly, I would say that public speaking is an area that I could work on. I tend to get nervous when asked to present to a large group of people. In small team meetings, I’m the first one to stand up and present. But put me in front of a big group and I can get flustered.

I actually spoke to my manager about this and we set it as one of my development goals for this year. I took an internal presentation skills class and attended some meetings of Toastmasters, a networking group for people who want to practice public speaking. With some practice, I started to feel more comfortable. Last month, I even volunteered to represent our team at a division-wide town hall. I only had to present for 10 minutes, but I did it and got great feedback! It was actually kind of fun, so I plan on continuing to seek out opportunities to improve in this area.”

Why this kind of answer works well:

Fear of public speaking is a common fear. In this sample answer, the candidate makes it clear that she has no trouble communicating in general (which could be a red flag). It’s just getting up in front of a big group that scares her. She goes on to describe how she identified the weakness, spoke with her manager about it, and then took proactive steps to improve. She even has a little triumph at the end.

Practice!

Exercise 1. Based on the information you learned in this unit, write down a little essay and name it «My Weaknesses» and prepare to discuss them with a potential employer.

Exercise 2. In the above article, some phrases are underlined. Study their meaning and pay attention to the use of prepositions and articles in these phrases. Compose sentences with each phrase.

Exercise 3. Translate into English:

Вчимося правильно представляти себе роботодавцю

Як же оманливе-привабливо звучить слово «со-співбесіди». Наче два рівноправних гравця ринку праці мило розмовляють на рівних, згласовивая умови свого со-ництва. Так, формально обидві сторони співбесіди рівноправні і рівнозначні, але тільки на перший погляд.

Позбавтеся від ілюзій

Якщо ви не є супервостребованим професіоналом, якого жадають побачити в своєму штаті корпорації, і за мізками якого полюють хедхантери (а ви ним не є, інакше питання «як знайти роботу»Просто не виникало б), ви один з безлічі кандидатів на одне тепле місце. Вибирати будуть вас, а не ви, і з великою часткою ймовірності, вас таки не виберуть. Назвемо речі своїми іменами, ви – товар на ринку праці. Причому не самий дефіцитний. Це були погані новини, тепер хороші. По-перше, тверезий погляд на речі і відсутність ілюзій – найважливіша складова

успіху. По-друге, людство за століття свого існування виробило величезний досвід продажу товару. Чому б не скористатися цим досвідом? Давайте розберемося, як виглядає пристрій на роботу з точки зору маркетингу. Отже, продаємо себе.

Вчимося самопродаж

Що робить товар добре продавався? Якість? Далеко не в першу чергу, тим більше що оцінити якість товару в момент покупки вдається далеко не завжди. Коли ми купуємо товар, ми дивимося на упаковку, читаємо анотацію, склад і т.д., реагуємо на рекламу і рекомендації. Звичайно, якість товару теж важливо, проте навіть найякісніший товар в непоказною упаковці і не розкручений рекламою. Упаковка в нашому випадку – наш зовнішній вигляд, анотація – резюме, дипломи та сертифікати, а реклама – рекомендації та відгуки минулих роботодавців, ну і звичайно те, що ми повідомимо про себе на співбесіді. Розглянемо ці складові. **ЗОВНІШНІ ДАНІ** Чим привабливіший зовнішні параметри здобувачки вакансії, тим вище її шанси на отримання бажаної посади. Про цей факт не прийнято говорити відкрито, але провідні консультанти рекрутингових агентств і співробітники кадрових відділів не заперечую першочерговість і важливість привабливості потенційного співробітника. Але і тим, кому не пощастило обзавестися зовнішністю топ-моделі, засмучуватися не варто, оскільки є можливість сподобатися навіть самому зайнятому і суворому чоловікові-керуючому. Для цього достатньо мати чарівністю, досвідом роботи, правильно побудувати діалог і мати відчуття власної гідності. Ну а про решту тонкощах того, як влаштуватися на роботу, ми поговоримо нижче.

Грамотне резюме

Саме воно здатне провести попередню рекламну кампанію вашої особистості, і допущені в ньому помилки прирівняти до ваших персональних недоліків. Тому для складання грамотного резюме краще скористатися комп'ютерною програмою, що підкреслює граматичні та стилістичні огріхи, або і зовсім замовити потрібний варіант в Інтернеті. Чітко визначитися з тим, на яку саме роботу ви хочете влаштуватися, уточніть бажану посаду і відповідні навички. Скажімо прямо: рідкісний роботодавець любить, коли здобувачі вакансій розкидають свої резюме на всі вільні посади.

Unit 10. Interview Question: What Gets You Up in the Morning?

- In this unit:**
- Learn how to answer the question
 - Mistakes you should avoid
 - Examples of answers to the question: “What gets you up in the morning?”
 - Practice section

How to Answer the Question “What Gets You Up in the Morning?”

“What gets you up in the morning?” is a rather common interview question. Interviewers usually ask it to get a handle on what motivates you and gets you going. The interviewer wants to learn more about you as a person; they are also angling to discover what you value in life. While it is okay to talk about what motivates you in general (for example, your kids or your family) you should aim to tie your motivation to some aspect of your career or work field. Here are some things to keep in mind when preparing your answer.

- Be detailed and give specific examples:** Talk about your skills and background when answering. Back everything up with examples from your studies, work experience, and other activities that are relevant to the requirements of the job.
- Be honest:** Interviewers genuinely want to know as much as possible about the candidate in front of them, and what that person might be like to work with on a daily basis. So when thinking of an honest answer, give some serious thought to what gets you up in morning.
- Think about what motivates you personally and professionally:** Don't be afraid to talk about big goals when answering. If you want to be in a director position down the road in your career (and you're getting up every day, and taking steps to make that move happen) note that.
- Explain how your motivation shaped your career path:** Once you've described your career goal and briefly outlined your plan for getting there, connect your answer back to the job you're interviewing for. Make sure you demonstrate that you've really thought about the position and how it will fit into your life and career trajectory. For example, let's say you want to work in education, and you've done a lot of education-related volunteer work during your four years in college. You can explain how that volunteer work was a driver for your career decision. By telling the employer about your future goals and why you're inspired by them, you'll demonstrate to the employer that you're being proactive by thinking far in advance about your career.

Mistakes You Should Avoid

With such an open-ended question, it's easy to get lost in the process of answering. It doesn't have to be scary! Here's how you can stay on track:

Use personal examples, but not too personal

Your interviewer wants to hear about how your desire to help others leads you volunteer in animal shelters, not that you get out of bed looking forward to playing beer pong at the end of the work week.

Don't waste the interviewer's time

There is no need talking about how you love the industry or how great the work environment is. Use your answer to strengthen your specific qualifications.

Avoid vague statements

Avoid vague, brief statements, such as “My love of finance.” Just saying that you love a particular industry is not an effective answer. Instead, explain why you love finance, and talk about the elements of the job that really excite you. Give specific examples. Talk about why you love the industry and explain all the aspects of the job that make you excited.

Don’t use timid or uncertain language

Express your enthusiasm for the job by being descriptive and positive.

Don’t state your motivations for wanting this particular job

This isn’t about why you’re interested in this job in particular—that’s an entirely different question.

Practice!

Exercise 1. Retell the above information using the phrases from the above article:

get a handle on; angling to discover what you value; aim to tie your motivation to; some things to keep in mind; be detailed and give specific examples; back everything up with examples; relevant to the job requirements; talk about big goals; motivation has shaped your career path; thinking far in advance about your career; mistakes to avoid; use personal examples, but not too personal; do not waste time; avoid vague statements; be descriptive and positive

Exercise 2. Prepare to write down your answer to the question. The following list of tips will serve as a checklist for you when you craft your answer. Write it down and prepare to present and defend your answer in a dialogue with your group-mates.

Your checklist to follow:

- Think about what motivates you personally and professionally.
- Don’t be afraid to share about career goals – this is a great way to show them that you’re motivated to succeed.
- Spend time focusing on what motivates you through life in general – a desire to help others, giving back to your community, etc.
- Explain why these values are important to you, how you plan to work them into your career, or how they have shaped your career path.
- Mention specific tasks you’re good at and how the positive feelings you receive from doing them motivate you throughout the entire day.
- Be detailed! Show off your strengths and background. Use examples from your work or education experiences that relate to the skills required for the job.

- Stick to talking about motivators that highlight your specific qualifications. Be sure to mention how they add to your success.

Exercise 3. Look at the words listed below. How many words with the same root do you know? Make up a list for every word. Which of the lists is the longest?

handle, aim, field, volunteer, decision, scary, desire, success.

Unit 11. Interview Question: What Can You Offer Us That Someone Else Can Not?

- In this unit:**
- **How to answer the question: What can you offer us that someone else can not?**
 - **Practice section**
 - **Mistakes you should avoid**
 - **Useful tips: structure your answer smartly**
 - **How to answer the question**
 - **Study some sample answer**

How to Answer the Question:

“What Can You Offer Us That Someone Else Can Not?”

(1) Giving an honest answer to this question will go a long way with the hiring manager. When you answer this question, you want to highlight skills and characteristics that will help you succeed at this position and company.

Points to Emphasize

- | | |
|--|--|
| • Point out positive attributes like you're a hard worker and persistent. | • This will show the interviewer that you are confident. |
| • Talk about ways you can learn more and grow as an employee. | • This will show the hiring manager that you are humble and desire to achieve more. |
| • Thinking about a list of skills prior to the interview will help you give the answer in a creative way. | • This will show the interviewer that you prepared for the interview. |
| • Make sure to point out skills and characteristics that are in line with the position you are applying for. | • This will show the interviewer that you are interested in this particular job and understand the employment process. |

(2) There are three main things an interviewer is trying to learn with this question. They want to see how confident you are; they're testing your humility; and they're gauging how much you prepared for the interview.

(3) The interviewer isn't looking for a long-winded answer, because chances are many of the candidates they've already interviewed have a skill set and background that's comparable to yours. This question offers you a chance

to highlight a unique part of your background, one that sets you apart from the competition.

(4) In order to hit a home run with answering this question, you have to strike a balance between confidence, humility, and preparedness to stand out.

(5) Think about what pieces of your background may be a little different from those you are interviewing against. Do you have work experience in a different but related industry? Or, do you have experience in another department within this industry? When you point out these strengths, ensure that they're qualities that will add to the role you're interviewing for.

(6) Make sure to point out skills and characteristics that are in line with the position you are applying for. For example, if you are applying for a project management role, be sure to highlight your project management expertise, and any project management certifications you hold.

(7) Point out positive attributes that will be highly valued in this role. For example, if you're interviewing for a customer-facing role, and you love interacting with the public, talk about this.

Practice!

Exercise 1. In the above article, all paragraphs are numbered. Think of the main thought delivered by each paragraph and write down one keyword for each paragraph that describes its main thought. Exchange your results with your group-mates and discuss them to choose the best keyword for each paragraph.

Exercise 2. What are the meanings of the phrases in the box below? Find synonyms to these words and make up sentences with every word in the box.

go a long way; highlight; point out; positive attributes; a long-winded answer; sets you apart from; a home run; strike a balance; stand out; be in line with; highly valued
--

Exercise 3. Think about three qualities that you could share with hiring managers at the interview when answering the question "What can you offer us that someone else cannot?" Write down your sample answer to this question. Read your answers to each other in classroom and exchange ideas about improving your sample answers.

Unit 12. Interview Question: What Were Your Bosses' (Supervisor's/Tutor's) Strengths and Weaknesses?

- In this unit:**
- **What were your bosses' strengths and weaknesses?**
 - **Tips for your answer**
 - **Mistakes you should avoid**
 - **A few sample answers to study**
 - **Practice section**

What Were Your Bosses' (Supervisor's/Tutor's) Strengths and Weaknesses?

If you hear this question, it is a sign that you are being considered seriously, because asking you to evaluate your past supervisor is a way of checking on several important character traits at once. It simultaneously tests your loyalty and your honesty by checking to see how you will approach the issue, and it also allows the interviewer to determine how objective and evidence-based your judgment is, which is a way of checking your temperament as a decision-maker.

No doubt, this is a very thorny question – and your interviewer knows this. It is unlikely they care very much about what your boss's weaknesses are – although they will be interested in seeing how you define weakness. But, as with many of the toughest questions, they are primarily interested in how you react to the question.

Tips for Your Answer

It would be a mistake to say that your boss has no weaknesses; it'll ring hollow. However, it would also be a mistake to level too much criticism at your boss – because you won't come across as being a very loyal employee, because it has no relevance to your ability to do the job for which you are applying and because it is quite simply unprofessional. To answer the question in a satisfying way, talk about a weakness that is not really a weakness – but make it sound convincing! Consider the following ideas.

- Keep things positive by highlighting the weaknesses in neutral language, with suggested alternatives that would enhance their leadership.
- Focus on the professional, and make sure that each critique has to do with their performance within the job.
- Approach this as a way of showing what you think your boss modeled well and where your personal philosophy differs, so that the interviewer sees that you are aware of the options in other leadership styles.
- Try to show how your suggested improvements show how things could be done better without emphasizing negative aspects of the current process.

Mistakes You Should Avoid

As with any question that asks you to provide criticism, it is easy to go too far with this one. It's also easy to avoid going far enough.

- Never launch an attack on your previous boss. Make sure you answer the strengths part of the question, no matter how you might feel personally.
- Similarly, you want to avoid making any evaluations based on personal habits or quirks that don't affect the job.
- Overly positive answers are also trouble, because they neglect to show what you learned in a way that highlights your readiness to move up.
- Don't let yourself slip into informality. Informal language can sound disrespectful even when it isn't meant that way.
- You needn't lie about your previous supervisors. Be truthful but remain positive. Frame your answer so that you shine a light on your professionalism and the insight you developed about the circumstances. The same holds true for the company – if you hated working at a company, keep that information to yourself.
- If you think about it, there are always at least two sides to every story. First, realize that nearly all employees have had some kind of difference of opinion with their manager, which is a normal part of a relationship, on the job or off. Thus, it is totally reasonable to talk about the situation.
- Convey what you learned and how the problem was resolved. In fact, dissenting opinions can be positive in that they lead to brainstorming and new ideas and solutions that advance the company. Perhaps you could explain how a difference in opinion led to some sort of improvement.

A Few Sample Answers to Study

<p>(1) "I didn't see eye to eye with my last boss and that led to a breakdown in communication. However, now I realize this was also due to my lack of experience in the industry and I worried that asking questions would be perceived as weak and indicate that I was unable to do the job. Now I've learned to ask questions immediately if I need further explanation and that it demonstrates my initiative and dedication to getting the job done right."</p>	<p>(2) "At my last job, the supervisor was great at communicating about the work process and timing, but conflict resolution was a bit of a problem. If two departments went head-to-head over the same resources, he rarely intervened to settle the issue, so the process could be a bit drawn out. It gave individual workers a bit more chance to be heard, but I'm not sure I'd let things go that long if it was me, but I would certainly make sure I heard everyone before speaking up. "</p>
<p>(3) "My former boss was very detail-oriented, to the point where he would step in and help me with every little project. While I found it</p>	<p>(4) "What I think is my bosses strength is his ability to handle pressure. His ability to lead our team even in the worst situations would be</p>

<p><i>bothersome, I eventually realized that it was a strength and began to learn from it. Since my attitude shift, I've discovered that I'm much more like him in my ability to focus on the small details that often slip through the cracks."</i></p>	<p><i>his strength Basically my boss is only as weak as the team around him. Some times we're not all on the same page, but most of the time we are, he has the ability to guide us in the right direction."</i></p>
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(5) "I'd naturally be wary of criticizing my boss because I don't think it's very professional. However, everyone has their weaknesses of course. My boss wouldn't be in the role they're in if their strengths didn't significantly outweigh their weaknesses. If I had to cite a weakness I would say it's that they tend to bite off more than they can chew. I don't know if it's necessarily a weakness to be overly ambitious but, as a result, they do often seem excessively busy and overworked and, inevitably, certain items slip through the net. However, the net result is probably that they get a lot more accomplished than the average person."

Practice!

Exercise 1. Read the above samples of the answer to the interview question about strengths and weaknesses of your previous boss. Discuss the strong sides of these answers with your group-mates. Develop a sample answer for yourself. Present it to your group-mates and answer their questions to defend your version of the sample answer.

Exercise 2. Study the underlined words and phrases in the paragraph 'Mistakes You Should Avoid'. Make sure you understand what they mean in this particular context. Compose sentences with each of these words/phrases.

Exercise 3. Look at the five sample answers to the question 'What were your bosses' strengths and weaknesses?', which are provided above. How do you understand the following phrases used by the job candidates? Re-phrase them in your own words.

- a) I didn't see eye to eye with my last boss*
- b) this was also due to my lack of experience in the industry*
- c) asking questions would be perceived as weak*
- d) If two departments went head-to-head over the same resources, he rarely intervened to settle the issue*
- e) I'm not sure I'd let things go that long if it was me*
- f) Since my attitude shift, I've discovered that I'm much more like him*
- g) my boss is only as weak as the team around him*
- h) Some times we're not all on the same page*
- i) they tend to bite off more than they can chew*
- j) they do often seem excessively busy and overworked and, inevitably, certain items slip through the net*

Exercise 4. Based on what you learned from this unit, write down your own answer to the question ‘What were your bosses’ (teacher’s / tutor’s) strengths and weaknesses?’

Unit 13. Discuss Your Resume

- In this unit:**
- **Learn how to discuss your resume at the job interview**
 - **How to nail the ‘walk me through your resume’ interview question**
 - **What not to do when answering this question**
 - **How to structure your answer**
 - **Sample answers**
 - **Practice section**

Discuss Your Resume at the Job Interview

(1) It is common for prospective employers to ask candidates to walk them through their resume at the beginning of an interview. Knowing how to do this and the mistakes to avoid can make the difference between creating the right first impression and the wrong one.

(2) When employers ask "Can you walk me through your resume?" they want to learn more about you and your experiences than a one-page resume can provide. They're assessing who you are as a person and whether you will be a good fit with the company's corporate culture.

(3) They also want to know whether you can present a comprehensive, yet focused response. This skill is important in most professions. Your interviewer is looking to see whether you know what information is essential to communicate, and what is irrelevant.

(4) You should give an in-depth response to this question lasting approximately two minutes. This is your opportunity to highlight the parts of your resume you believe deserve attention and give more information about these points.

(5) Briefly mention where you grew up and your education. Telling your interviewer why you chose your last educational institution (university, community college, or high school) and your major, if appropriate, will add some context to your resume. Make sure to mention internships and clubs that gave you leadership or industry experience during that time.

(6) Unless you are taking an entry-level job, next mention your job history. If your job history is long, the two most recent positions should suffice. If these are in the same industry, note any experiences or responsibilities you believe will help you in this role. If you are transitioning from a different industry, you may mention why your experiences there led you to decide on a career change.

(7) Since this question is commonly asked, it is a good idea to plan your response before the interview. This will give you an idea of how long your

answer is, and whether you need to add information or eliminate any unnecessary details.

(8) Memorizing your response can help your performance in the interview, but make sure you don't sound as if you're simply reading a script when delivering your answer.

(9) While it's important to give an in-depth answer to this question, you shouldn't bombard your interviewer with too much information. This will make your walk-through seem unfocused and may make the interviewer doubt your ability to communicate succinctly to customers or clients.

(10) On the other hand, don't make the mistake of skimming on the details. This should be a walk-through of your resume, not a run-through. Not giving enough detail will make your answer seem superficial.

(11) Finally, be unprepared at your peril. You should have an intimate knowledge of your resume and your answer. You will not make the impression you want if you need to peer over at this document while answering the question. Interviewers will commonly ask you to walk them through your resume, so there's no excuse for not being prepared. Knowing what to include in your response and what mistakes to avoid should help you answer with confidence.

How to Nail the ‘Walk Me Through Your Resume’ Interview Question

By Dan Butcher

There are various ways to tackle such an open-ended interview question. Here are a few tips to inform the approach you should take.

Clarify what the interviewer is looking for.

It's OK to ask a question to clarify exactly what the interviewer wants to hear. For example: “What part of my background is most interesting to you, and how much time would you like me to spend answering the question?”

Don't feel like you have to mention every job you've ever had.

This can be a difficult interview prompt because it's hard to answer succinctly, and the interviewee risks giving a very long or rambling answer that might take up too much time covering the rationale behind each move. Keep in mind that while it may be awkward for an interviewer to stop you mid-answer, it's easier for them to ask follow-up questions if you don't cover everything, suggests Janet Raiffa, a former vice president and head of campus recruiting at Goldman Sachs and a career adviser formerly with Columbia Business School.

“I recommend starting with something that may not be the very earliest chronological item if a career has been very long or early experience isn't relevant to the current job,” Raiffa says. “You can say ‘I'd like to start from this point,’ and it's unlikely that the interviewer will demand you go back further.”

Emphasize career highlights that illustrate what you'll add to the firm.

The question is really “why should I hire you?” – it is not requesting a literal retelling of your resume, says Caroline Ceniza-Levine, a career coach

and co-founder of SixFigureStart. While you want to walk the interviewer through your accomplishments, don't aim to summarize each role you've had.

"You need to highlight your specific skills, expertise and accomplishments that fit this job, Ceniza Levine says. "In the case of finance, this means to focus on financial analysis, knowledge of the markets, modeling, especially for M&A and corporate finance, exhaustive research, client service and sales experience, quick math and decision-making, especially for trading, and attention to detail, especially for back- and middle-office roles."

You want to focus on a few key highlights of each job and what you've accomplished and learned. Be ready to talk about representative projects or what you were proudest of at each job.

"It's important that there are illustrations of success and answers to the implicit question of 'why should I hire you?' based upon the job," Raiffa says. "If you were tapped by a previous employer for a move or part of a group that moved from one firm to another, that's important to mention, as it reinforces your performance or esteem within a group.

"To make a potentially long answer more cohesive, it can be useful to establish a through-line such as 'As you can see from my resume, I've had several jobs to date in finance, and they've all been connected in allowing me to further my passion for helping companies to X, and building my skills in Y.'"

Demonstrate that you understand the firm's culture and explain why you'll be a good fit.

You also want to show that you fit the culture of the workplace, which in finance means sharing examples of working in high-pressure, tight-deadline environments with demanding people who have exacting standards, Ceniza-Levine says. You need to craft a custom response for each individual firm and each particular role that you apply for.

"The best 'walk me through your resume' answer is authentic to you, meaning that you have tangible and compelling examples unique to your true skills and experience, and also 100% relevant to the employer," she says.

"So if you're going for jobs within different areas of banking, you should have different 'walk me through your resume' answers – you tailor the answer to each type of employer."

Don't fear bragging about yourself.

Talking about yourself is expected in an interview, and if you're not displaying a good amount of confidence, then you run a risk of not getting a job.

"Tell Me About Yourself" Interview Question: What Not to Do

- **(1)** In answering the "Tell me about yourself" interview question, there are a few important tips about what to avoid. If you are not prepared, there is a risk that your answer will become rambling and incoherent. This may undermine your chance at the position. Here are a few things to remember when you begin building a script for your response:

- **(2)** Avoid mentioning personal information such as marital status, children, political or religious affiliations, etc. These can be highly sensitive topics that might work against you as a candidate, not to mention such details should not be factors for the employer in determining your ability to perform the job.

- **(3)** Don't list multiple, vague strengths without supporting examples. Instead, you may want to choose two or three qualities about yourself. Support each with short, polished stories that can be supported by your work experience.

- **(4)** Don't summarize your resume word for word. Instead, discuss high points that are relevant to the position.

- **(5)** Don't rush into conversations regarding what you're looking for in the role or how the company can benefit you—save such topics for the final stages of the interview process when they are “sold” on you as a candidate and you have more leverage.

How to Structure Your Answer to the “Tell Me About Yourself” Question

- **(1)** How you respond to the “Tell me about yourself” question can set the tone for the rest of the interview. Overall, when you practice your answer, you want to tell a great story about yourself that you can share in no more than two minutes. In your response, do the following:

- **(2)** Mention past experiences and proven successes as they specifically relate to the position. Begin by rereading the job description. Take note of the required skills that you have, and identify recent stories that demonstrate them (review the STAR method to practice telling great stories in your interviews). Ideally, you should draw primarily from recent professional experience; however, volunteer work can also support your narrative while demonstrating a commitment to your community.

- **(3)** Consider how your current job relates to the job you're applying for. Is it a more senior role? If so, explain how you are taking on more responsibilities in your current position. If you are making a lateral transition to a role with different skills, describe how your current skills translate into the new position.

- **(4)** Focus on strengths and abilities that you can support with examples. When you start building the script of each example, focus on details and outcomes that you can quantify if possible. For example, stating that you “improved customer service” is less impactful than “increased customer service response rates each quarter by 10–15%.” If you don't have the exact information, estimate a realistic value.

- **(5)** Highlight a bit of your personality to break the ice. Because the “Tell me about yourself” interview question is about getting to know you, it's a good idea to share your personality with your interviewer—but not personal details. You may want to briefly mention hobbies that demonstrate intellectual

development and/or community engagement (e.g., reading, music, sports league, volunteering) or those that showcase personal discipline and achievement (e.g., learning a new skill, training for a half marathon). Discussing personal interests is a good way to wrap up your response while maintaining a professional tone.

Brainstorming the “Tell Me About Yourself” Question

Sometimes—even knowing that you should avoid addressing personal information and that your response to “Tell me about yourself” or similar open-ended questions need to be carefully planned—it can be hard to get started. To keep you on track, here are a few questions to ask as you brainstorm ways to respond and structure your answer:

What qualities make you a great fit for this position? Think of what makes you stand out as a job applicant for this role. Perhaps it’s your years of experience or some highly desired specialization, training or technical skills. Review the job description closely and note ways that you exceed the requirements.

Why are you interested in the role? Brainstorm why this position excites you, how it fits into your larger career goals and why you feel it’s the best next step.

Why are you interested in the company or the industry? After you’ve spent time researching the company and the industry, you should have a better sense of the mission, goals and trends impacting the industry. Do these align with the professional goals that you’ve set for yourself? What do you like and respect about the company as a whole? What excites you about the future of the industry? As you start building your story, tie together similarities among your professional goals, the future vision of the company and industry trends you feel are especially important.

With all the above in mind, ask yourself, What is a positive trait or characteristic that I’ve had for a long time that will serve me well in this role? For example, have friends or colleagues described you as especially organized? Curious? Entrepreneurial? Generous? Think about how you’ve long thought of yourself or how others have seen you. Then, think of recent examples from your life when you embodied that characteristic.

Practice!

Exercise 1. Read through the article ‘Discuss Your Resume at the Job Interview’. In it, all paragraphs are numbered. Write down a keyword for every paragraph. Then, close your book and retell the article by memory, using the keywords as a plan for your little essay.

Exercise 2. In the article ‘How to Nail the ‘Walk Me Through Your Resume’ Interview Question’ some words are underlined. What are their meanings in the particular context? To memorize them, make up your own sentences with each of the underlined words.

Exercise 3. Read the article “Tell Me About Yourself” Interview Question: What Not to Do’ and retell it in not more than five sentences (you can only compose one sentence for each paragraph). Then, present your little essays to each other in the classroom. Edit your compositions so that they have all relevant information, but the least number of words. The shortest, yet the most informative composition will be the winner.

Exercise 4. In the article ‘How to Structure Your Answer to the “Tell Me About Yourself” Question’ underline the main idea for each paragraph by writing it down in one phrase, and this phrase can not be longer than three words. Try to accomplish this task in five minutes. When the time is over, exchange your results with your group-mates. Decide, whose answer is the shortest and the most precise.

Exercise 5. Write down a synonym to each of the underlined words from the article ‘Brainstorming the “Tell Me About Yourself” Question’.

Exercise 6. Study the sample answers listed below. What are the strong and the weak sides of each answer? Discuss your thoughts with your group mates.

Sample Answers

Sometimes seeing an example can be helpful, though each person’s “Tell me about yourself” answer will be different. Below is a short script showing how this question can highlight someone’s strengths supported by successful results in just under two minutes:

(1) “I began my career in retail management, but a few years ago, I was drawn to the healthcare space. I’ve always been skilled at bringing people together and working towards common goals. My experience successfully leading teams and managing stores led me to consider administration, and I’ve been building a career as a driven health administrator for the last four years.

In my current role at XYZ Medical Center, the efficiency of the office has been a personal focus—especially as it relates to patient outcomes. I set and oversee goals related to department budget and patient volume. Last year, I worked with our IT department to implement a communication system for scheduling procedures and protocols to ensure that all departments were adequately staffed at all times. With our new online scheduling portal, we increased communication efficiency by 20%. To stay informed about their ongoing concerns, I hold regular meetings with physicians, nurses and other healthcare staff. In my role, I also manage marketing and advertising efforts on behalf of the Center. I’ve been really enjoying that part of my work and I’m especially interested in bringing the experience I’ve gained as well as my commitment to efficiency to the team at ABC Health. Outside of the office, I’m an avid reader and I love to hike. On weekends, you might find me at the local bookstore or exploring hiking trails in the area.”

Fundamentally, “Tell me about yourself” really boils down to “What do you want the interviewer to remember about you?” Answering this opening question effectively gives you the power to make a good first impression and structure the rest of the interview to your benefit.

Here is an example of what to say in an open-ended discussion of your resume.

(2) *“There are three parts of my resume that make me feel I’m a good candidate for this job. First, in the part where I discuss how I used an online portal to double the sales, I wasn’t sure that the new technique would work. So I researched other companies that were doing something similar, found out the potential risks and rewards, and decided it was worth the try. If this is something your company would like to consider, I think I could be successful with you as well.”*

Remember to choose the best points, iterate the resume entry, and then drive the idea home with a good story.

Here is another example of a good answer:

(3) *“After graduating from high school in Basking Ridge, NJ, I decided to attend the University of Notre Dame. I chose Notre Dame because of the school’s strong academics and strong athletics. Having lettered in three sports in high school all four years, I wanted a school where students pack the stadiums but also take academics seriously. Notre Dame was the perfect choice for me.*

At Notre Dame, I majored in finance and was actively involved in student government as a Class Council Rep and as a Senator. I chose finance because I knew that it would lead me to a career that was both quantitative in nature and involved significant interaction with people. During my college summers, I decided to enter the corporate world at the end of my freshman year and started my career at General Electric.

The next summer I worked at Goldman Sachs and the following summer at Merrill Lynch. Such experience was invaluable because it singlehandedly shaped what I want to do with my future career. Having been a summer Analyst both at Goldman and Merrill, I know for certain that investment banking is the right career path for me and I’d very much like to work for [insert company name].”

Exercise 7. Using the above examples, write down your own answer. Prepare to present your resume in front of your group. Be ready to answer their questions, as if they were interviewers at a job interview.

Unit 14. Interview Question: Discuss Your Educational Background

- In this unit:**
- **Types of interview questions about your education**
 - **How to discuss your educational background at a job interview**
 - **Tips for answering questions about your education**
 - **Sample answers**
 - **Practice section**

Types of Interview Questions About Your Education

There are a number of types of interview questions an employer might ask about your education. First, he or she might ask a question about how your major or minor, or your coursework, relates to the job you are applying for.

You also might get questions about why you selected particular courses or majors, or even why you chose the college you went to. Some employers might ask you to describe a particular class project or assignment that relates to the job. These kinds of questions are most common if you are a recent graduate, because your memory of your coursework is still fresh.

You might also be asked a question about your grades or your GPA. For example, an employer might ask if they think that your GPA or grades could reflect your ability to do the job.

Finally, a hiring manager may ask a question about why your educational background does not fit the requirements of the job. For example, if a master's degree is recommended for the job and you do not have one, an employer might ask you to explain why you have not pursued a master's degree, or how your lack of a master's might impact your ability to do the job.

Below is a list of interview questions hiring managers may ask about your educational background:

- Tell me about your educational background.
- How has your education prepared you for this job?
- How has your education prepared you for your career?
- Why did you choose your college?
- What other schools did you consider attending?
- Why did you choose your major?
- Who helped you decide which college to attend?
- What extracurricular activities did you participate in?
- Do you have any long-term education goals?
- What skills have you learned in college that apply to your career?
- Tell me about how a particular course or course project helped you succeed in a project with an employer.
- Do your grades reflect your potential?

- Why have you not opted to pursue a master's degree?
- Do you have any regrets about the way you spent your time during college?
- Your major doesn't relate at all to this job. Do you still think your coursework has helped prepare you for this job?
- Why did you not complete your college degree?

How to Discuss Your Educational Background at a Job Interview

This question is usually asked near the beginning of the interview, it intends to clear up more about your qualifications. This is a seemingly easy question, but you should not underestimate the importance of scoring points during this topic. This is particularly important for applicants whose actual job experience is fewer than five years. The experienced candidates should also be prepared to talk about their educational background, questions about it may come up at any point of the interview.

Points to Emphasize

When you discuss your educational experience, be sure to tie general topics you mastered at the University with the specific requirements of the job you are seeking.

- If you have work experience, tell a story of how a particular course helped you succeed in a project with a previous employer.
- Choose a particular skill that you believe will be important in the job you seek, and speak about specific coursework that trained you with this skill.
- Be positive and express how you look forward to finding out how your academic skills can help solve real-world problems in the company.

Mistakes You Should Avoid

Just because this may be the easiest part of the interview, don't underestimate the opportunity to sell yourself. More importantly, don't let this part of the discussion be boring to the hiring manager.

- Don't repeat what is in the resume that is likely sitting in front of the hiring manager.
- Don't be modest.
- Be sure not to assume that the interviewer can tell from your resume or a brief summary of your education that he or she is now ready to make an informed decision. The interviewer is not the salesperson, you are.
- If you yourself don't feel your education is a good match for the job, be sure to prepare until you do.
- Remember that hiring managers already have a general idea of your education from your resume. That is one of the reasons why they setup the interview in the first place. Consider this a chance to add a few zingers to spice up the message in your resume.

Tips for Answering Questions About Your Education

- **(1) Connect your education to the job.** Whatever the specific question, be sure to connect your educational background to the job. Before your interview, make a list of the skills and experiences required for the job, and then think about courses you took and projects you completed that helped you develop those skills.

- **(2) Call out specific courses that relate to the position.** Let's say you're applying for a marketing position but you have a degree in English. It may look like they don't directly relate, but this is where you call out courses that do relate to the position you're interviewing for. For example, perhaps you took an editing class. This is a benefit since you'll be able to edit press releases, blogs, marketing campaigns, and other materials that need to be perfectly edited.

- **(3) Consider extracurricular activities.** You don't only have to include examples from coursework. Think about extracurricular activities at school that helped you develop certain skills or abilities necessary for the job.

- **(4) Consider transferable skills.** If you majored in a topic that is unrelated to the job, try to think of transferable skills you developed in your courses that apply to the job. For example, perhaps you majored in English but are applying for a job in consulting. Talk about how all of your essay assignments helped you develop communication skills, which are required for working with clients.

- **(5) Go beyond the resume.** The hiring manager likely knows what school you went to and what degree you received, since this information will be in the education section of your resume. When answering questions about your education, don't just repeat what is on your resume. Mention a unique course or experience that shows how your educational background has prepared you for the job.

- **(6) Don't be modest.** Now is not the time to downplay your academic achievements. Don't be afraid to mention an award you won, or an "A" you received on a project.

- **(7) Don't lie.** If your grades were not good, or you did not complete your degree, don't lie to the employer. He or she will easily be able to find out if you are lying. However, you can answer a question about your education honestly while still demonstrating why you are a good fit for the job. For example, if you did not complete your degree, you might emphasize the skills you did develop while in coursework, and then highlight the work experience you gained when you left school.

- **(8) Be specific.** Since your education is most likely outlined in your resume, the person interviewing you needs more information about it. They want to hear things like how you graduated early, if you were in the top of your class, were able to balance work and school at the same time, managed to find a solution to a problem, etc. Most people have some level of education to discuss, so make yours stand out.

• **(9) Mention any additional training.** Your education level isn't simply about degrees and courses from an accredited college or university. This also includes any training, conferences you attended, or seminars, whether you took one online or in person. Take note of any kind of additional training, and mention the most relative ones in the interview.

• **(10) Talk about your future education goals.** If you're interested in continuing your education or finishing a degree you once started, discuss these plans in your interview. Employers enjoy knowing that potential employees want to better themselves. Just ensure them that your work won't be sacrificed because of it. A way you can do this is by telling them you'll be taking online college courses.

• **(11) Let the positives outweigh the negatives.** If you don't have your degree, don't emphasize it in a negative way. Mention that although you haven't graduated yet, it's because of how dedicated you've been to your career. If you will be earning a degree soon, talk about that. Discuss your experience, knowledge, passion, and education, and reflect why you're still a great candidate even if you don't have a completed degree.

• **(12) Be proud of what you've accomplished.** You've made it to the interview for a reason, so be confident in knowing that they saw something in you. Show pride in what you've completed in your career so far, and get excited for the possibility of a new career.

Example Answers

Let us look at a few examples of answers.

(1) *"As a college student learning software, I read that cutting edge companies had begun to use object-oriented programming (OOP). I added an OOP class, and it really improved the reliability of my code. I saw that OOP was an optional requirement for this position, and I think it will give me the opportunity to offer something extra in this job."*

(2) *"The job description noted that there are certain educational requirements— and the rest of the posting indicated the position necessitates excellent time management and communication skills. My educational background includes my high school diploma and some time in college— where I studied business management. I completed three terms of higher education— and in that time— I honed my communication and time management skills in classes such as marketing and English. The knowledge I gained in these and other courses would be directly beneficial to this position— and I plan to continue developing these skills in both my education and work by taking more classes and pursuing new challenges in the workplace."*

(3) *"My educational experience includes a recently completed college degree— which contributed greatly to my development of skills such as sales and teamwork. I noticed that the job posting listed these as essential skills for the position. The classes I took and projects I completed were for a marketing*

major– and they imparted many of the concepts necessary to understanding good sales techniques. I also often worked to complete presentations with classmates– and this helped me hone my ability to collaborate constructively. My educational background has prepared me well for this position and for a successful career path. I also plan to pursue further coursework in the future in order to keep learning and gain the qualifications to advance in this field.”

(4) “During my time at (School Name), I took many courses that have given me the skill set to be successful in this position. Being a Finance major, I found a passion for financial accounting. Although my coursework was mainly based on financial analysis, I chose accounting as one of my upper division electives. This course pushed me out of my comfort zone as most of my classmates were majoring in accounting. Since entering the finance industry, I feel I have used a majority of what I learned in that class. Since I have noticed that your finance department works directly with the staff accountants, I feel this would benefit your company greatly.”

(5) “I have a bachelor’s and am working on my master’s in finance. As an undergraduate, I minored in Art History. That minor has given me a better understanding of the art business.”

(6) “I graduated with my Bachelor of Science in 2007 from University XYZ. I received a variety of scholarships due to strong grades. I was on the Dean's list and graduated top of my class. This experience taught me pure dedication and how to manage deadlines.”

(7) “I received my Master's in Computer Engineering and Computer Science. Before that, my undergraduate degree was also in Computer Science. This education helped further form my analytical mind. My analytical way of thinking is well suited to a management role where I oversee technicians and engineers.”

(8) “I earned my degree in economics from the liberal arts college at my state university. So while my degree exposed me to the business side of the world, the rest of my education was in the humanities. I feel as though I've leveraged both sides of my education in my career. I certainly learned things outside of the classroom including time management, how to work cooperatively in a group, and how to be intrinsically motivated. I truly think I use these skills on a daily basis, so I'm especially grateful for my education.”

(9) “I have my associates degree in fashion merchandising and my bachelors in communications. I received a scholarship for my excellent grades and worked full time throughout college. Fashion merchandising helps daily in my job, as does my training in communications. Also, I learned time management, avoiding exhaustion during peak times.”

(10) “I have a B.A. in English and Spanish. I graduated with a 4.0 from ABC College. I worked full time while going to school, so I learned a lot of

time management skills and that I work best under some degree of pressure. I know that these skills I learned during college have helped me thus far in my career and I have continued to refine these competencies. I look forward to continuing to learn and grow from new experiences and bring my education and life skills to your company. I think I will be a strong asset to an already seemingly incredible team."

Do not forget to capitalize on this and every opportunity to sell yourself during your interview.

Practice!

Exercise 1. Types of Interview Questions About Your Education

Exercise 2. Read the article ‘How to Discuss Your Educational Background at a Job Interview’. What should you emphasize in your answer and what should you avoid saying? Do you agree with everything you learned from the article? Share your opinion.

Exercise 3. The article Tips for Answering Questions About Your Education provides 12 tips which may help you put together your answer to this interview question. Which of the 12 tips do you find most relevant for yourself? Write down one keyword for each of the 12 tips, then close your book and try to retell the article by only looking at the keywords you have written down.

Exercise 4. Read through the ten example answers to the interview question about the candidates’ education. Make sure you understand the meaning of the underlined words and phrases.

Exercise 5. Based on the information you learned from this unite, write down your own sample answer which you would like to use when you are invited to your first job interview.

Exercise 6. Look at the following examples of the interview answers. Do you find them good enough to be successful? Discuss each of them with your group-mates; think of the ways to improve these answers.

<p><i>Teacher</i> <i>"I have my Bachelor's in Spanish education K-12 as well as a reading endorsement. I graduated from Elmhurst College with honors. I am also looking to head back for my masters in teaching leadership. I value continuous learning and want to ensure that my graduate degree applies to my day to day job."</i></p>	<p><i>Actor</i> <i>"I am formally trained in acting through New York Film Academy where I majored in Musical Theater. Since graduating from NYFA, I have worked in small productions around the city while also taking additional coursework in film."</i></p>
<p><i>Optician</i> <i>"I have my high school diploma and</i></p>	<p><i>Occupational Therapist Assistant</i></p>

<p><i>one year of volunteer experience in our local optical shop. I've learned everything on the job from the lead optician."</i></p>	<p><i>"I earned my Occupational Therapist Assistant Diploma in 2012 and graduated top of my class. While attending school, I completed my practicum with XYZ Sports Therapy."</i></p>
<p><i>Human resources manager</i> <i>I graduated from the Gajahmada University in May 2005. So actually I'm a fresh graduate. To complete my final task, I did a research in Perta Oil Company and then wrote a thesis entitled "The management of human resources to promote work productivity". Based on my grade point average I was chosen as one of the best students from economics faculty.</i></p>	<p><i>Account manager</i> <i>"Several of my capstone courses for my major tied directly into the work I've been doing on the job. For example, my Algorithms class has tied in directly into my current project, as we're seeking to optimize the code for presenting user results. I was able to apply a unique algorithm that greatly increased the user interaction with the results on that particular page. Would you like me to show it to you?"</i></p>
<p><i>Sound Engineering Technician</i> <i>"I have a Bachelor's degree in Engineering from the University of Florida and a Sound Engineering Certificate from the University of Pennsylvania. Based upon these courses of study, I know that these qualifications will undoubtedly help me be highly successful on the job."</i></p>	<p><i>Bank worker</i> <i>"Several of my classes have tied into real world examples for my career. A recent example is with our case study class, where we reviewed a recent case of the merger between a large national bank and a smaller regional bank. With guidance from our professor, I reached out to one of the Vice Presidents at the regional bank to assess the impact of the merger. It provided valuable insight into the financial models used at the time. My final paper ended up winning an award within my department."</i></p>

Exercise 7. Write down your own answer to this question and present it in your group. Listen to the suggestions which your group-mates will make.

Part 3: Working Through Interview Questions

Describing Your Goals



Unit 15. Interview Question: Where do you see yourself in 5 years? 10 years?

- In this unit:**
- How to answer this question?
 - Mistakes you should avoid
 - Example answers
 - Practice section

How To Answer This Question?

Where do you see yourself in five years? This interview question is not designed to test your psychic powers.

No interviewer expects candidates to be able to describe exactly what they will be doing in 1,820 days. In fact, a truthful answer about what you hope to be doing can easily sabotage your odds of landing a job offer. So why do interviewers ask this question?

The interviewer wants to understand more about your career goals and how this position would fit into your grand plan. They care about your career goals because they want to hire someone who is motivated, proactive, and likely to stick around and work hard if hired.

If succeeding in this role is important to you as part of your long-term career strategy, you are much more likely to perform well.

You may also hear one of these similar/related questions that are not quite as clichéd as the old “5 years” chestnut:

- What are your long-term career goals?
- What is your ideal job at this stage in your career?

- What are you looking for?
- How do you define success?
- What's most important to you in your career?

In today's competitive job market, interviewers are looking for any red flag to use as an excuse not to hire someone. So you could be unfairly eliminated from contention if you answer this question in a way that even hints this is not the one and only job of your dreams.

Understandably, an employer wants to hire someone who is truly excited about the job at hand, someone who sees it as a great career move and will work tirelessly to do a good job.

You may have already said that you're interested in the job and why. But they are testing you further by asking, "Where do you see yourself in five years?"

If your five-year goal is to become an investment banker, it's going to be hard for them to believe that this position as an IT marketing manager is your dream job.

Hiring managers don't generally enjoy recruiting, hiring, and training new people. It can be a time-consuming and difficult process. Your interviewer does not want to invest time and effort in someone who is already planning to leave for something better as soon as it comes along (whether that's a job that's a better fit, grad school, or your own business).

After all, if she hires you and you quit after a month or two, she's going to look really bad to her bosses.

In reality, you are probably considering a few different potential career paths. It's smart for you to keep your options open to a certain extent. However, you don't have to advertise this fact in your job interviews.

Let's be clear: You should never lie during a job interview. However, that doesn't mean that you have to be 100% candid about all of the directions that you are investigating.

Here are a few ways to show how your goals align well with the position.

- Create a narrative that shows your preparedness for the position and how the skills you will gain from it will help you move forward.
- Make sure to keep things open-ended, so the interviewer can see how the cultivation of those skills will also help the company.
- Show how the company in general provides you with a path toward your goals, so they see you as a long-term investment.
- Keep it motivational, but don't be afraid to tell them what you want.

In some situations, your answer to this question will be particularly important. If you're making a career change or this position doesn't seem like an obvious next step based on your resume, your interviewer may be suspicious about whether you REALLY are committed to this field or just need to make a few bucks until something better comes along.

Nobody wants to hire an applicant who is halfhearted about the job. It's like dating someone who is using you for free dinners until someone she's REALLY attracted to comes along.

Your response to "Where do you see yourself in five years?" is your opportunity to sell the interview on your commitment to the career path and the position.

For example, let's say you were recently laid off after working in academia for five years and are now interviewing for a job in biotechnology management. To be seriously considered, you need to be able to describe why you are excited about making the switch and building a career in biotech. You don't want to leave the impression that this would only be a temporary diversion until something opens up for you in your "real" field of interest.

This is also relevant for new grads. If your major and internships are in a totally different area, be prepared to talk convincingly about why you want to invest the next five years in this new field represented by the open position.

Mistakes You Should Avoid

(1) First, you should not overthink it. An answer like this will not work well: "Well, that's a very hard question. I don't know what I'll be doing in 5 years....hm....that's tough."

(2) Many candidates make this mistake. Instead, you should let the interviewer see that you take the question seriously. Use your answer to reassure the interviewer that you're invested in this career path.

(3) Second, do not be too specific. "I plan to be a VP at a major firm with at least 7 direct reports, a company car, and a salary of 150K (plus options of course)."

(4) Ambition is good. Goals are good. However, if you are too specific, you run the risk of stating goals that are not realistically achievable in the job available. From the interviewer's perspective, that means you're not a good fit.

(5) Third, don't be flaky: "I'd love to be CEO in five years. Then again, I'd also love to be touring with my band if that takes off."

(6) You can come across as flaky if you seem to have a million different ideas about what you want to do – or if you have zero clear ideas about your future. In reality, many good candidates are exploring different options or are still trying to figure it out. However, a job interview is not a session with your career coach. You want to give the impression that you're focused and have a plan (even if it's not the only plan you're considering).

(7) Fourth, try not to raise any red flags: "Well, I'm not sure. I'm thinking about law school or business school or clown college."

(8) Many job seekers have long-term visions of going back to school or starting their own business. These are admirable goals, but there's no need to share them with your interviewer, especially if you're still weighing your possibilities.

(9) Of course, if you've already committed to full-time grad school or another path that will conflict with your ability to perform in the job, it's only fair to be open about that.

(10) Also, there are some career paths that require advanced degrees and/or other additional training. For example, many finance and management consulting career paths require an MBA. In these cases, it will be expected that your five-year plan will include more schooling.

(11) Here are a few more problematic moves that often set candidates back.

- Never compete against the people in the room, even if you really want to. Remember that you're not going for their jobs.
- Don't let your answer take you away from the job you want, even if you plan to let your ambitions do just that.
- Avoid anything that puts a timer on your employment. Interviewers are typically not looking for temporary workers unless they advertise for them.
- Don't lose track of the fact that the people in the room are likely to be the people who can help you succeed in the job and with your future ambitions. Give them something to work with.

(12) Take the time to think about this question and prepare a response. Don't memorize a script, but practice how you will describe your long-term career plans in a way that will be relevant to the interviewer and help you tell your story about why you're the best person for the job.

Example Answer

Now, it is time to look at some answers to the question. Answers like the one below tell the truth, but they leave just enough to be considered at a future date.

*“Here’s a good way to walk the line on this question in a way that encourages your interviewer to think about your future with the company.
Well, in five years I hope to have moved into a position very much like this one, but with more of an impact on the department’s big-picture development. I’m not sure about what that will be, but I’m up for a challenge. In ten years, I’d like to find myself in a position to mentor others in the field, putting my experience to use in ways that help others achieve what I’ve attained.”*

Practice!

Exercise 1. Read the main article of the unit and answer the following questions:

- Why do interviewers ask the question “Where do you see yourself in five years? In ten years?”
- What kind of answer to interviewers expect to hear? Do they expect a truthful answer from a candidate?
- Which variations of the question can you possibly hear at the interview?

- The article offers a few ways to show how your goals align with the position you apply for, what are they?
- How can you prove your commitment to the career path and the position offered by the hiring company? What should you say?

Exercise 2. In the article *Mistakes You Should Avoid*, all paragraphs are numbered for your convenience. In each paragraph, underline only one keyword that best describes the main idea of the paragraph. Write down these keywords on a piece of paper. Then, retell the article and use the list of keywords as a prompt for your oral essay.

Exercise 3. Study the following responses from job candidates, they will give you more ‘taste’ of the answer. We have provided some analysis to the right of every answer.

<p>(1) <i>“My goal right now is to find a position at a company where I can grow and take on new challenges over time. Ultimately, I’d like to assume more management responsibilities and get involved in product strategy. But most importantly, I want to work for an organization where I can build a career.”</i></p>	<p>This answer offers some insight into the candidate’s goals and interests (becoming a manager, being involved in product strategy) so it’s not too generic. This response also strongly expresses a desire for a long-term career with the company.</p>
<p>(2) <i>“I am driven to be the best at what I do and I want to work somewhere where I’ll have opportunities to develop my skills, take on interesting projects, and work with people I can really learn from. Some of the most innovative thinkers in the industry work here and that’s a big reason why I would love to build a career here.”</i></p>	<p>With this answer, the candidate is emphasizing her focus on learning, performance, and achievement. She is also complimenting the company and its reputation for hiring quality people (including the interviewer, perhaps?). The reference to “building a career here” indicates an interest in sticking around and contributing.</p>
<p>(3a) <i>“Let me start by saying that I’m really excited about the position we are discussing and my number one goal is to do the best job I can at this role. Having said that, if down the line there’s an opportunity for advancement and I’ve proven that I have not only the skills and experience needed to take on this next level of responsibility, then of course I would be interested.”</i></p>	<p>Well played there! You’re showing that you’re dedicated to the position and that you are ambitious, but not ridiculously so. But why not take it one step further and outline what you plan to do if and when that advancement becomes available?</p>

<p>(3b) <i>“I’m also really passionate about the work I do and would love if there were opportunities for me down the line to also be able to mentor other employees or new recruits to be successful within this position, perhaps as a manager or supervisor.”</i></p>	<p>You are showing with this second statement that you are grounded enough in reality, but ambitious enough to know that advancement does happen...and when it does, it leaves vacancies that you’re willing to help fill by providing training for potential replacements down the road.</p>
<p>(4a) <i>“From the moment I read the job description for this position I was really excited about your company’s role in the community, and for this reason, am thrilled at the possibility of working with you for a long time. I’m very passionate about outreach and I’m looking forward to the opportunity to be heavily involved in this area.”</i></p>	<p>First of all, good job complimenting the company! You’re showing that you’ve done your research and that you’re also looking for a position that allows growth.</p>
<p>(4b) <i>“While my main focus moving forward will be on the position we are discussing today, I’m hopeful that I’ll be able to grow within this position to take on more and be a part of new and exciting projects in the community.”</i></p>	<p>Again, nicely done. You’re letting the employer know that you’re dedicated to the job you’re applying for right now but that you’re also committed to the long term growth of the company...and your role within that growth.</p>
<p>(5a) <i>“I’m glad you asked! One of the reasons that I applied to this company was because of your company’s reputation for helping with its employee’s career growth as well as providing advancement opportunities. Long term commitment from an employer is important to me because it creates a sense of belonging and really brings out my desire to “go to battle” for the company.”</i></p>	<p>You’ve done a nice job complimenting the company culture as well as reaffirming your desire to be a long term employee. A hiring manager loves to hear that you are a solid investment.</p>
<p>(5b) <i>“I’m really driven to achieve both mine and the company’s goals, and it is my belief that this stability will allow me to do so as I grow within this role. Five years down the road I see myself growing into a supervisor or manager where I’ll be able to use my</i></p>	<p>You’re dedicating yourself to the position but at the same time, letting the hiring manager know that you’re also interested in growing and increasing your level of responsibility.</p>

skills to support and influence others.”

Exercise 4. Having studied all the above information, write down your answer to the question: *Where do you see yourself in five years? Keep in mind that the interviewer wants to hear what you plan to do with the job you’re applying for right now and that your answer should reflect reasonable and realistic growth... More than anything, you want your answer to reassure the hiring manager that investing in you isn’t risky and that you’re the Perfect Candidate for the job. You don’t really need a magic ball to see a future with a company, you only need a few tips and a healthy dose of reality.*

Unit 16. Interview Question: What Is Your Dream Job?

- In this unit:**
- How to answer the question: What is your dream job?
 - Your strategy
 - Example answers
 - Practice section

How To Answer the Question: What Is Your Dream Job?

It is important to be able to articulate your dream job. Not just for personal reasons, but also for when you’re asked about it in interviews.

But, how can you even begin to describe your ideal job, especially to someone who is clearly going to be judging your response? Just picking a place to start is a head-scratcher.

Here’s a hint: Career counselors like to think about good jobs as the intersection of your skills, interests, and values. That’s a good way for you to approach it as well. Talking about your skills will give you an opportunity to sell them a bit—after all, it is an interview. Your interests will show your investment, and your values can help illustrate your fit with the company.

Break it down into three parts, like this:

Part 1. What Skills Do You Want to Use?	First, decide what you are good at doing; think about your strengths. It is likely you have already had the chance to talk about this topic a bit during the interview. Highlight the skills that you enjoy using most, not just the ones you’re a superstar at. This is about your dream job, so don’t <u>shy away from</u> mentioning any that you want to grow as well. Here are a couple of ways you can begin your response: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>I’ve mentioned my experience with ___. My dream job would definitely have to relate to that. I’d also love to grow my skills in ___.</i>• <i>I’ve thought about this before, and I know I would want to keep honing my skills in ___ as well as learn more about ___.</i>
Part 2. What	Next, it’s time to talk about what interests you.

Interests You?	<p>Think <u>big picture</u> for this. What drew you to your industry? What's something you did as a kid that's actually found its way into your work? What is it about your career that keeps you <u>engaged</u>? <u>Weave that in</u>.</p> <p>Build on your answer like this:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I've been interested in the ___ industry ever since I first discovered ___. That, combined with my interest in ___ and ___, means I've been hooked ever since.</i> • <i>In terms of job content, I'm interested in work that involves ___ and ___. I've been curious about things like this ever since ___, so I would definitely want that to be part of my dream job.</i>
Part 3. What Are Your Values?	<p>Giving a sense of what your career values are will give the interviewer an idea about what motivates you; it's a good way to bring the focus back to the company you're interviewing for (assuming, of course, that your values align with the company culture).</p> <p>It also adds some extra <u>complexity</u> to your answer. You're not just saying, "I want an interesting job that I'm good at." I mean, that's nice, but this is your dream job we're talking about!</p> <p>Wrap up your response with something like this:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Based on my skills and interests, in my dream job, I would want to ___ as related to ___, ideally in a company where I could ___ and ___. These are both really important to me, and I'm excited to see that they seem to be equally important to this company.</i> • <i>Basically, my dream job would be to ___ for ___ in a position that would allow me to ___ and ___. I value this last point in particular—it's the reason I'm so excited to be interviewing for this position.</i>

Notice how none of this included an actual job title? It is not necessary. Do not pigeonhole yourself with anything that official. Instead, give the hiring manager a more nuanced response by covering your skills, interests, and values. He or she will get the chance to learn more about you—and you have more flexibility to line up your career goals and the position you're applying for. That is a win-win situation.

Now, here is a hint. Career counselors like to think about good jobs as the intersection of your skills, interests, and values. That is a good way for you to approach it as well. Talking about your skills will give you an opportunity to sell them a bit—after all, it is an interview. Your interests will show your investment, and your values can help illustrate your fit with the company.

What Is Your Dream Job? Example Answers

(1) *“I think my dream job would be a combination of creating products that are making a difference in the world and getting a chance to share them with as many people as possible. I was excited about this position because I read that millions of people use your company’s products each day and it seems like the work you’re doing is having a big impact in the world.”*

Notice you’re not giving a job title. You’re only sharing characteristics... like making a difference, and having a large number of people seeing/using what you create (remember... you need at least two. I would say two or three is the ideal amount).

And then you are completing your answer by relating it back to what the company is offering, and showing you did a bit of research about them!

So here’s a quick recap of the method I shared above. If you follow these guidelines you will have a great answer to this question every time:

- Never use a specific job title. Use words that describe what your dream job would look like.

- Choose at least two or three phrases/words, and try to pick things that overlap with the job you’re interviewing for.

- Conclude by showing the hiring manager that you did some research about them, and explain why you’re interested in their job.

(2) *“What I look for in a job, and what I love about this customer service representative position, is the ability to utilize my communication and customer service skills. I love interacting with customers and quickly and effectively problem solving with them. Down the road, after becoming an expert in your product line and developing strong relationships with your customers, I would love to work in sales.”*

(3) *“My dream job involves an extensive amount of teamwork, such as regular staff meetings and group projects. I love that this job emphasizes communication among colleagues and between management and staff. My previous job was 50% team projects, and I am excited to continue that kind of teamwork and open communication here.”*

(4) *“My dream job would allow me to develop web content for a variety of companies. I love getting to know different clients and developing content to suit their unique needs. For example, in my last job, I worked for clients in industries ranging from healthcare to education and received praise for my work with a variety of companies. I love that this job would allow me to work with a range of clients.”*

Practice!

Exercise 1. Read through the information about describing your dream job to an interviewer. Pay attention to the underlined words and phrases.

Write them down and provide each of them with a synonym. If necessary, use a dictionary.

*Exercise 2. Study at the examples of answers to the interview question **What Is Your Dream Job?** The author of the article suggests everybody to apply a 3-step strategy to building an answer to this question. Remember it and analyze the examples of candidates' statements, illustrating it. Make notes for yourself about building your answer grounding on this strategy. Discuss its advantages with your group-mates in the classroom.*

Exercise 3. Study the example answers provided above and, using them as samples, write down your answer to the question about your dream job.

Unit 17. Interview Question: Are You Willing to Relocate?

In this unit:

- **How to answer the interview question about relocation**
- **Your strategy**
- **Sample answers**
- **Practice section**

How to Answer the Interview Question About Relocation

Moving to a new city can be an exciting or daunting idea, but when a hiring manager asks, "Are you willing to relocate for the job" they may be looking for something different.

There are a number of answers you can give to this question, but ultimately, an interviewer is trying to gauge your enthusiasm for the position. The interviewer may also be testing your commitment for the role and the company, as well as your flexibility. Whatever the employer's motivation for asking, you can answer honestly and still position yourself as an asset to the company.

Your Strategy

Depending on your specific circumstances, there are a number of answers you can give, but in fact, you want to give your potential employer the idea that you would be passionate about the position. Here are five responses that will make sure your name is not removed from consideration:

"I am absolutely willing to relocate."

This might be the obvious answer, especially if you are able to relocate anywhere they would like. As a young adult the opportunity to relocate might be exciting. Answering that you are definitely willing to relocate will show that you want to do whatever is necessary to be a part of the company and team. A formal answer would be: *"For the right opportunity I am definitely willing to relocate. I believe that this position and company is that opportunity."*

If you have no issue with relocating for this position, it would be very beneficial to ask the interviewer questions as well. Asking these questions will reassure that you are able to move for the position.

The ‘maybe’ answer

Relocating for a job is a major life change. There are many questions left unanswered that could cause you to debate whether you are willing to move for a position. How long will you be there? Is this a company I want to have a long career with? Will I be able to advance my career with positions? All of these questions would have anyone on the fence about relocating for a job. So can you answer maybe?

The answer is yes, maybe is an answer and not a bad one. It is how you answer that is important. You might respond with: *“I very much enjoy this area and would love to continue my career here, but this position is a great opportunity for my career and if relocating is a part of that, I would definitely consider it.”*

Saying possibly with enthusiasm

Moving is not always that ideal situation. Though this job opportunity might be exactly what you are looking for, moving still does not get you excited. Most companies will ask if you are willing to relocate to gauge your interest in the position. This question could be a major factor in determining if you are hired. This is where honesty is important. Lying in an interview is bad for all parties involved. It is okay to be hesitant about relocating. It is important to portray that in the best way possible in the interview. Answering with a statement like, *“This is a great opportunity and a position I believe I am a great fit. I enjoy working in this area, but I would consider relocating depending on the circumstances,”* will help you stay on track while staying honest with the interviewer. They will see that you are willing to do what it takes to be a part of the team and would like to further your career at this location.

How do you say no?

Sometimes moving is just not an option. Several reasons could cause a need for you to stay in this area. But if you say no will it cause you to lose this job opportunity? In some cases it just might. But there is a way to say no without insinuating you don’t want the job.

“This is a great opportunity for my career and would love to be a part of the team here. I enjoy this area and think it is where I would like to further my career, especially with this company.”

This could be a great answer that states that moving is not something that you would like to do, but you are sincere about wanting the job. Being honest can get you far with a potential employer.

What not to say

With very few correct answers to this job, there are a plethora of wrong answers. You will not know every answer in an interview. In fact, they don’t necessarily expect you to know every answer throughout the interview. Even when you don’t know the answer, there still is a correct response. When asked

if you are willing to relocate there are many wrong answers. So if you really want to get the job, here are some phrases you should NOT say:

- “Are you going to pay me more?”
- “If I get to choose where you move me.”
- “I never want to move from this area.”
- “Depends on what you are willing to offer.”

Any answers along these lines will make the hiring managers forget about you and move on to the next candidate. It is not necessarily what you say but HOW you say it that is more important. This is definitely true during an interview when you are answering certain questions.

Sample Answers

For someone willing to relocate, a good response might look like this:

(1) “I believe this position will provide me with a lot of great opportunities, so I would definitely be willing to relocate.”

If you are unable to relocate, a good response to keep yourself in the running might be:

(2) “I would love to be a part of this company, and this position would be great for my career. However, I am unable to relocate at this time but would consider it in the future.”

Don’t think you have lost the job just because you cannot move to a different city. Sometimes, your enthusiasm for the position is all an employer needs to see.

An example of how to best answer this question for experienced candidates:

(3) “I’m very open to relocating, not just for this job, but also in the future. I currently have an apartment with a lease, but that lease can be broken by paying an extra two months’ rent as a penalty. The lease runs out at the end of the year, at which time I can move without penalty.”

An example of how to best answer this question for entry level candidates:

(4) “I’m very flexible about relocation. I currently can fit all that I own into my car, which has been the case each year going back and forth to campus. And I’m open to considering a variety of locations both now and into the future.”

Another example of a good response of this kind would be—

(5) “Due to my experience of relocating as a teenager and having to make new friends I would be happy to relocate for the right opportunity with your company.”

If you want to say maybe then you can try this:

(6) “I love the area that I live and work in at the moment and would really like to continue my career here, but this job is such an incredible opportunity that I would be willing to relocate if that is required.”

You could also say:

(7) *“This is such an amazing opportunity and I would love to say yes right now, but I can’t give you a definitive answer without talking to my family first.”*

The great thing about this answer is that it also gives an explanation as to why you would have no problem moving.

An example of how you should NOT answer this question:

(8)

“I would be open to relocation, but only if someone was going to pay me a lot of money for the job and a lot of money up front to buy all new furniture at the other end of the move.”

Practice!

Exercise 1. Read the Find the following words in the main article of the unit and decide what their meanings are in the context of the article:

daunting; ultimately; flexibility; passionate; beneficial; reassure; to gauge; to portray; insinuating.

Write down at least one synonym to each word and compose sentences with the words in order to memorize them.

Exercise 2. Study the sample answers to the question about relocation, listed above. Which answer(s) seems the most relevant to you? Why? Exchange opinions with your group-mates.

Exercise 3. Put together your own answer to the question discussed in this unit. Write it down and prepare to present it to your group in the classroom.

Unit 18. Interview Question: What Are Your Career Goals?

- In this unit:**
- Interview question: What are your career goals?
 - Structure Your Answer
 - Points to emphasize
 - Mistakes you should avoid
 - Some tips for making your answer sound good
 - Your strategy
 - Examples of answers
 - Practice section

Interview Question: What Are Your Career Goals?

Structure Your Answer

The similar questions you may hear at the interview are: “What direction are you seeking to take with your career?”, “What are you seeking to accomplish in your career?” and “What would you like to have said about you at your retirement party?”

The interviewer is seeking to get past the here-and-now to understand what plans, if any, you have made for the progression of your career. Many job

seekers are unprepared for this question, since it is focused on the future. The interviewer can establish how committed you are to the career vs. it just being a job for you by how you answer this question.

Focus on the near term, covering the next two years. You can state broader goals of longer-term aspiration, but they should be mid-career goals, not end-of-career goals. For example, you should not state that you want to be President of the company one day (or any VP-level or above role, unless you are already at a Director level). While you might think that will define you as being big picture focused, most interviewers will view it as a level of expectation which likely cannot be met. So in spite of being able to do the job for which you are interviewing, you may be bypassed due to the fear on the part of the employer that they will not be able to meet your longer-term expectations for career growth. Keep it near term and keep it reasonable.

Points to Emphasize

- Connect your answer to the job you're applying for.
- Talk about how you want to learn new things that will make you better in the position you're applying for.
- Try to bring up skills and traits that you have that would help you do the job.
- Make sure that the goals you talk about could happen in the company you are interviewing with.

Answer the question honestly and in a way that assures the interviewer that you are genuinely interested in working for and staying with their company.

Mistakes You Should Avoid

There are also a few things that you should avoid saying.

- Do not mention goals about going back to school or starting a family. This may make it seem like you won't be with this company for the long haul.
- Do not mention a career path that couldn't happen in the company you are interviewing with.
- Be careful not to start bragging about what you think you will accomplish.
- Don't give a wishy-washy answer.

Make sure to give a well thought out answer to show the hiring manager how eager you are to work for them.

Some Tips for Making Your Answer Sound Good

If succeeding in this role is important to you as part of your long-term career strategy, you are much more likely to perform well.

Be aware that interviewers may be looking for any red flag to use as an excuse not to hire someone. Understandably, an employer wants to hire someone who is truly excited about the job and sees it as a great career move and will work tirelessly to do a good job. You may have already said that you're interested in the job and why. But they are testing you further by asking,

“Where do you see yourself in five years?” Moreover, hiring managers don’t generally enjoy recruiting, hiring, and training new people. It can be a time-consuming and difficult process. Your interviewer does not want to invest time and effort in someone who is already planning to leave for something better as soon as it comes along (whether that’s a job that’s a better fit, grad school, or your own business). After all, if she hires you and you quit after a month or two, she’s going to look really bad to her bosses.

In reality, you are probably considering a few different potential career paths. It’s smart for you to keep your options open to a certain extent. However, you don’t have to advertise this fact in your job interviews.

Let us be clear: You should never lie during a job interview. However, that doesn’t mean that you have to be 100% candid about all of the directions that you are investigating.

Keep your answer fairly general, especially if you don’t know a lot about the typical career path at the company. For most interview questions, I recommend being SPECIFIC because general answers tend to be bland and easily forgettable. This is the exception. Make your answer truthful, but broad enough that it doesn’t raise doubts about whether you would be a good fit for this position at this organization.

Stress your interest in a long-term career at the company (especially if you have short job tenures on your resume). Your interviewer wants to know that you’re ready to settle in and grow with the firm. The truth is that anything can happen. The company could go out of business, they could lay you off, or you could be lured away for a better opportunity.

Remember that the organization is going to be investing considerable time, energy, and money in hiring and training someone for this job. You must at least show an honest intention to stay long enough to be a good investment. If you have some “job hopping” on your resume, it’s particularly important to make the case that you’re now ready for a long-term role.

Demonstrate your enthusiasm for the job as an exciting next step for you. Most importantly, make it clear that you are motivated to take on this opportunity right now.

Your Strategy

Do not overthink it. Do NOT answer this:

• “Well, that’s a very hard question. I don’t know what I’ll be doing in 5 years....hmmmm....that’s tough.”

It is great that you take the question seriously, but you are not being evaluated based on accuracy of answer. Use your answer to reassure the interviewer that you’re invested in this career path.

Do NOT be too specific:

• “I plan to be a VP at a major firm with at least 7 direct reports, a company car, and a salary of 150K (plus options of course).”

Ambition is good. Goals are good. However, if you are too specific, you run the risk of stating goals that are not realistically achievable in the job available. From the interviewer's perspective, that means you're not a good fit.

Do NOT be flaky:

• *"I'd love to be CEO in five years. Then again, I'd also love to be touring with my band if that takes off."*

You can come across as flaky if you seem to have a million different ideas about what you want to do – or if you have zero clear ideas about your future. In reality, many good candidates are exploring different options or are still trying to figure it out. However, a job interview is not a session with your career coach. You want to give the impression that you're focused and have a plan (even if it's not the only plan you're considering).

Do NOT raise red flags:

• *"Well, I'm not sure. I'm thinking about law school or business school or clown college."*

Many job seekers have long-term visions of going back to school or starting their own business. These are admirable goals, but there's no need to share them with your interviewer, especially if you're still weighing your possibilities.

Of course, if you've already committed to full-time grad school or another path that will conflict with your ability to perform in the job, it's only fair to be open about that.

Also, there are some career paths that require advanced degrees and/or other additional training. For example, many finance and management consulting career paths require an MBA. In these cases, it will be expected that your five-year plan will include more schooling.

One Last Word of Advice

Take the time to think about this question and prepare a response. Don't memorize a script, but practice how you will describe your long-term career plans in a way that will be relevant to the interviewer and help you tell your story about why you're the best person for the job.

Practice!

Exercise 1. Read the paragraph called 'Structure Your Answer'. How do you understand the meaning of the following sentences? Re-phrase them in your own words without changing the meaning:

"The interviewer is seeking to get past the here-and-now to understand what plans, if any, you have made for the progression of your career."

"You can state broader goals of longer-term aspiration, but they should be mid-career goals, not end-of-career goals."

"So in spite of being able to do the job for which you are interviewing, you may be bypassed due to the fear on the part of the employer that they will not be able to meet your longer-term expectations for career growth."

Exercise 2. Read the paragraph Points to Emphasize and Mistakes You Should Avoid only once. Then, look at the beginnings of the sentences provided below and try to reproduce the missing words by memory:

Points to Emphasize

- Connect your ... to the job you're applying for.
- Talk about how you want to ... new things that will make you better in the ... you're applying for.
- Try to ... up skills and ... that you have that would help you do the job.
- Make sure that the ... you talk about could happen in the ... you are interviewing with.

Answer the question ... and in a way that assures the interviewer that you are ... interested in working for and staying ... their company.

Exercise 3. Read the paragraph Mistakes You Should Avoid only once. Then, look at the beginnings of the sentences provided below and try to reproduce the missing words by memory:

There are also a few things that you should ... saying.

- Do not mention goals about to school or starting a This may make it seem like you won't be with ... for the ... haul.
- Do not mention a career path that couldn't happen in theyou are interviewing with.
- Be careful not to start ... about what you think you will
- Don't give a ... answer.

Make sure to give a ... answer to show the hiring manager how ... you are to work for them.

Exercise 4. Read the paragraph named 'Some Tips for Making Your Answer Sound Good'. Make sure you understand the meanings of the underlined words and phrases. What information in this section was new for you? How are you going to use it in putting together your own answer?

Exercise 5. Based on the information provided in 'Your Strategy' paragraph, write down a plan for your answer to the question about your career goals. Use the examples provided in the paragraph to develop ideas for your answer.

Exercise 6. Write down your own answer to the interview question, Why are you looking for a new job?

Unit 19. Interview Question: Why Are You Looking For a New Job?

- In this unit:**
- **How to answer the question: Why are you looking for a new job?**
 - **Points to emphasize**
 - **Mistakes you should avoid**
 - **Examples of good answers**
 - **Practice section**

How to Answer the Question: Why Are You Looking for a New Job?

(1) When you're interviewing for a new position, you should come prepared to answer questions about why you're leaving your job or why you left your previous one. Rather than focus on the past – and any negative experiences – your answer should open the door to a discussion about why this new position is the perfect job for you.

(2) While the specifics of your answer will depend on whether you left voluntarily or were asked to leave, it's important to answer in a way that casts you in a positive light.

(3) For example, you'd never want to say, "My boss is a tyrant and creates an insanely competitive environment, pitting all of the employees against each other." Even if your boss is a beast, it's not helpful to point that out in a job interview. Imagine what would happen if your interviewer happens to be a friend or colleague of your boss, which could happen if the new job is in the same field and in a nearby locality.

(4) Besides that, giving a negative answer may not reflect well on you, so at least be neutral or leave your boss out of your answer. Take the high road instead. The best way to do this is to highlight the reasons why you're seeking the new position. For example, "My current job puts a lot of focus on individual achievements, but I'm really looking forward to working in a collaborative environment. I do my best work as a team player." That's a much better and more positive response.

(5) When interviewers ask this question they are not only inquiring about your job search but are also inferring as to why you are applying for their position. They will also use how you speak of your current employer as a gauge to how you would speak to another employer about them. These are important factors in the hiring decision, so it is critical that you answer this question appropriately.

Points to Emphasize

First of all, you should aim to frame your answer in a way that makes your interviewer feel confident that the position you are interviewing for is in line with your personal and professional goals. Don't forget that the delivery of your

answer is just as important as its content: be sure to practice aloud so you sound positive and clear in your responses.

It would be helpful to emphasize a few key points and present some things in a certain manner.

- Paint your current or last employer in a positive light.
- Provide clear, intelligible reasoning for desiring to leave.
- Give support for your initial answer that makes your desire to change positions acceptable.
- Show a positive correlation between what the new job has to offer and what you are lacking in your current position.

You want to make sure that your answer is truthful, clear and properly supported.

Mistakes You Should Avoid

There are a few mistakes that you should avoid during your interview.

- Do not try to skip past this question with a vague answer.
- Try not to show disdain for your duties or your current company.
- Even if you have personal reasons closely tied to why you are leaving, do not lead with them.
- Do not try to appear overly saddened to be planning to leave your current position; this can be a bit confusing and come off as deceitful.

The last thing you want to do is leave any doubt in the interviewer's mind that you have fully thought through your decision to leave your current position.

Practice!

*Exercise 1. Read the five paragraphs of the article **How to Answer the Question: Why Are You Looking for a New Job?** Write down a keyword for each paragraph in it. Retell the paragraph and let your list of keywords help you remember the sequence of the information.*

Exercise 2. What are the points to emphasize when you discuss the reasons of looking for a new job with a potential employer? Do not forget to mention the four points listed in this unit and you are welcome to add any other ideas that come to your mind.

*Exercise 3. What are the mistakes that candidates frequently make when answering the question, **Why Are You Looking for a New Job?** Discuss this topic with your group-mates.*

*Exercise 4. Write down your own answer to the interview question, **Why are you looking for a new job?***

Unit 20. Interview Question: What Would You Look to Accomplish in the First 30/60/90 Days on the Job?

- In this unit:**
- **Why do they ask this question?**
 - **How to answer the question**
 - **Some ideas for your answer**
 - **How to succeed in your new job: the first week, month and 90 days**
 - **Practice section**

Why Do They Ask This Question?

One of the more common questions at a job interview is, “What would you accomplish in the first 30, 60, or 90 days on the job?” If this is your first entry-level job, the answer to this question can be hard to anticipate—but it’s not impossible. With proper planning, you can come up with a realistic, honest and enthusiastic answer.

First, let us take a look at what this question is actually asking. Why the numbers 30, 60 and 90? These numbers correspond to standard cut-offs for your first three months on the job—30 days, 60 days or 90 days. Interviewers ask this question for a number of reasons. They want to see how you think about your new role, how fast you’ll complete the onboarding process and what types of goals and standards you hold yourself to, especially in a new environment.

This onboarding period may seem daunting, but it can be an exciting time, too. You will learn a lot about your duties, your supervisor, company culture and workplace etiquette. You also will learn a lot about yourself and how you fit into the larger organization.

How to Answer the Question

In the first place, **do your research.**

Even if you’ve had an internship in the field before, you can’t really know what a job entails until you’ve worked full-time in the role. That doesn’t mean you can’t do your research to get a fuller picture. Here are some ideas for where to look for a dose of realism (and some healthy inspiration):

Job listings

Do a quick Google search for similar roles and titles to get a sense of what those responsibilities look like.

Employee resumes

Perusing the online resumes of young professionals in your intended field can be invaluable. Resumes provide more in-depth information than company profiles and bios. Again, start with people who are just a couple of years more experienced than you to see what they’ve accomplished.

Talk to someone

Arrange an informal meeting with someone in your intended field, preferably someone around your age and experience level. Explain that you would like to get started in the industry and have questions about what to reasonably expect during the first three months and the rest of the first year on the job.

Outline your goals for each month

After you've studied up on what you may be doing at your job, think about what you can realistically accomplish during this initial period. What kinds of concrete goals can you set? What projects are you excited to take on? If possible, stick to quantifiable results. Then practice your answer to the interview question. Try to condense your response to 3-4 sentences.

Some Ideas for Your Answer

Remember to always have a backup answer at hand. You might want to use this answer as a model to structure your own answer.

(1) "In addition to getting to know the team and getting fully up to speed with the role, there's a lot I want to accomplish during my first three months in the role of editor. During my first 30 days, I want to get a sense of our blog's editorial goals and use those to create a new blog design. After 60 days, I want our blog redesign launched and to have at least 50 contributors writing for the website. After 90 days, I want to switch the efforts from building the team to tracking growth, and I'm hoping that we can have 100,000 unique visitors by then through utilizing our marketing channels and those of our contributors."

If you don't have a clear idea of the exact goals for the position or what you would like to accomplish, you can talk about things that are relevant for almost any role. This can serve as your backup answer.

(2) "Within 30 days, I plan to get to know the people I'll be working with the most and to be comfortable with them. Within 60 days, I plan to have a solid understanding of the industry, the company and the competitive landscape so that I can hold my own in any conversation about the company. Within 90 days, I plan to meet the goals that have been set for me."

How to Succeed in Your New Job: The First Week, Month and 90 Days

There's a lot of uncertainty that comes with a new job. You'll encounter new people, a new environment and a new set of responsibilities. To set you up for success, we've put together these tips to guide you through your first milestones.

The First Week of a New Job

Success during week one is about balance: you want to s, but you shouldn't put too much pressure on yourself to get everything right. The goal is to learn about your new workplace and feel out your place in that ecosystem.

In the first week:

Introduce yourself, relentlessly. Studies have shown that anxiety in new situations can come in part from not feeling confident in how to introduce

ourselves. It's a natural feeling – when you're new, you don't necessarily want to call attention to yourself. But in the first days of a new job, you want your enthusiasm to shine through. So, find the timing that feels right and give a quick, energetic introduction to the people you don't know yet.

If meeting new people is particularly important to you, you can enlist the help of others. Mention to your manager that introducing yourself is a priority for you and ask for a list of people you should get to know. In meetings, you could ask the organizer to give you some time at the beginning or end to introduce yourself.

Here are some ways to ease into your introductions:

- Prepare your opening lines ahead of time so you have a script at the ready when you encounter a new face.

- Pay attention to your surroundings and other people. Don't interrupt a meeting to introduce yourself or speak too loudly in communal spaces. As you're introducing yourself, take note of how the other person is reacting. If they seem distracted, keep it short. If they seem receptive, you may want to get to know this person better. You can make a great first impression by making someone else feel heard.

- Do your best to remember names. You can do this by saying the person's name back to them and writing down a quick note about them when you part. Don't get overwhelmed by needing to remember everyone's name, though. If you forget someone's name, honesty is the best policy: "I'm sorry, I've been taking in a lot of new information over the last few days. Could you remind me of your name?"

Ask well-timed questions. Research has shown that new employees perform better when they ask more questions. By asking your leaders and peers for new information, you'll get up to speed quickly. But in your first week, you want to find the right time to ask questions. Here are some guidelines for how and when to ask:

Think about what you want to know. In some cases, you may need permission, while at other times you may need advice or validation. If you get specific, you'll be better able to ask and less likely to waste time.

Prioritize the information you need. For example, if you can't get your computer or access badge to work, that's something you need help with immediately. If you're not clear on the quarterly goals for your team, you can probably wait to talk with your manager about that over the coming weeks.

Write down your questions so you don't forget. You can raise these questions during a one-on-one meeting with your manager. You should learn your manager's preferences: Do they want to be asked questions via email or in person? If you have a lot of questions for one person or group, consider setting up a meeting rather than stopping by their desk or office. In the meeting invite, you can list out the questions you have. This gives them time to prepare responses.

Seek out a friend. Once you've made some introductions and have a sense of who you'll be working with, ask a new colleague to lunch or coffee. It could be the person sitting next to you or another newcomer who started at the same time. Developing a trusted relationship will make you feel more comfortable as you're getting to know this new workplace. In fact, research has shown that having social ties at work can make us more productive.

During this first week, you may not find your best friend or develop a deep relationship with anyone. But seeking out someone you can relate to even in the short term will provide some needed stability.

Learn how to navigate and enjoy your new workplace. Locate the restrooms, the coffee and water, the stairs and elevators, where you can eat lunch and take breaks, and seek out any other amenities this workplace offers. If you haven't been given a tour, consider asking a colleague for one.

In this first week, you may also want to experiment with your commute: finding the right times to leave home and testing different routes or transportation methods. Identifying and establishing the routines early on will give you peace of mind.

Bonus first week tip: Add value

Most likely, your job was open and you were hired because there is a lot of work to be done. In your first week, your main priority should be to soak up information, but consider challenging yourself to add value in ways big or small. Here are some ideas of where to start:

Learn how to make the coffee. This task usually falls to the person who comes upon an empty pot. Be proactive and learn how everything works so you can make a fresh pot if you empty it.

Ask your manager what their biggest pain point is. Once you know the answer, spend your first week thinking about how to lessen that burden. Don't force it or step on anyone's toes, but if there's something you can do, do it.

Think back to your interviews. Was there a specific need that came up? Consider writing up a short proposal for how you would take on that challenge.

The First Month of a New Job

After the exciting initial days on the job, it's time to settle into your role. The goal in this first month is to learn how you can apply your skill set to the challenges and opportunities facing this organization.

In the first month:

Get to know your team better. It's important to continue making new connections and allowing others to know you, too. By simply being around your new team and attentively observing how everyone works and collaborates, you'll gain valuable insights about the company and group culture.

Get organized and set good habits. This job is a fresh start and a good opportunity to shed old routines. Take these first weeks to decide how you want to organize your calendar and to-do lists, how you'll manage your time and the skills or practices you want to develop.

Define success with your manager. During the first few weeks, you and your manager should take time to clarify your mutual expectations. This includes understanding how you will work together, how you will get the resources you need to do your job well, and how your job performance will be assessed.

Here are a few guidelines for these conversations:

- Come prepared and use time effectively. When you are seeking guidance or information, you should take on the work of driving that conversation.

- Put yourself in your manager's position. If you find that your expectations don't align, try to see it from their perspective and find areas of overlap or compromise.

- Identify early wins. There are probably a lot of things on your plate. As you learn more about what your manager values, prioritize the tasks that support their goals as well.

Bonus first month tip: Be humble and open-minded

When we are humble, we are acknowledging that we cannot go it alone. Take the time to thank the people who are showing you the ropes, don't take credit for work you haven't done and listen more than you speak. You've never done this exact job in this exact setting, so no matter how much experience you have behind you, keep an open mind.

The First 90 Days of a New Job

The goal during the first few months is to take ownership of your new role. During this time period, you should set yourself up to do your best work yet.

In the first 90 days:

Challenge yourself. In many situations, we have more power than we perceive. As Harvard psychology professor Ellen Langer has said:

“Social psychologists argue that who we are at any one time depends mostly on the context in which we find ourselves. But who creates the context? The more mindful we are, the more we can create the contexts we are in. When we create the context, we are more likely to be authentic. Mindfulness lets us see things in a new light and believe in the possibility of change.”

Set ambitious goals for yourself, work towards those goals by diving into situations that support them, and continually repeat this process – striving to reach higher each time. You may not always achieve the goals you set for yourself, but the process of applying yourself with vigor is where significant personal and professional growth takes place.

Set boundaries. You may have spent the first month of your new job compromising on some of your boundaries. Maybe you came early and stayed late or took on extra projects to help others. This is a natural response in a new setting – we want to be obliging so that others will accept us.

In the first few months of your job though, you should begin to reestablish the boundaries that enable you to do your best work. While you should continue to be a team player, learning to say “no” will help you focus on your goals and manage time effectively.

Set up a three-month review. In some organizations, a 90-day review for new employees is common practice. Even if your new employer doesn't have a formalized review at this time, you may want to ask your manager for an informal review.

This is a simple way to check in with each other and verify that you're still on the same page. In your review, you can provide a status update on the goals you may have laid out in your first month. You can also look forward: what milestones does your manager expect you to have reached in the next three months? The next year?

Reconnect with old colleagues. Now that you've begun to settle into your new job, it's a great time to update former coworkers and learn what's happening with them.

Maintaining your professional network is a good way to keep a pulse on the job market and your profession. Our own analysis shows that 65% of employed people look at new jobs again within the first three months of starting a job. This doesn't necessarily mean that it's already time to leave your new job. Rather, it signals a natural time in which to consider the next step in your career.

Bonus first 90 days tip: Be gentle with yourself

Believing in yourself is key to succeeding in a new job. You will undoubtedly face frustrations and make mistakes as you're adjusting. Don't fixate on what you have yet to accomplish. Focus instead on how far you've already come and where your hard work will take you next. After all, from a pool of candidates, your new employer chose you for this job – you've got this.

When you're ready for your next challenge, update your Indeed Resume so employers can contact you with new opportunities.

Practice!

Exercise 1. Read the material of this unit a few times and try to remember the information it suggests in detail. Then, find in which context the following words/phrases are used in the article and suggest your best ways to translate them into your native language. Retell the article, using each of these phrases in your own sentences.

encounter	get up to speed	have a lot of things on
milestone	validation	(one's) plate
make (first) impression	quarterly goals	be humble and open-minded
put (much) pressure on	navigate	take credit (for)
oneself	amenities	take ownership of your new
get (everything) right	add value	role

feel out (one's) place in	be proactive	social ties
relentless(ly)	a pain point	striving to reach higher
anxiety	burden	reestablish boundaries
to shine through	gain valuable insights	verify
particularly important	shed old routines	be on the same page
enlist the help of others	clarify	mutual provide a status update
to ease	into expectations	maintain professional
(introductions)	assess	job network
ahead of time	performance	face frustrations
communal spaces	guidelines	fixate on
set up a meeting	align	update your resume

Exercise 2. Write down all underlined words and phrases from the articles of this unit. Make sure you understand their meanings in the context of the articles. Find and write down at least one synonym to each word/phrase.

Exercise 3. Below, you will find the list of sub-paragraphs from this unit. They provide information about preparing yourself to answer the interviewers' question, What Would You Look to Accomplish in the First 30/60/90 Days on the Job? Study this list, read the information of the unit, and write down a one-sentence-long statement for each sub-paragraph to make a short essay that will contain the most valuable information of the unit.

- Do your research.
- Job listings
- Employee resumes
- Talk to someone
- Outline your goals for each month
- The First Week of a New Job
- Introduce yourself, relentlessly.
- Ask well-timed questions.
- Seek out a friend.
- Learn how to navigate and enjoy your new workplace.
- Bonus first week tip: Add value
- The First Month of a New Job
- Get to know your team better.
- Get organized and set good habits.
- Define success with your manager.
- Bonus first month tip: Be humble and open-minded.
- The First 90 Days of a New Job.
- Challenge yourself.
- Set boundaries.

- Set up a three-month review.
- Reconnect with old colleagues.
- Be gentle with yourself

*Exercise 4. Study the example answers provided in the unit and write down your own answer to the interviewer’s question **What Would You Look to Accomplish in the First 30/60/90 Days on the Job?***

Unit 21. Interview Question: What Are Your Salary Requirements?

- In this unit:**
- **“What are your salary requirements?” question**
 - **When/How the salary question is asked**
 - **How to answer salary expectations questions (with examples)**
 - **Answering “What are your salary requirements?”**
 - **Your strategy**
 - **Tips on negotiating for what you’re worth**
 - **How to answer salary expectations questions (with examples)**
 - **Practice section**

“What Are Your Salary Requirements?” Question

Why do companies ask job candidates the salary question? Ultimately, company leaders and HR professionals want to know if they can afford you *before* they invest time and resources courting you to come to work for them.

Some employers are bargain hunting. Despite a general market value for certain positions, some companies place a bigger premium on certain positions than other companies. This means that the salary they expect to pay for a certain position may be lower or higher than the going rate.

Another possible reason is that they’re trying to see how you value your work. Are you confident enough to ask for what you deserve or will you meekly accept whatever they offer?

Your strategy:

Sell them on you, and convince them of your worth to their organization before you reach the point of salary negotiations.

When/How the Salary Question is Asked

Usually, “the salary question” is either “*What are you looking to make?*” or “*What are you making now?*” Each of these comes with different challenges. The question(s) can come up early on as part of the screening process or can pop up later after you’ve answered a few of the behavioral, skill, or background questions.

In some respects, it's a good thing when the salary topic comes into the interview conversation. It indicates that there is some interest in having you come to work for the company.

The other side of the coin, though, is that when you're not prepared, it's easy to make a misstep on this question that could prove costly.

Expect the salary interview question and have plans in place to address it before going into the interview.

Answering “What are Your Salary Requirements?”

It seems like an innocent question. It makes sense that potential employers would want to know a ballpark figure for your expectations, right?

Not so fast. Be aware that candidly stating your salary expectations too early in the interview process can lead to problems.

- Early on, the company in question isn't sold on you just yet. They're still feeling you out and doing comparison shopping between you and the other candidates. You'll have better leverage to negotiate later, so it serves you best to avoid naming a specific number too early.

- You may be tempted to sell yourself short to move forward in the process. While some businesses will jump at the lowest offer, there are plenty of others out there that understand the marketplace and will shy away from candidates that seem too eager to lower their standards to get the job. It may make them worry that you'll lower your standards elsewhere as well.

- Furthermore, do you really want a company that makes you feel as though they're only after the cheapest possible deal? Or do you want to work for a company that's after the most qualified candidate for the job?

- A high number can price you out of contention before you've even had a chance to make a good impression. Low or high, if you name a price that's outside of their expectations, it can remove you from the running for the position.

- Going too low can also put you in a position where you can't afford to take the job, yet can't afford to turn the job down. This is especially true for job candidates who offer low-end figures out of desperation and in hopes of getting the job. This rarely leads to a happy work situation.

Before you consider answering the question, it's important to know the going rate for jobs in your field and in your job market (location).

Do some research on these sites to understand the market salary range for the position, size of the company you're interviewing with, location, and your experience level. You will probably find some conflicting information and wide ranges in some places, but at least you'll get a general sense if you look at a few sources.

Your goal is to arrive at a reasonable salary range that seems fair based on market value and your current or most recent salary. This way, if pressed, you can name a number that's based on real data and position it as the market range and not just what you want.

You will also want to think a bit about best case scenarios (what salary offer would make you say yes on the spot) and worst case scenarios (what salary offer would you walk away from)

Your Strategy

When asked, “What are your salary expectations for the job?” try your best to sell yourself by saying something along the lines of:

“I’m more interested in finding a position that’s a good fit for my skills and interests. I’m confident that you’re offering a salary that’s competitive in the current market.”

You’re letting them know that you’re confident of your abilities and respect yourself too much to sell yourself short.

At the same time, you’re giving them an opportunity to earn your respect by making a fair offer. By doing this, you’re tactfully letting them know you’re not desperate and expect to be compensated appropriately for your time and talent.

By playing hardball on the salary issue and not giving in and answering right away, you’re also letting the hiring company know that they’re getting a savvy and tough negotiator if they hire you. This may be the perfect incentive for a better salary offer.

Naturally, some interviewers will press further for a specific number. At this point, you can say something like:

“Well, according to my research and past experience, my understanding is that 75-90K per year is typical based on the role and requirements.”

This frames the number as “here’s my understanding of what’s competitive” as opposed to “here’s what I want.”

If you’ve done your research (see above), you’ll be able to quote a reasonable range and then they can respond.

Interviewers ask the question “What are You Making Now?” believing that if they offer a salary 10 to 15 percent higher than your current salary will be sufficient to lure you away from your current position.

There are a number of reasons why this question may not be so straightforward for many candidates. Most typically, many candidates are either underpaid or overpaid in their current roles. They fear an overly high or low number could lead to an unattractive offer or knock them out of contention. Others may be making a career change or moving from commission-based to salary work or otherwise in a situation in which the comparison isn’t valid.

If you’re making “too much,” the interviewer may feel they can’t afford you or you are overqualified. This can be a problem if you are okay with taking a lower salary – perhaps because you know you are/were overpaid, you are making a career change, or you are prioritizing work-life-balance or other aspects of the job.

It's far more common for someone to be underpaid and worried about the perception that there's something "wrong" with them for that reason.

If you're not making the market rate, or close to it, potential employers may begin scratching their heads and asking why. The problem is that many people choose jobs with lower salaries for reasons that have nothing to do with work ethic or job performance including the following:

- Bonus/commission incentives
- Flexible working options or reduced hours
- Better benefits – health, retirement, tuition reimbursement, etc.
- Fewer work hours
- Location (cost of living, local job market, etc.)
- Opportunity to take on new responsibilities and gain experience even if your salary didn't increase accordingly

You don't want to let the decision to work for a less than stellar salary in the past derail your opportunity for a competitive salary in the future.

In any of these cases, deflection, on this particular question, can be your best bet. Eventually, you will have to address this question. However, you will be in a much better position if you can deflect until they already love you and you have more leverage to negotiate.

When pressed to give your current salary when you know it would sabotage your chances, consider the following tactic to delay the question a little longer, if not put it off altogether:

“Since this position is not exactly the same as my current job, let's discuss what my responsibilities at this company will be and work together to determine a fair salary for this position.”

If you feel you must reveal your lower salary earlier than you would like, don't forget to mention the contributing factors too. Employers will understand that a job in Iowa paid less than a job in New York City, for example.

How to Answer Salary Expectations Questions

When a recruiter or hiring manager asks, “What are your salary expectations?” there are a few ways you can answer. Here are some suggestions, with example responses:

Provide a range

If you don't feel comfortable providing a single number, you may choose to offer a range instead. Keep in mind, however, that the employer may opt for the lower end of your range, so make sure your target number is as close to the bottom number as possible. Also, keep your range somewhat tight with a variance of no more than \$5,000 to \$10,000.

Example: *“I am seeking a position that pays between \$75,000 and \$80,000 annually.”*

Include negotiation options

In addition to your salary, there may be other benefits, perks or forms of compensation you consider just as valuable. Including these as possible opportunities for negotiation is an option, too. For example, while the employer may not have budgeted enough for your ideal salary range, they may be willing to offer equity in the company to make the compensation package more attractive to you.

Example: *“I am seeking a position that pays between \$75,000 and \$80,000 annually but I am open to negotiate salary depending on benefits, bonuses, equity, stock options and other opportunities.”*

Deflect the question

If you’re still early in the hiring process and still learning the specifics about the job duties and expectations, you may want to deflect the question for later in the conversation. However, keep in mind you’ll still eventually have to discuss salary expectations. Either way, it’s a good idea to be prepared with a well-researched number in mind—even if you’re still factoring in additional information.

Example: *“Before I answer, I’d like to ask a few more questions to get a better idea of what the position entails. That way, I can provide a more realistic expectation.”*

A few more things to consider when determining salary expectations

Sharing salary information with an interviewer can feel uncomfortable, especially if you’re not accustomed to being asked this question and are discussing your ideal compensation for the first time. To help the conversation go smoothly and make sure you get a fair salary, here are a few additional pointers:

Aim high

Once you know the average salary range for a position, consider padding your expectations. In most cases, employers are going to start you off at the lower end of the amount you provide. By aiming higher, you can make sure that, even if they offer the lowest number, you’ll still be making your target number. For example, if you want to make \$45,000, don’t say you’re looking for a salary between \$40,000 and \$50,000. Instead, give a range of \$45,000 to \$50,000.

Be confident

Some employers are interested in your answer as well as your delivery. If you’re confident and self-assured, it will show you know your worth and, while you might be open to negotiation, you’re not going to accept less than you know you deserve. Don’t sell yourself short in an attempt to move forward or you could end up making too little.

Explain your reasoning

While you don’t need to get too detailed in explaining how you arrived at your salary expectations, it doesn’t hurt to share why you’re giving the number. Highlighting your experience or educational level can add additional

justification for your salary, especially if you're aiming for the higher end of the local average. Just be careful not to overshoot the amount too much or you could be considered overqualified.

Example: *“The average salary for this position in this area for a professional with my level of experience is between \$110,000 and \$115,000, so that would be my salary expectation for this role.”*

When an interviewer asks about your salary expectations, having a well-formulated, data-backed answer will ensure you're not undercutting yourself or aiming over the market value. By giving an honest, informed response, you can help the interviewer better understand whether your expectations align and, if things go well, what sort of salary will be attractive enough to get you on board.

Practice!

Exercise 1. Find the following words in the article ‘What Are Your Salary Requirements?’ Question and make sure you understand their meanings in the context of the article. Compose and write down sentences with these words.

salary, bargain, market value, rate, payment, worth, a ballpark figure, salary requirements, salary expectations, marketplace, deal, low-end figures, salary range, bonus, commission incentives, benefits, bet, deflection, leverage

Exercise 2. Study the paragraph called Your Strategy. Then, using the information suggested in it, write down a sample answer to the question ‘What Are Your Salary Requirements? Do not forget to use phrases from the list below:

I'm interested in
a good fit for my skills and interests
I'm confident that
a salary that's competitive in the current market
according to my research and past experience,
my understanding is that
based on the role and requirements
since this position is (not) exactly the same as my current job
let's work together to determine a fair salary for this position

Exercise 3. The article ‘How to Answer Salary Expectations Questions’ suggests you to follow these logical steps in building your answer: Provide a range / Include negotiation options / Deflect the question / Aim high / Be confident / Explain your reasoning. Write down a sample answer to the question using this logical sequence.

Exercise 4. Imagine that you are a hiring manager of a company who is interviewing a candidate with your current education, experience and skills.

Write down five questions which you would like to ask the candidate in relation to the discussion about his/her salary expectations.

Exercise 5. Based on all information you learned from this unit, write down your sample answer to this question and prepare to present it to your group-mates in a classroom discussion.

Unit 22. Interview Question: What Is Your Availability?

- In this unit:**
- **Interview question: what is your availability?**
 - **Points to emphasize**
 - **Mistakes you should avoid**
 - **Sample answers**
 - **Practice section**

Interview Question: What Is Your Availability?

One question you might be asked during a job interview is, "What days/hours are you available to work?" Employers often ask this because they want to know how flexible you are.

If you are applying for a shift job, or a part-time job, an employer might ask this question because they want to see if you would be willing to work less popular days and hours (like nights and weekends). If you are applying for a full-time job, the employer might want to know if you are willing to work hours and days outside of a typical workweek.

While answering this question, there are a few things you should point out in order to convince the hiring manager that you are a good fit for the position.

Points to Emphasize

- Make sure that you are honest about your availability and divulge any time constraints you have.
- Try and make it appear as if your schedule is relatively open so that it looks as if you are already committed to the position.
- If you have time commitments, give a brief explanation about what they are and why they are important.
- Give the hiring manager information about any time off you will need in the near future.
- Knowing this information will ultimately help the interviewer decide if your schedule will work with what is needed for the position.

The way you answer this question varies slightly whether you are applying for a full-time job, or a part-time or shift job.

No matter what kind of job you apply for, be honest about any commitments that are absolutely not flexible. For example, if you have to take your children to work in the morning, or if you cannot work evenings because you take a night class, say so. Do not promise you will be available if you know you will be unavailable.

If you are applying for a full-time job, you want to emphasize that you are willing and able to put in a full workweek and that you can work occasional other hours as needed.

If you are applying for a part-time job, or a shift job, you will want to emphasize your flexibility even more. If there are certain days or hours you simply cannot work, say so. However, emphasize that you are open and flexible about any other days or hours they may need. It will show the employer that you will make your work a priority.

Mistakes You Should Avoid

Although this question might seem straightforward, it can be easy to answer it in a way that harms your ability to get the job. Make sure that you avoid the following mistakes while providing a response.

- Don't use answering this question as a way to ask for time off that you will need in the next few months.
- Avoid saying that you will be able to work when you really aren't available.
- As you answer this question, don't be defensive when explaining your circumstances.
- Although it's alright to say that your schedule is completely open, don't feel like you have to do this.

The main thing to keep in mind is that the interviewer just wants an honest, straightforward answer from you.

Practice!

Exercise 1. Read through the article 'Interview Question: What Is Your Availability?' Make sure you understand the meanings of the underlined words. Find and write down at least one synonym to each underlined word.

Exercise 2. Look through the examples of interview answers below.

Position	Answer
(1) Admin	"I am available most days, evenings, and weekends. I do have an obligation on Tuesday evenings, but aside from that, I should be available most times. Can you clarify for me the hours for this position?"
(2) Manager	"I see that you are open Monday to Friday from 8 am – 8 pm. Could you share with me the ideal schedule for your managers? I would like to, of course, be able to cover the peak traffic times for your business."
(3) Marketing	"My schedule can be flexible and fluid. I understand that your clients may need a deadline pushed which requires work in the evenings or on weekends. Since the majority of this job would require me to be on a laptop, I am confident that I can deliver the work when needed, even if it's remote."
(4) Retail	"I am available to work any evening and all weekends. I am a

second-year University student and my courses this semester are primarily in the mornings and early afternoons."

(5) Sales *"I am eager for this opportunity and understand that, aside from regular business hours, I may need to take client calls in the off-hours. I am okay with that and will make myself available as necessary, to be successful in this role."*

(6) Teacher *"I understand that your bell rings at 8:40 AM and 3:20 PM. I plan to be at school at least 30 minutes before school starts and will stay as late as needed to complete my work. If you are looking for an extra-curricular commitment, I am certainly open to discussing that as well."*

(7) Ramp agent *"As you know, I am currently employed. As such, I am available to start a new position two weeks upon having resigned from my current position."*

(8) Psychiatrist *"I am available to work any type of shift in this inpatient practice, but I just need to know what a schedule looks like with a week's advance in time. My commitments outside of work would just need to know."*

(9) Flight Attendant *"Part-time"*

(10) Heavy Equipment Operator *"What hours or shifts are available?"*

Exercise 3. Based on the information you learned in this unit, put together your own answer to the question.

Part 4: Working Through Interview Questions Describing Your Professional Skills and Potential



Unit 23. Interview Question: What Makes You Think You Are Good for This Company?

- In this unit:**
- Why are you the best person for the job?
 - Options for answering
 - Tips for answering
 - Example answers
 - Practice section

Why Are You the Best Person for the Job?

An interviewer might ask you the question, “Why are you the best person for the job?” This is similar to other common interview questions, such as “Why should we hire you?” The interviewer wants to know why you would be a better option to hire than other candidates. They also want to make sure you know what they are looking for in a job candidate.

When answering this kind of question, you want to “sell” yourself to the employer and convince him or her that you are a unique and strong candidate. Read below for advice on preparing for and answering the interview question, as well as sample answers.

Options for Answering

There are many ways you can answer this question. The first way is to explain how your personality or personal traits make you an ideal candidate.

For example, you might explain that you are particularly motivated, or that you are known for going above and beyond for your employers.

Another way to answer is to emphasize your unique skills. If you have skills that make you a strong candidate (especially if not many people have those skills), mention these.

No matter how you answer, be sure to emphasize what makes you unique. You want to show the employer how you stand out among the other applicants.

Tips for Answering

Prepare in advance

Before an interview, think carefully about what makes you an ideal candidate for the position. First, look at the job listing, and circle any key skills or qualifications. Then, look at your resume, and note any particular experiences or skills that fit the job listing. Emphasize those qualifications in your answer to the question.

As with all interview answers, a little preparation for the “Why are you the best candidate for this position?” question is key to your success. In order to speak convincingly about your qualifications, follow these tips.

Match your top skills with job requirements

Review the job description (and your resume) and look for reoccurring skills and responsibilities. Then, match your top skills with the top three-to-five job responsibilities, experience requirements, or characteristics requested, and explain how they match to the role.

Know how you can help the company

The more you know about the company, the stronger your answer will be. Look for clues about company culture on the company’s website and social media channels, and see what issues the company is facing by reading recent news. But don’t stop there. If possible, set up informational meetings with people who currently work at the company so you can learn about the culture and the job. Or, research employees via LinkedIn, and see if you share a connection with someone at the company. That someone could perhaps broker an introduction, which would allow you to ask questions either electronically or in person.

Getting back to your answer: explain how you can help the company. For example, if the company mentioned interest in expanding into foreign territories, and you happen to have lived in one of those territories, find a way to mention that in your answer—note your familiarity with the culture, and of course, if you speak the language, definitely emphasize that!

Be interested

Don’t hold back. Show your enthusiasm about joining and contributing to the company.

Be confident

Planning your answer in advance allows you to state your answer clearly and with confidence. The words you use and the tone of your voice are both important to conveying a confident message. Practice your answer in advance!

Be convincing

You will need to sell yourself to the interviewer and convince them that you can make a positive contribution. Share an example of a time you successfully made a difference at a company, and whenever possible, quantify the impact you made. For example, if you're interviewing for a sales position, and you played a huge role in increasing sales by 10% over the course of 10 months at your last company, mention those numbers!

Be honest

Never exaggerate or lie when answering any question during your interview, especially this one. But don't be too humble either. If you have received any awards or recognitions for your accomplishments in relatable positions, mention them.

Be unique

Pick a valuable yet unique skill or experience that will set you apart from the other candidates. You want the interviewer to remember you as a qualified and stand-out candidate.

Give examples

You want to be as specific as possible when answering this question. Whether you emphasize your skills or a personality trait, be sure to provide one or two specific examples that prove you have those qualities and how you will use them in the workplace. Ideally, your examples will come from past experiences at work. However, if you are new to the job market, you can also emphasize experiences from school, extracurricular activities, or volunteer work.

Focus on how you can help the company. Avoid answers that emphasize why you want the job. Instead, focus on how you can add value to the company. To prepare for this kind of answer, make sure you have some knowledge about the company ahead of time.

Don't compare yourself to others. Even though the question is about how you compare to other candidates, don't critique the other job seekers. This can come across as negative or rude. Instead, emphasize what makes you unique in a positive manner, without attacking or insulting other candidates.

Do NOT say this:

“Unlike some of the other candidates I’m sure you’ve seen today, I have experience in the field, which means that I can hit the ground running on day one.”

Do say this:

“My years of experience in this field have given me on-the-job knowledge, as well as a sense of where the industry has been and where it’s going in the future. I have the kind of technical skills that only come from doing the job for

several years. I can slide seamlessly into this role and start hitting goals on my very first day.”

What the interviewer wants to hear is why you think that you would be able to carry out this job well. Obviously, nobody can say they are the best for the job without knowing who else is in the running.

Example Answers

(1) “I couldn’t say that I am the best person for the job, because I don’t know of the other candidates who have applied and what their skills and experience are. However, I know I would be very good at this job because my previous job was carrying out this role, and I excelled at it. Therefore the job matches my skills and talents, and I have the experience to prove that I would be a great candidate for this position.”

(2) “It would be impossible for me to state that I am the best person for the job as I don’t know of the other candidates that have applied, or what their qualifications and character are like, but I do know that I have been wanting a job in this sector for a considerable length of time now, and what I lack in experience I will more than make up for in enthusiasm and willingness to learn. As a matter of fact, my lack of experience in this actual role may be beneficial to yourselves as I will not be “set in my ways” of carrying out the role, whereas someone who has already done this job for a different employer might wish to continue doing it the old way, and become frustrated with your method. Therefore I think I would be a good candidate as I will be freshly trained to your methods.”

(3) “It is not for me to say whom is best for the job, I personally feel I have the suitable qualifications, experience and skill to carry out this job, and as you know the company and the position better than I do, you are the only person who can say who is best for the job. If you don’t choose me I would not be upset because I would understand that with your knowledge of the position I was not suitable, I would only hope you would feedback to me with the reason why. So my answer in short would be that I am a good candidate for the job, but I cannot say I am the best because I have no idea against whom I am competing.”

A few ideas of sample answers:

(1) “I think that my experience in the (widget) industry and my ability to work autonomously make me a good match for this position.”

(2) “I have the savvy, experience, and superior communication ability to be an asset to your company.”

(3) “Your company provides many services that I have had experience with, in a variety of capacities. I believe that my familiarity with the industry would make me a good fit for this position.”

(4) “You have explained that you are looking for a sales executive who is able to effectively manage over a dozen employees. In my fifteen years of experience as a sales manager, I have developed strong motivational and team-

building skills. I was twice awarded manager-of-the-year for my innovative strategies for motivating employees to meet and surpass quarterly deadlines. If hired, I will bring my leadership abilities and strategies for achieving profit gains to this position.”

(5) “I have top-notch administrative skills and I believe I'd be an asset for the office. My skill set seems to be a perfect match for what you're looking for. In addition, I enjoy working with people, and would welcome the opportunity to be a part of your team.”

Practice!

Exercise 1. The paragraph ‘Tips for Answering’ suggests the following ideas which are supposed to assist you in building a successful answer to the question What Makes You Think You Are Good for This Company? Do you agree with these ideas? Would you add more items to this list? Discuss each of the ideas with your group-mates and write down any new ideas you have.

Prepare in advance

Match your top skills with job requirements

Know how you can help the company

Be interested

Be confident

Be convincing

Be honest

Be unique

Give examples

Exercise 2. Study the above examples of answers to the question What Makes You Think You Are Good for This Company? Develop your own sample answer based on your current knowledge, experience and resume information. Read the answer for your group. Discuss its strong and weak points with your group-mates.

Exercise 2. Which words and phrases from the examples of successful answers listed above would you like to use in your job interview? Why? Discuss this with your group-mates.

Exercise 3. Check your memory: insert the missing words into the example answer to the interview question discussed in this unit.

“I think that my in the industry and my ability to work make me a good for this position.”

“I have the, experience, and superior communication to be an to your company.”

“Your company many services that I have had experience with, in a of capacities. I believe that my

..... with the industry would make me a good for this position.”

“You have explained that you are looking for a executive who is able to effectively over a employees. In my fifteen of experience as a sales manager, I have developed strong and team-building skills. I was twice manager-of-the-year for my innovative strategies for motivating to meet and surpass quarterly If hired, I will bring my abilities and strategies for achieving profit gains to this”

“I have top-notch administrative and I believe I'd be an asset for the My skill set to be a perfect match for what you're looking for. In, I enjoy working with people, and would welcome the to be a part of your”

Unit 24. Interview Question: What Is Your Ideal Work Environment?

- In this unit:**
- **How to answer: What is your ideal work environment?**
 - **Points to emphasize**
 - **Mistakes you should avoid**
 - **The right ways to speak about your ideal environment**
 - **Example answers**
 - **Practice section**

How to answer: What Is Your Ideal Work Environment?

(1) This one is tricky because if you give a scenario that is the complete opposite of how their environment is—say, you prefer to work alone but the job necessitates collaboration—they may think you're not right for the job. Without knowing how the team operates, it's hard to tailor an honest answer for this question.

(2) The best option is to create a specific, yet non-committal, answer that makes you sound genuine but still allows for some flexibility. For example, state that while you prefer working in groups, some alone time is great for you to collect your thoughts. Or that you want a work environment that is consistent yet allows for you to challenge yourself professionally. You want to turn the answer to this question into almost a compliment to the team.

(3) When asked this tough question, you may think that they're wanting you to describe exactly what the job is that you applied for, but that isn't always the case. With this query, they're really trying to assess your personality. Just like you have different characteristics that build your persona, so does the company that you're applying with. The interviewer asks this question to make sure that both of your temperaments would mesh together in harmony.

(4) It happens in every interview: the dreaded “what would be your ideal working environment” question. You’re often stumped because you don’t know exactly what they’re looking for in an answer.

(5) When asked this tough question, you may think that they’re wanting you to describe exactly what the job is that you applied for, but that isn’t always the case. With this query, they’re really trying to assess your personality. Just like you have different characteristics that build your persona, so does the company that you’re applying with. The interviewer asks this question to make sure that both of your temperaments would mesh together in harmony.

Points to Emphasize

(6) Giving a response to this seemingly loaded question involves a deeper look into you and your various traits, particularly your positive ones.

- Before answering, take into account how their company is structured in terms of work days, formality, small start-up vs. large corporation, etc.

- Focus on wanting an environment that allows for the use and growth of your established skills and qualities.

- Highlight your desire to work in a team-oriented workplace.

- Talk about your work-style and try to word your answer so that it blends in well with the company’s vision.

(7) Overall, interviewers are looking for an honest and confident response. Telling the truth about your ideal working environment is preferred, but make sure that you give an answer that has been pondered upon and is well-worded before jumping the gun.

Mistakes You Should Avoid

(8) Every interview question has a pitfall or two. Avoid them by eluding the following mistakes:

- Don’t talk about how your ideal workplace is one with lots of vacation time and flexible hours.

- Do not focus your answer purely on the people you will be working with.

- Try not to stray from the actual company and its workings by making it all about you when you respond.

- Don’t essentially read off the job description or company’s “about us” page.

(9) One of the greatest mistakes that you can make when faced with this question is not making it personal to you and then becoming forgettable.

The Right Ways to Speak About Your Ideal Environment

An ideal working environment is one where the surroundings are neat and tidy:

When you are asked this question in the course of an interview, it is very important that at the start of your answer you talk about the physical aspect of things. You must begin by stating an ideal work environment is one which is

kept clean and tidy. No individual likes working in an environment which is dirty and unhygienic.

Keeping the office clean is not merely the responsibility of the cleaning staff, but it is the responsibility of everyone working in the company as well. Saying this will really leave a good impression in the mind of the person taking your interview.

Where there is adequate technology to help the employees:

If a boss of a company wants his company to do well and flourish, it is very important that he should be willing to spend some of the company profits on technology. It is no secret that we are living in a technological age and if companies do not keep up with the changing times it is unlikely that they will be able to compete properly with other leading businesses.

So in the course of your answer, do mention that an ideal working environment is one where there is proper infrastructure available for the employees so that they are able to do all their work in a proper and time efficient manner.

An environment which is very quiet and peaceful:

Good quality work is never produced in an atmosphere or environment of noise or chaos. All individuals need to function in a calm and stress free manner in order to bring out the best in themselves.

So the candidate must answer by saying that an ideal working environment is one which is quiet and peaceful so that the employees are really able to get in touch with their inner thoughts as well as feelings.

Good companies are those where the manager is able to enforce strict discipline so that no one thinks it is alright to shout or talk loudly.

An environment which is well lit up:

Believe it or not, having the right kind of light is very important in the workplace. If the office is poorly lit up then chances are that the employees too are likely to feel very restless and sleepy.

So when the interviewer asks you this question do not forget to include this point in your answer as well. It may seem like a small or insignificant thing to say, but if you at least make a mention of it, your interviewer is sure to understand that you are someone who takes in to account even the smallest of things.

Lighting is something that instantly makes a person feel awake or sleepy, so it does help in setting a working environment.

An environment where there is a lot of positivity:

An ideal work environment extends beyond physical things like comfortable chairs and air-conditioning. It is an environment where there is a lot of positivity and employees are really encouraged at all points in time.

If a working atmosphere is very repulsive and negative then employees are never going to feel like doing the best they can do. All employees should be adequately rewarded when they happen to do a task well.

If the employees are never given bonuses or incentives then they will see no need to push the boundaries and excel at every task which is handed to them.

Where employees are allowed to think in a free manner:

When you are asked this question pertaining to an ideal working environment, do make it a point to state that an ideal working environment is one where the employees are given the freedom to think outside the box without having any kind of fear in mind.

There are many companies which try and curb the creativity of the employees by telling them to always go by the books, yet a company which has an ideal working environment will not instill such fear in the minds of those who are working under them. Employees should be taught that failure is something which is a part of life which cannot be run away from.

An environment which has no unhealthy work place politics:

In any office whether small or big there is always some extent of workplace politics. In some companies the workplace politics is of a positive kind but in other companies the workplace politics is of a very unhealthy and bad kind.

On being asked this question you should surely make a mention on the fact that an ideal working environment for you is one where there is certainly healthy competition.

After all healthy competition makes people rise to the occasion and bring out the best in themselves. Unhealthy workplace politics makes some meek people feel both vulnerable and insecure.

An environment where there is no unnecessary gossip:

It is often said that only people who are silly and very narrow minded indulge in gossip. People who are brimming with new ideas and dreams never have time for such pettiness.

So when the recruiter of the companies asks you such a question in the course of your interview, do state that an ideal working environment is one where people are constantly so preoccupied with their work and projects at hand that they never sit around ideally gossiping about people who they don't like. State boldly that you are someone who never indulges in things like this because you find it very low.

Where employees feel safe and secure at all points in time:

Workplace violence is something which is more common than you might think. There are many employees especially women who often feel very threatened and worried when they walk into their place of work.

Due to the fear playing on these victims minds they are unable to bring out the best in themselves. When the person taking your interview asks you this question, state that an ideal working environment is one where no one has any kind of fear playing on their mind,. A working environment should be well

guarded by armed securities, who know exactly what to do when trouble of any kind breaks out.

An environment where the superiors help the new comers:

There are many companies where the seniors simply refuse to help the new comers, this is mainly because they want to establish their superiority and secondly because they fear that the new comers will get better than them and replace them in the time to come.

Once asked this question you should state that you believe an ideal working environment is one where the seniors are very helpful and supportive to the new comers.

No employee whether young or old should be made to feel inferior in any manner. State that you are someone who would be always willing to help a fresher if you were in a position of advantage.

Where there is no kind of corruption:

It is very unfortunate that nowadays most companies are very closed about what they are doing. It is because of this lack of transparency where corruption is on the rampant.

Once the employees are aware of the fact that such corruption is taking place behind closed doors it is unlikely that they will be feeling like giving their best towards the company.

State in your answer that you are someone who values honesty and integrity above everything else and it is for this reason that you consider an ideal working environment one where there is no corruption of any kind.

An environment devoid of any kind of favoritism:

All employees have the dream of getting ahead in the company which they are working for. As long as promotions are carried out in a free and fair manner employees do not feel bad. The moment employees understand that promotions are being given based on favoritism then that is the thing which is going to make them feel betrayed.

When you are asked this question by the recruiter state that you believe an ideal working environment is one where merit is rewarded at all times. There is no discriminated on the basis of caste creed or sex. Saying this will really show you to be someone who is very clear sighted and morally righteous.

Where all the employees work as a team:

An ideal working environment is most obviously one where all the employees work unanimously as a team. No one is trying to get ahead, by putting the next one down. It is rather unfortunate that the business world is rather famous for being cut throat. State in your answer that though you are someone who would love to get ahead and be successful at your career, you would never consider even for a moment doing something like this. You would consider a working environment as ideal if everyone was secure in their own position and work collectively for the good of the company.

An environment where people help you if you are in trouble:

An interview is where you have to really show all that you have to offer. If you are unable to put your best foot forward then a good job opportunity will slip through your hands. On being asked this question state that an ideal working environment is one where people are ever willing to help you if you are in trouble. They assist you whenever you are feeling low or down. It is the job of company's boss to ensure his company runs as a well oiled machine.

Where praise is given where it is due:

When you are asked this question be sure to state that an ideal working environment is one where all the employees are given praise when it is due to them. No one constantly tries to put them down just for a tiny mistake which they might have made when getting a job done. After all, we are just human beings and not gods. Making mistakes is something which is natural.

An environment which encourages you to focus:

Lastly an ideal working environment is one where there are no distractions. It is an environment which is conducive to work. In addition to this, there should be proper food and drink provided so that when working hard the employees health does not suffer in any way. Having a balanced diet is something which is very important.

These are some of the things which you can include in your answer so that the recruiter understands very well that you are someone who knows exactly what you want. Those who have no real experience in the business world will answer this question by only referring to the physical environment in the office. This question includes a lot of different points which you ought to keep in mind.

If your answers during an interview appears incomplete and very off point then it is obvious that the company will not hire you onboard. Companies long to hire those people who are able to look at things in an objective and holistic manner.

Example Answers

Here's one way through the question that emphasizes the relevant points.

(1) *“My ideal environment would be one where employees have a great deal of leeway in their process and where communication is easy because it's flexible, where employees are given multiple ways to reach out for help or to provide it. Mixing face-to-face meetings, conferences, a variety of electronic communication tools, and so on allows people to be more flexible and to work on the go, which makes them more productive by letting them have more control over their circumstances without sacrificing on support.”*

And a few more examples provided by people of different professions, which differ in styles and approaches:

News Company:

(2) *“I enjoy the challenge of a fast paced work environment, with clear deadlines and the ability to both work as a team and as an individual.”*

Casual Tech Startup:

(3) *“I appreciate work environments that bring out the best in me and my talents – companies that expect a lot from me, but also believe in me and let me be myself knowing that I’ll be able to come through...”*

Company of Workaholics:

(4) *“I enjoy an environment that pushes me to complete my work no matter what it takes, and surrounds me with others that are also looking to achieve similar professional goals.”*

Work Environment with Ups and Downs:

(5) *“I prefer to work with an adaptive work environment that adjusts based on the needs of the company. One that is able to handle fast paced challenges on tight deadlines, but is also light-hearted and can slow down when less needs to be done.”*

Caring Work Environment:

(6) *“I love working in an environment that is open to questions and ideas, while also bringing out the best from their workers.”*

There are many different types of work environments, and the one you are applying to may not be exactly what is represented above. Take into consideration the type of company, the size of the office, the size of your team, and what you see around you when you are in for the interview. Adapt your answer accordingly, and only be honest if you are willing to risk the job on it.

Practice!

Exercise 1. Read the article ‘What Is Your Ideal Work Environment?’ In it, paragraphs are numbered for your convenience. Write down a keyword for every passage and retell the article looking at the list of your keywords.

Exercise 2. The words and phrases below are random phrases taken from the above article. Use these words as prompts to reproduce the main idea of each paragraph.

(1) the complete opposite of, prefer to, the job necessitates collaboration, without knowing how the team operates, to tailor an answer

(2) The best option is, non-committal answer, sound genuine, allows for some flexibility, some alone time is great, collect your thoughts, a work environment that is consistent, challenge yourself professionally, a compliment to the team

(3) tough question, describe exactly what the job is, isn’t always the case, trying to assess, different characteristics, the company that you’re applying with. to make sure, mesh together

(4) the dreaded question, stumped, don’t know exactly

(5) trying to assess your personality, different characteristics that build your persona, mesh together

(6) seemingly loaded question, a deeper look into, various traits

- take into account, in terms of, small start-up vs. large corporation
- Focus on, established skills and qualities
- Highlight, desire, team-oriented workplace
- work-style, blends in well with, the company's vision

(7) Overall, confident response, ideal working environment, an answer that has been pondered upon, well-worded

(8) a pitfall, eluding mistakes

- vacation time and flexible hours
- purely
- stray from the actual company
- read off the job description

(11) not making it personal

Exercise 3. The article 'The Right Ways to Speak About Your Ideal Environment' Has the following structure (see the list below). Discuss every item in a group discussion. Add more ideas to the list and exchange examples of the office environment described in the article.

An ideal working environment is one where:
 the surroundings are neat and tidy;
 there is adequate technology to help the employees;
 the environment is very quiet and peaceful
 the environment is well lit up
 there is a lot of positivity
 the employees are allowed to think in a free manner
 there is no unhealthy work place politics
 there is no unnecessary gossip
 the employees feel safe and secure at all points in time
 the superiors help the new comers
 there is no kind of corruption
 the environment is devoid of any kind of favoritism
 all the employees work as a team
 people help you if you are in trouble
 praise is given where it is due
 the environment which encourages you to focus

Exercise 3. Check your memory. In the example answers below, some words are missing, Write them into the blank spaces, then go to the article 'Example Answers' (above) and check if you did it right.

(1) "My environment would be one where have a great deal of leeway in their and where communication is because it's, where employees are given ways to reach out for help or to it. Mixing face-to-face meetings,, a variety of electronic communication, and so on allows people to be"

flexible and to on the go, which makes them more by letting them have more control over their circumstances without on support.”

(2) “I enjoy the challenge of a fast work environment, with clear and the ability to work as a team and as an”

(3) “I appreciate work environments that out the best in me and my talents – companies that a lot from me, but also in me and let me be myself knowing that I’ll be to come through...”

(4) “I an environment that me to complete my work no what it takes, and surrounds me with that are also looking to similar goals.”

(5) “I prefer to work an adaptive work environment that based on the needs of the One that is able to fast paced challenges on deadlines, but is also light-hearted and can down when needs to be done.”

(6) “I love working in an that is open to and ideas, while also out the best from their workers.”

Exercise 4. Look at the examples of successful answers to the question about the preferred work environment. Pick out the ideas that suit you best and put together your own version of the answer for your future job interview.

"I can be flexible when it comes to my work environment. From your website, it looks like the environment in the engineering department here at RRS, Inc., is fast-paced and structured to expand production. I enjoy working in an area experiencing rapid growth, and I think many times this kind of environment is conducive to new ideas and applications."

When You Don't Have a Preference

"I have worked in many types of environments and enjoyed learning new things from each. I would say that while I don't have a preference for a particular environment, I really like working with people who are committed to getting things done and who are passionate about their work."

Dedicated and Productive Employees

"Generally speaking, I like to work in an environment where productivity is high, and the employees have a sense of commitment. In my experience, whether the culture is extremely fast-paced or more laid back, it's the dedication of the employees at all levels that makes the company successful and a great place to work."

Working With a Strong Team

"I enjoy working in an environment where the members of the team have a strong sense of camaraderie and a good work ethic. I like working with competent, kind, funny people who like to get things done. It's important to me to feel that I can trust my team members to always do their best because I do."

You Can Adapt to Any Work Environment

"Having worked in a variety of work environments, from very casual and laid-back to super fast-paced, I think I adapt well to most. I'm not familiar with what the corporate environment is here; can you tell me about it?"

Unit 25. Interview Question: Tell Me About a Time You Made a Mistake

- In this unit:**
- **How to answer the question “Tell me about a time you made a mistake”**
 - **Avoid making mistakes**
 - **Your strategy**
 - **Example answers**
 - **Tips for answering questions about mistakes and failures successfully**
 - **Practice section**

How to Answer the Question “Tell Me About a Time You Made a Mistake”

You might assume that hiring managers ask this question to torture candidates – to dig for any evidence of a flaw, any excuse to reject you. When you look at it this way, it's no wonder that many candidates freeze up and have trouble coming up with a good example of a failure.

It may reassure you to know that hiring managers don't expect you to be perfect. They know that everybody fails.

They ask this question to understand:

- Are you someone who can learn from failure?
- Are you self-aware enough to acknowledge failure and weakness?
- Do you take smart risks?
- How do you view success, failure, and risk in general?

After all, if you've never failed, then you've probably never succeeded on any significant level either.

- **NOTE: Prospective employers want to know:
Do you know how to fail smart and learn from your mistakes?**

The most common phrasing of the question is the simple, “Tell me about a time when you failed” or “Tell me about a failure.” There are some other variations on this theme as well:

- What's your greatest professional failure?
- Tell me about a mistake that you made.

- What was your biggest mistake and what did you learn from it?
- Tell me about a decision that you regret.
- What's your greatest professional regret?

In fact, the hiring managers do not expect you to be perfect. They know that everybody fails.

- NOTE: They ask this question to understand whether you are someone who:
 - can learn from failure
 - can take smart risks
 - is self-aware enough to acknowledge failure and weakness
 - has a certain vision of success, failure, and risk

After all, if you've never failed, then you've probably never succeeded on any significant level either. Prospective employers want to know: Do you know how to fail smart and learn from your mistakes?

Avoid Making Mistakes

(1) The most common mistake is to NOT answer the question. I can understand why a candidate might freeze up if asked about a failure. If you haven't prepared to address this topic, it can be daunting to try to instantly think of a good example and then describe it in a diplomatic way that shows you are both honest and a smart hire.

(2) Many candidates will um and uh for a while and finally say something like:

“Well, I can't think of any serious failures. I guess I've been fortunate to be pretty successful in most of my positions so far...”

That might seem like a safe way to answer. However, from the interviewer's perspective, you're not answering the question at all.

(3) This non-answer will be interpreted in one (or more) of four ways:

- You think you are perfect and thus have no self-awareness or ability to grow;
- You're hiding a history of tragic failures that you don't want us to know about;
- You don't hold yourself to a very high standard, so you never fail; or
- You always play it safe and never take any risks or make any bold moves.

None of these interpretations are particularly flattering.

(4) The other common way to screw up this question is to blurt out something without thinking it through. Some candidates get flustered and insert foot directly into mouth. They share something that makes them look bad.

Your Strategy

(5) To avoid any upsetting moments at the interview, every job candidate prepare an interview story about a failure. It is very important to select a failure example that will serve you well in job interviews. Everybody fails – in big and

small ways. The tricky part is to craft a failure example that highlights your strengths and smarts.

(6) Choose a real failure. You must answer the question. Don't go with something like: "We only improved sales by 35%, but I wanted to do more, so I felt like a failure. I guess I'm just a perfectionist."

(7) Define Failure in Your Own Words. The reason why you don't need to talk about some immense failure in which everything goes catastrophically and comically wrong is because you're going to spell out why you felt this situation was a failure. After you've picked your story, define failure in a way that works for it. Once failure is defined, your story no longer needs to be an obvious failure; it just has to be whatever you define failure to be. Here are a few examples for you:

(1) <i>"As a manager, I consider it a failure whenever I'm caught by surprise. I strive to know what's going on with my team and their work."</i>	(2) <i>"I think failure is more than just not meeting a goal, it's about not meeting a goal with the resources you're given. If I end up taking more time or supplies than I was originally allotted, that feels like a failure to me."</i>	(3) <i>"To me, failure is about not meeting expectations—others' as well as my own."</i>
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(8) Tell your story

Now that you've established how you evaluate failure, tell the story that you chose. Try not to spend too much time setting the stage, and get to the punch line quickly. Interviewers don't ask this question to see you squirm, they want to know how you handle setbacks—so get to the part where you're dealing with the failure as quickly as possible.

(9) Start with the situation, and explain why it was challenging. Then go into what you specifically did to try and rectify it. Presumably, since this is about failure, you will not be successful or will only be partially successful. That's fine. Do not try to cover up the fact that things didn't all go as planned. It's impossible to do well in an interview if the interviewer doesn't believe what you're saying, so don't try to sugar coat things.

(10) Don't raise red flags

At the same time, you don't have to confess your deepest and darkest secrets. Don't choose a failure that was the result of a serious personal mistake (totally forgot to attend the meeting) or character flaw (probably shouldn't have called the client "Sweet cheeks"). A team failure can work well because you share responsibility with others (just make sure you acknowledge your role and don't try to pass the buck completely)

(11) Share What You Learned

At the end of your response, after you relay the awful outcome of your story, you get to the good stuff. You want to wrap up with your lessons learned.

Talk about why you think things went badly, maybe what you would have done in hindsight, and, of course, what you'll be doing going forward.

(12) To sum up, if you want to feel confident in your interview, follow the two steps:

- Think of a story about a failure at work from your own experience; and
- Write down a few bullet points for each of the key aspects of your story (Situation/Task, Approach, and Results).

This method allows you to hit all of your key points while keeping your answer concise (this is very hard to do without focused preparation).

Example Answers

With a failure story, you want to get right to the point in the S/T section. Give them the basic facts about the situation/task.

Here is an example:

“I would say that my biggest professional failure was in my current role as a project manager at ABC Consulting Corp. Last year, our team failed to land a \$2 million new project from one of our existing clients. The project should have been ours, but we dropped the ball.”

The emphasis should be on the positive – the lessons learned, which you'll cover later in the R section. This candidate takes responsibility for the failure and doesn't try to sugarcoat it or lead with defensiveness.

After you have given a brief background of what the failure was, it's time to walk through a bit more detail about what happened and why.

- *“I think the biggest issue was that the whole team took it for granted that the project would be ours. We had a good relationship with the client and we had just wrapped up a very successful project for them.”*
- *“A team of us, led by the account manager, went to pitch. It was a solid pitch and we got great feedback.”*
- *“But in retrospect, we didn't go the extra mile to wow them. We didn't push as hard as we should have. That opened up the opportunity for a competitor to put on a big show and steal the business.”*
- *“At the same time, we failed to truly understand all of the client's key concerns. They told us that price was the #1 consideration, so we focused on demonstrating cost-effectiveness.”*
- *“Meanwhile, a new senior VP had come on board and I now realize that his priority was picking his own vendor and he saw us as his predecessor's pick. As the person working with the client team day to day, I should have picked up on that and found a way to address it.”*

This is a pretty insightful breakdown of what happened. There is enough detail to allow for a full understanding of the outcome, but the candidate doesn't go off on tangents or overwhelm with information.

The candidate has clearly thought about the causes of the failure and analyzed his own role.

He takes responsibility and identifies how both he and the overall team could have done better.

He doesn't raise red flags about his work ethic or professionalism.

A very good interview story always features a happy ending. With a good answer, you should describe positive outcome(s) of the actions that you took (*increased sales, reduced costs, winning presentation*).

Consider saying something like this in the end of your story:

“Losing the business was a real blow to the company – financially and from a morale perspective too.”

“I actually volunteered to lead the analysis of what happened and see what we could learn.”

“Our #1 lesson as a team was to never take a client for granted – and to never, ever settle for a “good-enough” pitch. We have to hit all of our presentations out of the park. And I can honestly say that we’ve done so ever since – and it has led to a record year for new business in our group.”

“Personally, I learned that I need to pay more attention to the dynamics within the client organization and read between the lines more.”

“As the project manager, sales isn't the main focus of my job. However, as a daily contact with the client organization, there is a lot that I can do to help the company bring in new business.”

“I decided to take a sales course to develop my skills and have found that I now really enjoy being closely involved in the business development process – and I am pretty good at it.”

“In fact, I made a point of staying in touch with my client contact from the lost project and continued to nurture that relationship.”

“As a result, when that contact moved to a competitor, she ultimately brought ABC in for an even bigger project than the one we lost.”

In these sample statements the candidate analyzes what went wrong and what he learned from the experience. He looks at it from the organizational, team, and individual perspectives.

He demonstrates that his lessons were well learned by discussing the success of subsequent sales pitches.

He takes responsibility without seeming negative or defensive

He puts more focus on the R (what was learned) than on the failure.

If you're a regular reader, you know how much we emphasize practice. Interview practice may not be exciting, but it is incredibly effective. I have seen

the difference that practice had made for thousands of job seekers, especially when it comes to answering difficult behavioral questions (including questions about failures).

The truth is undeniable: candidates who prepare and practice land more job offers. To paraphrase the old saying: Don't fail to prepare, prepare to discuss your failure.

Practice!

Exercise 1. In the article *How to Answer the Question "Tell Me About a Time You Made a Mistake"* some words are underlined. Write them down into a column and provide each word with a definition. If needed, use a dictionary.

Exercise 2. In the article 'Avoid Making Mistakes' paragraphs are numbered for your convenience. Read them one after another and write down one sentence for each paragraph that best describes its main idea. Then, exchange your results with a partner (group-mate), read each other's statements for every paragraph. Revise and edit your statements and develop the final – revised and improved – list of 12 sentences, according to the number of paragraphs in the original article.

Exercise 3. Explain the meanings of the following words and phrases from 'Avoid Making Mistakes' article:

- (1) freeze up, address (a) topic, daunting, instantly think of, a smart hire
- (2) um and uh, pretty successful, a safe way to answer
- (3) non-answer, have no self-awareness, hold (oneself) to a high standard, play safe, make a bold move, flattering
- (4) screw up, blurt out, think through, get flustered, insert foot into mouth
- (5) an interview story, a failure example, in big and small ways, craft an example, strengths and smarts
- (6) a perfectionist
- (7) immense, spell out, define, obvious,
- (8) evaluate, set the stage, get to the punch line, squirm, handle setbacks, dealing with smth.
- (9) go into, rectify, presumably, to sugar coat things
- (10) raise red flags, confess, character flaw
- (11) outcome, wrap up, lessons learned
- (12) sum up, bullet points, hit all key points, concise

Exercise 4. Write your answer to the interview question, 'Tell Me About a Time You Made a Mistake'.

Unit 26. Interview Question: Would You Work Holidays/Weekends?

- In this unit:**
- **How to answer the question: “Would you work holidays/weekends?”**
 - **Points to emphasize**
 - **Mistakes you should avoid**
 - **Example answers**
 - **Practice section**

How to Answer the Question: “Would You Work Holidays/Weekends?”

There are several questions you might encounter during an interview for an internship or entry-level job. One question you’re likely to come across is “Would you work holidays and/or weekends?” Employers ask it to gauge your flexibility and your ability to juggle work and other commitments. In some cases, your answer can directly affect whether you’re hired for a position. Here are some things to keep in mind as you prepare your answer.

Be realistic about your time

If the employer is looking for someone who can be available 24/7, and you know that just isn’t feasible for you, be honest from the start rather than having that miscommunication later. It’s much easier to take on more work later than to scale back after you’ve agreed to perform the job. You may say something like:

“I have no problem with working on holidays or weekends as long as I can set my schedule as far in advance as possible.”

Don’t give more detail than necessary. If your grandma has already asked for your help executing Thanksgiving this year, that’s wonderful, but your future employer doesn’t need to know.

Know your limits

Remember that the employer has needs too, one of which is the confidence that a candidate can fulfill all of a job’s requirements—time commitments being one of them. Still, most employers will work with you around legitimate concerns and/or scheduling issues if they feel as though you are the best person for the job and you’re straightforward with them about your scheduling needs from the start. You may say something like:

“Unfortunately, because of my family commitments, I can’t commit to working every holiday, but I could definitely give up some when the company needs it.”

By demonstrating flexibility and commitment to the position, you’ll impress the interviewer and get one step closer to landing the job.

Points to Emphasize

When you answer this question, try to be as accommodating as possible without misleading the interviewer about your timetable.

- Show some flexibility in your schedule.
- If you can't work weekends or holidays, give a viable reason as to why not.

- Emphasize your time management and efficiency while on the job.
- Be both tactful and confident in your response.

Be positive in your reply and show how excited you are to work with the company. If you can, refocus the conversation back to what you can bring to the enterprise.

Stating expectations and desires about working nights, weekends, or holidays is not wrong, as long as candidates provide an honest, sensible reason as to why. It is best to explain these commitments during the hiring process. When crafting an answer, consider:

- Personal goals or habits
- Family obligations
- Lifestyle choices

When these conflict with night, weekend, or holiday hours, applicants should still try to convey their openness to working different times for the best chance at a successful job interview.

Mistakes You Should Avoid

As you respond to the question, keep in mind what the hiring manager is probably looking for.

- Do not commit to a schedule that you will not be able to maintain.
- Avoid concealing other time consuming obligations.
- Do not disclose more information about your schedule than necessary.
- Do not forget to account for the industry you are working in.

You should tailor your answer without misinforming the hiring manager. Even if you think your response is not what he or she is looking for, it is better to be honest than to find yourself working more or less than you wanted.

Example Answers

Remember, you should be realistic and honest when discussing your schedule. Employers are often willing to work around legitimate concerns such as family or education. Plus, you also want to make sure the position fits your expectations. Here is an example of an answer:

(1)

"I'm a single parent, so while I can pick up an occasional weekend shift, I cannot commit to working every weekend. However, my holidays are much more flexible as long as I set my schedule in advance.

I'm an efficient worker, so though I will gladly put in extra time as needed, I find I can get the vast majority of my work tasks completed during the regular workweek. Although, I have no problem with the occasional long

work weekend or holiday.”

Here are a few more examples of good answers:

(2) Waiter or Waitress Job	<i>“I understand a restaurant is busiest during nights and weekends. I am willing to work as much as you need me. That said, I also value a work-life balance. If at all possible, I would like every other Friday or Saturday off.”</i>
(3) Sales Associate Position	<i>“Certain holidays are very important to me because I spend time with my family. Besides that, I can pick up any night and weekend shifts. I am also willing to work more time around the holiday season to help with the extra business.”</i>
(4) Administrative Assistant	<i>“I have young kids who I would like to spend my evenings with, so I prefer to only work in the daytime. I know some times are busier than others, though, and I am willing to pick up hours when I am needed.”</i>

Practice!

Exercise 1. Study the information provided in the article ‘Would You Work Holidays/Weekends’. Find the following words and phrases in the article and make sure you understand the meanings:

encounter, internship, entry-level job, gauge, flexibility, juggle, commitments, affect, scale back, perform, legitimate concerns, scheduling issues, tactful, convey, conceal, time consuming, disclose

Exercise 2 Retell the information of the unit with your group-mates in a dialog; exchange your opinions about working on holidays/weekends; wherever possible, provide examples to illustrate your opinions.

Exercise 3. Read through the example answers provided above and write down your own answer to this question. Prepare to discuss it with your group-mates and to explain why you would (or would not) like to work extra hours, night shifts, or on weekends.

Unit 27. Interview Question:

How Would You Deal with an Angry or Irate Customer?

- In this unit:**
- How to answer questions about dealing with angry or irate customers
 - Mistakes you should avoid
 - Example answers
 - Practice section

How to Answer Questions About Dealing with Angry or Irate Customers

No one likes mean and unhappy customers, but you will probably deal with them no matter where you work. Your interviewers are asking you this

question to really get a feel on how you handle frustration and to see how much you value customers. Inquiring about your reaction, they try to understand your attitude. It is in accordance with the internal policy of the company? Do you understand the golden rule that the customer is always right even if they are wrong?

When answering the question, you should emphasize that you try to avoid any arguments with customers, going above and beyond with your service. Then you should elaborate on it, saying what you would do with an angry customer.

The following sample answers should help you to compose your own interview answer.

(1) *“I try my best to avoid that. I always listen carefully to their needs, and try to satisfy them with my service. However, some customers will be angry, doesn’t matter what we do. If that happened to me, I would apologize to the customer, and if my apology did not help, I would seek an assistance of a more experienced colleague.”*

(2) *“I would try to identify the problem. I would ask them what exactly made them unhappy in regards to my service, and I would try to help them. However, if I was unable to solve them problem, I would most likely try to simply proceed with their checkout, so they would not disturb other customers. One has to count to meet some angry customers, it is just a part of the job. It would neither distract nor upset me.”*

Mistakes You Should Avoid

Remember, customers are extremely important to businesses so you really want to avoid answers like:

(1) *“HmMMM no clue, I hate conflict.”*

(2) *“I had a customer who kept complaining about their food being too cold, so I spit in their food. Is that what you're looking for?”*

(3) *“Just walk away. I don't have enough time to deal with rude people.”*

(4) *“My mom tells me I'm really good at throwing temper tantrums, so I could totally see myself going a little crazy and start to throw things.”*

(5) *“You know, I really hate customers. They think they are soooo great because they can walk into a store and shop. Hello!?! You're nothing special and you have no right to get upset with me. I'd get up in their face and be like, ‘LISTEN...’”*

These answers really tell the interviewer that customers are not a priority to you and that you'd make a pretty scary employee; you'd definitely be a risky hire for them!

Example Answers

Here are a few good examples to follow:

(1) *“I am a firm believer in the customer comes first. I’ve learned to not take the things that customers say about their experience personally, which really helps when it comes to diffusing the situation. I always try to really understand the complaint and do the best I can to solve the issue. If they are really upset I would then get the manager. Sometimes they just want to talk to a manager to know that their complaints are being heard.”*

(2) *“In my previous job at AT&T, I was confronted with irate customers on a daily basis. People were not satisfied with their invoices, the money they had to pay, and they often blamed me for that. I always calmly explained them, in a simple language, why the numbers didn’t match their expectations. I maintained a friendly attitude, and it worked most of the time, as soon as they understood I was not their enemy, just an employee doing their job.”*

(3) *“This is my first job application, so I do not have a similar experience. However, if it happened in a bank, I would try to understand the customer, listening carefully, and asking additional questions while trying to identify the real problem they have. I would definitely not argue with them. Anyway, I count with this behavior, and angry customers would not discourage me in job.”*

Practice!

Exercise 1. Think of situations when you had to deal with angry or irate people in your life; write down the story and describe how you managed to deal with the unusual situation. Check whether your story responds to the tips provided in the article ‘How to Answer Questions About Dealing with Angry or Irate Customers’ Revise and edit your story to make it comply with the suggestions from the article.

Exercise 2. Study the example answers to the interview question about dealing with angry or irate customers, provided in this unit. Write your own answer to the question. You are welcome to use some ideas and words/phrases from the example answers above.

Unit 28. Interview Question:

Tell Me About an Accomplishment You Are Most Proud Of

- In this unit:**
- **How to speak about accomplishments you are most proud of**
 - **Your strategy**
 - **Mistakes you should avoid**
 - **Put together the story about your most significant achievement**
 - **Example answers**
 - **Practice section**

How to Speak About Accomplishments You Are Most Proud Of

(1) If your interviewer asks you this question, consider yourself lucky. It's the perfect opportunity to talk about your most impressive experience. Unfortunately, most candidates waste this wonderful opportunity because they aren't prepared and/or don't feel comfortable "bragging."

(2) Most people don't have a lot of practice talking about their accomplishments. If you are an introvert or a bit on the modest side, this can feel very challenging. You may even have been taught that it's rude or obnoxious to brag about your achievements. What might come across as obnoxious at a cocktail party, however, is perfectly acceptable and welcomed in a job interview.

(3) If you can't get comfortable talking about yourself and your accomplishments, you are not giving yourself the best shot at the opportunities that you deserve. You can't rely on the interviewer to read between the lines or notice how great you are from just your resume and a little chit chat.

(4) On the other hand, you don't want to come across as full of yourself, entitled, or rude.

(5) You can easily avoid this by preparing in advance so that you'll feel comfortable talking about yourself and your work in a positive, natural way that conveys confidence, but not cockiness.

(6) How do you do this? I'm here to show you the approach that has worked for so many of my coaching clients and Big Interview subscribers.

(7) First, a little trip into the mind of the interviewer to understand their perspective.

(8) If an interviewer asks you about your greatest accomplishment(s), that means they really want to know what sets you apart from other qualified candidates, to get a better sense of what you've done and what you value.

(9) In fact, every hiring manager wants this information even if they don't know enough to ask you about your greatest accomplishment. Interviewing is not a lot of fun for them. They're in the room because they want to find the best candidate. You can make it a lot easier for them by cutting to the chase and leading with your best material.

(10) I'm a big believer in identifying your "greatest hits" and creating concise interview stories about each of them.

(11) That way, you have great answers for this behavioral question and also develop a comfort level talking about your achievements in general (which will help you in so many other parts of the interview as well).

(12) "What is your greatest accomplishment?" is a behavioral interview question. Some variations include: "What are you most proud of?", "What were your biggest wins in your most recent role?," "Tell me about a time when you went above and beyond the call of duty." Before we dive into how to answer this particular question, a quick refresher on the concept of behavioral interviews: Behavioral interview questions are the ones that ask you for

specific examples of past work experiences. The ones that start with “Tell me about a time when you...” or “Give me an example of...”

(13) The idea is to understand past job performance as a way to predict how a candidate would approach the job if hired. Behavioral questions can be used to test a candidate in any number of competency areas (a few popular examples: teamwork, leadership, work ethic)

(14) Job interviewing is an imperfect process. It’s impossible to truly know who’s the best candidate after just a couple of conversations. However, we (interviewers and candidates) do the best we can with the best process we have.

(15) For interviewers, asking behavioral interview questions is the most reliable way to get a sense of who the candidate is and how they approach their work.

(16) For candidates, strong answers to behavioral questions allow them to stand out from the pack and highlight their best qualities.

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Note: Your Greatest Accomplishments = Your Greatest Selling Points
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Your Strategy

Surprisingly, many bright and accomplished candidates fail to spend enough time strategizing about which examples to highlight in their interviews and how. This is usually for one or more of the following reasons:

- They are good communicators so they think their stories will just flow naturally in conversation. The problem here is that an interview is not a typical conversation and going with the flow usually leads to weak examples (the one that comes to mind in the moment isn’t the best one, or they can’t remember all of the details, or they get caught up in a long-winded answer)

- They don’t feel comfortable “bragging,” so they have good stories, but they don’t tell them in a memorable and compelling way (usually either too general or too long-winded).

- They get overwhelmed trying to figure out what behavioral questions to prepare for, how much detail they should include, what makes a good story, etc.

The best way to prepare for this moment in the interview is by identifying at least 3 of your “greatest hits” stories. Your “greatest hits” are your most impressive, interesting, and relevant accomplishments.

A good greatest hit story can be used in a variety of different ways and to answer different behavioral questions. For example, one story about a successful project could be used to demonstrate leadership, problem solving, or ability to deal with conflict.

Your greatest hit story is the one that you want to use for a question about your proudest accomplishment. Choose the story that you think best represents why you would be a great fit for the position.

If you have a set of 3-5 greatest hits stories, you can adapt for different opportunities and lead with the one most relevant for each job description.

Keep in mind that I don't advocate writing out a story and memorizing it word-for-word. As always, I recommend the STAR approach for outlining your story. The STAR framework will help you focus on the key details so you can tell a story that's authentic, memorable, and concise.

The goal is to write out a few bullet points for each of the key aspects of your story (Situation/Task, Approach, and Results). This lets you focus in on your key themes without being too scripted.

As this interview question gives you an opportunity to share the reasons that you would thrive at the job you are interviewing for, make sure to do the following:

- Describe the practical skills that enabled you to succeed.
- Explain the specific strategy that you used or the steps that you took to meet your objective.
- Mention any obstacles or challenges that you encountered and overcame.
- Touch on any useful knowledge or insights that you gained during the process.

Provide detailed information to establish credibility and help the interviewer understand the value of your accomplishment.

Mistakes You Should Avoid

During the interview, be sincere and descriptive when you answer this question.

- Don't undermine your accomplishment by trying to act modest.
- Don't provide an overly simple or short answer that won't give the interviewer any useful insights.
- Don't focus on achievements that have little relevance to the job that you are applying for.
- Don't exaggerate a real accomplishment or fabricate one that you think will sound impressive.

Put Together the Story About Your Most Significant Achievement

Avoid these clichéd answers and choose something that's specific to you. It should be a tangible event or accomplishment that you can pinpoint and measure – if you raised money for charity, how much did you raise in the end? It's no good giving a vague response, such as 'becoming more confident when meeting new people', unless you can develop it. As with competency-based interviews, you should aim to use the **STAR** technique.

Situation: give the interviewer a context – describe the situation and why the achievement was significant. Why was it difficult to achieve?

Task: what goal did you aim to achieve?

Action: explain what your specific actions to achieve your goal were.

Result: make sure it's a clear and specific event.

It should be something that wasn't easy; great answers show the recruiter how you had to be determined, dedicated or confident in the face of a challenge in order to succeed. You really need to show off the benefits to the recruiter. Does your achievement show that you've got great self-motivation and self-awareness and that you always achieve what you set your mind to? Then make sure this comes across.

You can choose a professional achievement that's related to the role, such as exceeding sales targets in your part-time job, but you don't have to. It's more important that it's an achievement you're genuinely proud of – if you're not passionate about it, that will come across to the interviewer.

If you're still struggling to come up with something, think about whether you've done any of these:

- Trained for and finally completed a marathon or other sporting achievement
- Set up a new student society or turned a struggling one into something more successful
- Overcome a fear by completing something you were frightened of
- Gone travelling alone despite nerves
- Given a presentation at an event and got over public speaking worries
- Raised a certain amount of money for charity
- Helped others to succeed – for example, by teaching them a new skill

This is also your opportunity to talk about something you haven't been able to discuss in your interview so far. You could prepare a few significant achievements to choose from on the day so that you can pick up the extra skills and experiences that haven't been discussed in the interview yet. There's also no reason why you can't mention more than one achievement or the fact that you have plenty of other goals and achievements yet to come.

Example Answers

Let us take a look at a few example answers.

(1) *“At my last position, I oversaw the implementation of a new software system, which is now used by over 100 employees. I developed a customized training program, worked one-on-one with about one-quarter of the employees and introduced an incentive program to ensure that they stay current with the software. This allowed me to practice planning a large-scale project and motivating a sizable group of employees.”*

No matter how far you have advanced in your career or what your accomplishments are, answering this question well can be a great way to show an interviewer why are uniquely qualified for the job.

Example Answer for Entry Level Job Seekers:

(2) *“I'm most proud of my work in my recent internship. I had the chance to help develop a new Android app for a fast-growing startup and I took the lead on the project after one of the other team members quit. This was outside*

the original scope of my internship, but ended up being a great opportunity to learn and show what I'm capable of. I was able to deliver the app on time before the end of my internship, and have deployed it to the Google Play store. It currently has 25,000 users and over 100 four- or five-star reviews. I can send you the URL if you're interested."

Example Answer for Experienced Job Seekers:

(3) "My proudest accomplishment was a new content marketing strategy that I created for our sales and marketing department this year. This was a three-month project and it was the first project I led from start to finish. I enjoy leading and want to do more of this in my career, which is why this project meant a lot to me. In the six months since the launch of this program, my company grew our website visitors by 43%, and boosted the number of customers that contact us for a free consultation by 20%. That's our primary way of getting leads, so the CEO is extremely happy about this and called me into her office to personally thank me and acknowledge what I did."

After you give your answer, you should definitely expect follow-up questions. When employers ask this question, it's to find out about you as a person – your interests, your strengths, etc. This isn't just a question where they ask and move on.

So don't panic when they ask for more details or continue with related questions. It just means they're interested in learning about you and hearing how you handle challenges and why this particular achievement made you most proud.

Example of a results-based response

(4) "I experienced my greatest achievement when I worked as a website manager for an entertainment outlet. The website was struggling at the time; my team was under pressure, and I was tasked with forming a strategy to increase traffic."

"I noticed the Oscars were in a month's time, so I devised an Oscars campaign across video, written and social platforms and linked the content to popular search terms. After executing the campaign, I increased content output by 15% and traffic by 20%, showing I can get results in challenging situations."

Example of a skills-based response

(5) "My greatest achievement was when I worked as a sales representative. I was given a list of new targets, and later that month I arranged a meeting with one of our biggest prospective clients."

"I used my communication skills to build a relationship with the director over time. He was unwilling to purchase our product at first, but after I met with him multiple times, formed a bond with him and conveyed the benefits of our product, he was happy to buy from us."

"I was delighted to bring on board such a lucrative client, and the client"

is now one of our biggest. I've since learned communication is one of my strongest traits."

Example of a values-based response

(6) "My greatest achievement occurred in my current marketing position. I joined as a marketing executive and was keen to progress internally from the outset. I proved my abilities by discovering profitable new markets and increasing brand awareness, and I was later promoted to marketing manager.

"I was delighted to earn a promotion as this is the kind of success I look for in every role. I now have new duties and plenty of variety in my role, which I'm pleased about. I hope I can bring my valuable knowledge to this role, and develop my career with you in the same way."

By now you'll see that you that 'what's your greatest achievement?' is all about revealing facts and figures, showing off relevant skills and values and giving a confident performance.

Practice!

Exercise 1. In the article "How to Speak About Accomplishments You Are Most Proud Of" all passages are numbered. Read the article and write down a key word/phrase that best describes the idea of the passage. Then, retell what you have read using the key phrases as a plan for your retelling.

Exercise 2. Check your language memory: read 'Your Strategy' section, copied below, and insert the missing words instead of figures wherever necessary:

Your Strategy

Surprisingly, many bright and **(1)** candidates fail to spend enough time strategizing about which examples to highlight in their interviews and how. This is usually for one or more of the **(2)** reasons:

- They are good communicators so they think their **(3)** will just flow naturally in conversation. The problem here is that an interview is not a typical **(4)** and going with the flow usually leads to weak examples (the one that comes to mind in the moment isn't the best one, or they can't remember all of the details, or they get caught up in a long-winded answer)

- They don't feel comfortable "bragging," so they have good stories, but they don't tell them in a memorable and **(5)** way (usually either too general or too long-winded).

- They get overwhelmed trying to **(6)** out what behavioral questions to prepare for, how much detail they should include, what makes a good story, etc.

The best way to prepare for this moment in the interview is by **(7)** at least 3 of your "greatest hits" stories. Your "greatest hits" are your most impressive, interesting, and **(8)** accomplishments.

A good greatest hit story can be used in a **(9)** of ways and to answer different behavioral questions. For example, one story about a successful

project could be used to demonstrate leadership, problem solving, or ability to (10) with conflict.

Your greatest hit story is the one that you want to use for a question about your proudest (11). Choose the story that you think best represents why you would be a great (12) for the position.

If you have a set of 3-5 greatest hits stories, you can (13) for different opportunities and lead with the one most relevant for each job description.

Keep in (14) mind that I don't advocate writing out a story and (15) it word-for-word. As always, I recommend the STAR approach for (16) your story. The STAR framework will help you focus on the key details so you can tell a story that's authentic, memorable, and (17).

The goal is to write out a few (18) points for each of the key aspects of your story (Situation/Task, Approach, and Results). This lets you (19) in on your key themes without being too scripted.

As this interview question gives you an opportunity to (20) the reasons that you would thrive at the job you are interviewing for, make sure to do the following:

- Describe the practical skills that (21) you to succeed.
- Explain the specific strategy that you used or the steps that you took to meet your (22).
- Mention any (23) or challenges that you encountered and overcame.
- Touch on any useful knowledge or (24) that you gained during the process.

Provide detailed information to establish (25) and help the interviewer understand the value of your accomplishment.

Exercise 3. Study the information provided in the paragraph 'Mistakes You Should Avoid'.

(1) In your own words, define the meanings of these phrases:

to undermine (one's) accomplishment, to act modest, to provide an overly simple answer, to provide an insight, to have little relevance to the job, to exaggerate, to fabricate, to sound impressive.

(2) What is the STAR technique? What do the letters 'S', 'T', 'A', 'R' stand for?

(3) Why is it good to choose a professional achievement that's related to your anticipated role in the employer's company?

(4) Why is it good to prepare a few significant achievements to choose from rather than just one?

Exercise 4. Look at the example answers for the interview question about accomplishments you are most proud of. Analyze why each of them is good in its unique way. Decide which answer(s) you would like to use as an example when preparing your own answer. Pay attention to the use of these words and phrases in each answer:

(1) *I oversaw the implementation of..., I developed a..., I worked one-on-one with..., I introduced an incentive program to ensure that... , to stay current with..., this allowed me to..., a large-scale project”*

(2) *I’m most proud of..., I had the chance to..., I took the lead on..., this was outside the original scope of..., it ended up being a..., opportunity to learn, show what I’m capable of, I was able to deliver...*

(3) *My proudest accomplishment was..., I created..., this was a three-month project, the project I led from start to finish, I enjoy leading, this project meant a lot to me*

(4) *“I experienced my greatest achievement when..., I was tasked with..., I noticed, I devised, after executing the campaign, I increased... (output)*

(5) *My greatest achievement was when..., I was given a list of new targets, I arranged a meeting, I used my communication skills to..., I formed a bond with..., I was delighted to bring on board..., I’ve since learned communication is one of my strongest traits*

(6) *My greatest achievement occurred in..., I joined as..., I was keen to..., I proved my abilities by..., I was later promoted to, I was delighted to earn a promotion, I have new duties and plenty of variety in my role, I’m pleased about, I hope I can bring my valuable knowledge to...*

Exercise 5. Write down three versions of your own answer to the question about your best accomplishments: a results-based, a skills-based and a values-based response. Do not forget to use STAR technique when putting together your answers.

Unit 29. Interview Question:

If I Called Your Boss/Tutor Right Now and Asked Him What Is an Area That You Could Improve On, What Would He Say?

- In this unit:**
- **How to answer this question**
 - **Your strategy**
 - **Mistakes you should avoid**
 - **An expert’s opinion**
 - **Example answers**
 - **Practice section**

How to Answer This Question

When your interviewers ask you this question, they really aren’t trying to make you uncomfortable, and they aren’t even necessarily looking to see how you assess your own performance. Instead, they are getting an insight into how you discuss your supervisors and their demands. They are looking for two things:

- 1) your ability to view yourself from an external perspective; and

2) potential insights from others who know you well as a third party objective opinion. This allows them to better understand your outlook as an employee and your methods for communicating about sensitive topics.

In asking the question, the interviewer will likely also probe the source of the answer. So be ready to answer the follow-up question of "Why do you think they would say that?"

The best approach to answering this question:

This is where having written letters of recommendation can help you in the interview. Most people ask for letters of recommendation after the interviews are over, when references are being checked in prep for a potential offer. However, if you do your homework in advance, this is something you should be doing before you interview. It is also the best way to bulletproof your references in advance.

If you have a professor with whom you've had a close relationship, ask for a letter of recommendation to be used with future employers. If you have had an internship, ask for a letter of recommendation from your boss and/or others with whom you have worked.

If you have work experience that has generated a performance review, this may also be used as your documentation. Work awards can also be used. The best approach to answering this question is to be able to back it up with a written letter of recommendation, awards or other performance documentation.

Your Strategy

When answering a question about what someone else thinks of you, there are a few points you want to be sure to emphasize.

- When you talk about your weaknesses always talk about how you are trying to improve.

- Answer with something that your manager would actually want you to improve on. Be honest.

- Discuss non-essential skills, so the interviewer won't see it as a negative.

- Try to turn negatives into positives. This can be harder when talking about what your manager saw as a negative.

- If you feel like your current boss would mention that you have been improving in a core area, mention that so that you can talk about how.

- It might be worthwhile to discuss how this area where you need improvement fits into the overall picture for the job, so they understand how this skill or task fits into your job description.

- The best thing you can do is focus on something you are fairly new to doing, so that you can show how you grow into tasks and what you do to improve as you acclimate.

- Remember, they want sober assessment. Try to be lightly positive, but not overconfident.

The biggest point to emphasize is the truth. The hiring manager doesn't want to hear a story you made up.

Mistakes You Should Avoid

These are common missteps that can cost you the job, but with a little planning and foresight it's not too hard to get around them.

- Never use this as an opportunity to question your boss's judgment about your performance. This is a toxic strategy that hiring managers will pick up on right away.

- Don't focus too much on your individual negative performances or get lost in anecdotes, this is about more general tasks or traits.

- Avoid blame-shifting, especially if you are interviewing for a position that is heavily team-oriented.

- You should not be your own biggest critic. It's important to be honest, but keep your language direct and informative and avoid talking yourself down.

An example of how you should NOT answer this question:

"Well, I'm not quite sure, since I really didn't have much of a relationship with any of my professors. I doubt any of them actually knew who I was. You see, I went to a public university and most of the classes were in big lecture halls. So it was really difficult to get to know a professor on a personal level. I met some of the TA's when I went in for help and tutoring and they would probably say I was a little bit slow to learn the material, but eventually got it."

Example Answers

Here are a few example answers for you to study. The key is the strategy for improvement, and the commitment to hearing criticism and responding constructively.

(1) *"I think my boss would probably say I take a bit more than I should, and it makes me tire out. We've strategized this together, and I have developed a stronger sense about when to delegate over time, but I still do have ups and downs in my productivity because of the occasional over-scheduling."*

Never forget that the interviewer is trying to see if you would fit in at the company. Don't take any of the questions too personally. Here is another example of an answer:

(2) *"My previous manager would like me to improve on sharing my ideas during meetings, keeping my expectations realistic and becoming more organized. I have been working on becoming more vocal during meetings. I tend to just think to myself and share later, but I know it is more beneficial for the group to share when everyone is there. I have to keep my expectations realistic because I always want to finish everything way ahead of schedule, and that's not always possible. When I started out I wasn't that organized, but I've really come a long way there. I've implemented a new organization system recently."*

An example of how to best answer this question for experienced candidates:

(3) *"My boss would say that I was one of the most productive individuals on the team and that I was key to helping our team achieve our goals for the year. We not only met our key goals for the year, we also delivered on two additional projects, one of which won the President's Award for outstanding achievement. I know she would say that, because that's what she wrote in my performance appraisal. I have a copy of it for your review, along with a copy of the President's Award that I received for the Afterburner Project. Would you like to see them?"*

An example of how to best answer this question for entry level candidates:

(4) *"I have received personal feedback from several of my professors, who refer to me as one of the most dedicated students with whom they have worked along with recommending me for the Outstanding Student in Accounting Award. I won that award my Senior year and had been recommended by the Department Chair. I have his letter or recommendation along with the copy of the award, would you like to see them?"*

Practice!

Exercise 1. Read the information about answering the interview questions about the areas you should improve on. Answer the questions:

- (1) Why do interviewers ask candidates the question about the areas they could improve on?
- (2) What are the two things the interviewers are looking for when asking the question?
- (3) What is the follow-up question the interviewers usually ask?
- (4) What is the use of letters of recommendation at a job interview?
- (5) Should you take any written confirmations of your professionalism and accomplishments to the interview? Why?

Exercise 2. In the section about your answer strategy, a bullet-list of eight useful tips is provided. Read them through and try to reproduce them by finishing the sentences below:

- When you talk about your weaknesses always talk about...
- Answer with something that your manager would...
- Discuss non-essential skills, so the interviewer won't...
- Try to turn negatives into positives. This can be harder when...
- If you feel like your current boss would mention that....
- It might be worthwhile to discuss how this area where you need improvement fits into the...
- The best thing you can do is focus on...
- Remember, they want sober assessment. Try to be...

Exercise 3. What are the common missteps that candidates often make when answering the questions about the areas they should improve on? Discuss the following questions in a dialog with your group-mates.

(1) Why is it a bad idea to question your boss's judgment about your performance?

(2) How much can you afford to share about your individual negative performances?

(3) What kind of discussion should you avoid when interviewing for a team-oriented position?

(4) What is the best balance between being honest and avoiding too much self-criticism at an interview?

Exercise 4. Prepare your sample answer to the question of this unit and be ready to discuss/defend it in a classroom discussion.

Part 5: Working Through Interview Questions

Describing Your Social Skills



Unit 30. Interview Question: Give a Time When You Went Above and Beyond the Requirements For a Project

- In this unit:**
- How to answer this question
 - Points to emphasize
 - Mistakes you should avoid
 - Example answers
 - Practice section

How to Answer This Question

Like many behavioral interview questions, this one may have some hidden meaning behind it. Understanding what is really being asked is important for giving a strong answer.

When asking for an example of something, interviewers generally are trying to confirm that you have that quality. They may be less interested in your actual example, but they are interested in how confidently you are able to demonstrate this ability in yourself. They should be certain that you are an employee that goes above and beyond by the end of your example.

Your interviewer is expecting that you will share a past example versus a more vague statement like “I always go above and beyond”.... so that is exactly what you need to prepare.

First, think about your past work and/or internship experience and think about a time when you took a task to the next level. If you have a few examples to choose from, pick the one most relevant to the job you're interviewing for.

If you're having a tough time coming up with an example from a job, think about any volunteer work you've done, school projects (if you're a recent graduate) or anything else in your life that you really feel you took to the next level. Generally, professional experiences are best, but a more personal one can be your next option.

Still not coming up with anything? There must be something in your life, school, or work experience that you put lots of effort into and went well beyond what was asked for. It doesn't have to be a really grand, intense example. Just one that shows you're willing to go the extra mile.

It could be something like this:

“When I was still working with my previous employers, I was given a project and the requirements for it. Immediately, I recognized that the requirements were not enough to get the job done properly. I knew that those were the minimum expectations, and that they would be acceptable, but the project would fail even if my managers were satisfied. I decided I needed to do the project justice, even though I had to work on it at home on the weekends.”

Points to Emphasize

When answering this question, you are just trying to establish that you are hardworking. Just ensure that you properly communicate that one point.

- Confidence is everything. No matter what your example is, you should be confident that it proves that you go above and beyond.
- Focus on the quality they ask about. Do not get sidetracked explaining other implications of your example.
- Put more effort into the take-away of your story than in the presentation.
- It will be especially effective if your example is from a working experience in a related field.

You should highlight the positive aspects of your example. You might also emphasize the impact it had on your character.

NOTE: Remember to answer each interview question behaviorally, whether it is a behavioral question or not. The easiest way to do this is to use an example from your background and experience. Then use the **S-T-A-R** approach to make the answer a STAR: talk about a Situation or Task (**S-T**), the Action you took (**A**) and the Results achieved (**R**). This is what makes your interview answer uniquely yours and will make your answer a star!

Mistakes You Should Avoid

Just remember what the interviewer is trying to take away from your example. If you focus on that, and cut out all other aspects, your answer will be strong.

- Do not worry about coming up with a profound example. Anything, even simple examples, will be adequate as long as they are relevant.
- Do not forget which quality they are asking about. Tangents may include other good qualities, but they diminish the strength of your example.
- Never exaggerate. The whole point is believability. It is pointless if they do not buy your story.
- Avoid rushing an answer to prompt a more comfortable question.

An example of how you should NOT answer this question:

"Well, I usually do just the minimum required to get the job done. But recently I was able to pad my work estimate so that I finished the project ahead of schedule. The user was really happy about it, even though it was just me giving a lot of fluff in the initial estimate. I always find that it's best to underpromise so that whatever I deliver is considered overdelivered..."

Example Answers

When giving an example of a time you went above and beyond, your answer should probably be similar to this:

(1) *"When I was still working with my previous employers, I was given a project and the requirements for it. Immediately, I recognized that the requirements were not enough to get the job done properly. I knew that those were the minimum expectations, and that they would be acceptable, but the project would fail even if my managers were satisfied. I decided I needed to do the project justice, even though I had to work on it at home on the weekends."*

You could start out by saying something along the lines of "going above and beyond is something I've done often in my career" or "*generally when faced with a task, I try to not only execute on it, but also think about how I can do it 110%.*"

Then, share an example to back that up. You want your example to be clear, to the point, and demonstrate the fact that you went above and beyond what you were expected to do.

Always be authentic. Interviewers are smart and they know a canned, robotic, response when they hear one.

The best approach to answering this question:

Select a time when you exceeded expectations, even if it was only for one part of the requirements for the project or assignment. If you are an experienced candidate, you should select a recent work project. If you are an entry level or internship candidate, the ideal is to select an internship experience. However, if you do not have one, you can select a school assignment, ideally one that is career related. Give specifics about the requirements and how you exceeded them.

An example of how to best answer this question for experienced candidates:

(2) *"In my most recent project, our users asked to add a new feature to*

the product. Since this was essentially a bolt-on addition to some rather antiquated code, I dug deeper and found that we could upgrade that entire section of code to make it more efficient with only a small amount of additional effort. I got the OK from my manager to proceed and we did the upgrade to the delight of the user community, since it increased system efficiency by more than 50% due to the tighter integration with the code base..."

An example of how to best answer this question for entry level candidates:

(3) "In my recent internship, I was part of a small team tasked with researching our user experience for a new component which was going to be implemented. Previously, my internship employer had relied on internal employees as test subjects for their alpha and beta testing. I made a recommendation to my project leader that we might want to reach out to our users who are connected to us via social media to see if any would be willing to test the final beta. I got the OK and we assembled a team of 15 external users to do final beta testing. The results were that we got a much more robust and diverse set of responses externally that helped us to come out with a flawless launch later that month..."

An example of how to best answer this question for internship candidates:

(4) "In my capstone class, we were assigned a research project which most students delivered based on Internet and library research. However, I went out to several businesses in the area to interview practitioners to get their current views on the subject. The result was a much more current and relevant sample set. My professor had me present my findings to the class and held it up as one of the best reports he had received in the history of teaching that class..."

Practice!

Exercise 1. Discuss this with your group mates:

What are behavioral interview questions? Why do they require special attention of a candidate?

What are the interviewers trying to learn when they ask a candidate to provide an example of his/her past performance?

Why should you avoid making general statements at an interview?

What kind of examples of your past performance you should have in mind at the time of the interview?

How should you behave at the interview in order to demonstrate the interviewer that you are really good for the position?

Why should you focus mainly on the job-related experiences when you provide examples of your past performance to the interviewer?

According to the information provided in the above article, what should you specifically emphasize about yourself during the interview?

Exercise 2. Study the example answers to the question about your experiences of going above and beyond the requirements of a project. What ideas would you like to use in preparing your own answer? Write down a sample for your answer and prepare to present it to your group in the classroom.

Unit 31. Interview Question: What Was Your Biggest Failure? How Did You Handle It?

- In this unit:**
- **How to answer questions about your failures?**
 - **Mistakes to avoid**
 - **Your strategy**
 - **Points to emphasize**
 - **Example answers**
 - **Practice section**

How to Answer Questions About Your Failures?

(1) Interviewers are sometimes just as interested in what has gone wrong in your life as what has gone right. This is not because they take pleasure in others' pain nor because they want to see you squirm, but because they want to see how you have dealt with adversity and obstacles. They want to see whether you can learn from mistakes and how resilient you are. It is also a good way to test your problem-solving skills and assess how aware you are of your strengths and weaknesses .

(2) For this reason, it's not uncommon for you to be asked 'What has been your biggest failure to date and what did you learn from it?' or variations on the theme, such as:

- 'Describe a time when something didn't work out as you had planned. What did you do and what did you learn from it?'

- 'Tell us about a mistake you've made.'
- 'How do you deal with setbacks?'

(3) Mistakes To Avoid

Do NOT answer one of the following:

- *'I have never failed at anything.'*
- *'I am so dreadful that there are too many examples to choose from.'*
- *'I had nothing to do with why everything went wrong. It wasn't me.'*

(4) Why are these answers unlikely to get you the graduate job you want?

- NOTE: the question is asking what your biggest failure is – plus, pinning the blame on someone else doesn't indicate that you are capable of learning from your mistakes.

(5) Your Strategy

Spend more time explaining what you have learned about yourself than the experience: Instead of dwelling on what went wrong, identify the reasons behind the incident and emphasize what you have learned and what you now do differently. Explain the actions you took to ensure that you wouldn't achieve the same mistake.

(6) Don't play the blame game: A graduate job interview shouldn't be like the closing round of *The Apprentice*. You shouldn't be looking to excuse your behavior or actions; instead, show that you are aware of your weaknesses in that particular situation and focus on what you have done to mitigate or work on them since.

(7) Use it as a springboard to talk about success: Once you have detailed your 'failure', you can turn to talking about how what you learned from that incident has led to you being more successful in another situation... and then talk about that.

(8) It can be difficult to answer a question about your failures. There are a lot of traps that you have to avoid. It helps to know what the hiring manager is really asking. They want to know how you handled yourself in that failure, and what you see as a failure. They also want to see how you react to getting asked about it. Did you really learn anything, or are you defensive and deny it? The way you answer this question will show them how you react in the face of bad news. It can also show them your level of confidence, your ability to learn from mistakes and your desire to better yourself.

(9) When you plan your answer to this question, it is also good to remember the following:

- It is unlikely that you have achieved everything first time around, so you would be stretching your interviewers' credibility. If you truly don't feel that you can pinpoint a 'failure', you could instead talk about a time when you were disappointed or a time when something almost didn't work out, but then did thanks to your actions. Remember that the interviewers are more interested in what you have learned from an experience than the failure itself.

- This is not the time to talk yourself down. You want to choose an example where you have managed to take something useful from a difficult or discouraging situation. If you've since been able to avoid repeating what went wrong, or to turn failure into success, so much the better. Try not to point out the following traits and experiences.

- Do not get defensive.
- Beware of being too vague.
- Don't focus too much on the failure.
- Try not to sound like you lack confidence.

(10) When you answer questions about your failures, it is easy to get sucked back to a time when you were not in a great place. Remember that the interviewer is trying to test your confidence and you learn from difficult situations.

(11) Points to Emphasize

When you answer this question you want to make sure to emphasize traits and experiences that will make you look like a good candidate.

- Call attention to what you learned as the most important part of the story.
- Focus on what you have done to ensure that the same thing doesn't happen again.
- Try to give examples that will not detract from skills needed for the position you are applying for.
- Even though it may be difficult, try to keep the answer as positive as possible.

(12) Everyone has moments of failure. The interviewer is trying to see how you reacted to that failure.

Example Answers

Emphasize what you have done to grow, and keep your answer positive. These examples may inspire you to write your own answer to this tough question.

(1) *“When I was first starting out in the industry, I failed at communicating with a vendor. This led to a loss of revenue for the department. When I realized what I had done, or rather what I had failed to do, I immediately took responsibility for my inactions. I went to the vendor and talked with them. It took a while, but I finally got it all back on track. Since then, I have made sure to attend seminars and workshops to help me avoid the same type of failures.”*

(2) *“While working in my previous position— I was diligent about setting goals and striving to meet them on time. There was a quarter last year when my department failed to meet the expected quota— and I take responsibility for that failure. I believe that I pushed my team too hard to meet deadlines— instead of taking time to cheer them on for their accomplishments. In retrospect— I feel that employees need to be nurtured in a professional capacity in order to be as productive as possible. I learned to break goals into smaller segments and offer incentives and rewards to the hardest workers.”*

(3) *“There was a time early in my career when I worked too quickly and didn't put enough thought into producing quality results. Because of this— I was overlooked for promotions and my career became stagnant. I feel like I failed my employer and myself by not working hard enough and by focusing too much on quantity. On the plus side— I was driven to achieve the goals that I had set— but my method for achieving them was flawed. In looking back— I can see how important it is to give my work my full attention and produce the best results possible every day. I can honestly say that I am appreciative of my failure because it has made me the conscientious professional that I am today.”*

Practice!

Exercise 1. Answer the questions raised in the unit:

- (1) Why would the interviewers be interested in what has gone wrong in your past?
- (2) What questions should you expect from the interviewer?
- (3) Paragraph (3) lists a few mistakes you should avoid making. What are they?
- (4) What can you gain by structuring your answer in the right way?
- (5) Paragraph (5) provides ideas for building your answer to the ‘failure’ question. What are they?
- (6) What should you avoid doing when answering the ‘failure’ question?
- (7) How is the talk about your failures connected to the fact of learning your lessons?
- (8) What is the hiring manager really asking when they want you to provide examples of your past failures?
- (9) Paragraph (9) lists some ideas about structuring your answer to the interview question about your failures. What are they?
- (10) Why should you never forget about being confident when answering questions about your failures?
- (11) What are the points to emphasize when speaking about your failures at an interview?
- (12) Why does the interviewer want to hear about your moments of failure?

Exercise 2. Study the example answers provided in this unit. Structure and write down your own answer to the question.

Exercise 3. Role-play activity. Work in the classroom. This is an all-group activity. You will imitate a situation of answering hiring manager’s questions at a job interview. Your instructor will assign roles and give you a few minutes to prepare for the game. Here is your role-play situation:

SITUATION: As a job applicant, you are interviewing for a job as the accounting manager at a medium-sized firm. You have worked as an accountant in two other companies, but this position would be a promotion for you. You believe you could do a good job and want to do well in the interview. You are worried about this interview, because the previous company you interviewed with initially offered you a good job, but took back their offer when they found out that you had lied on your job application. You have learned your lesson and have been totally honest in your application for this position.

Unit 32. Interview Question: What Motivates You?

- In this unit:**
- **How to answer the interview question: What motivates you?**
 - **Your strategy**
 - **Answering “What motivates you?” – quick instructions**
 - **Example answers**
 - **Practice section**

How to Answer the Interview Question: What Motivates You?

Answering interview questions like, “what motivates you?” or “what motivates you at work?” can be tricky because they are such open-ended questions. It’s not as difficult as it seems if you have the right method, though.

In asking this question, interviewers hope to figure out what makes you tick. They want to get a sense of your personality and who you are as a person. But more importantly, they want to see your resiliency, determination, etc. How you’ll handle challenges and setbacks (a tough project, or being asked to do something that isn’t quite on your job description, or having to work late, fill in for another team member, etc.)

Honest answers can help reveal what circumstances help you feel excited and enthused. (Another common variant of this interview question is “What are you passionate about?”, which also tries to open a window into what makes an interviewee excited and fulfilled.) Giving insight into the forces that motivate you at work can be a window into your personality and style, helping interviewers get a sense of you as both a person, and how you’d be as an employee.

After all, there’s a big difference between the candidate who’s motivated by building teams and establishing strong relationships with co-workers and the candidate whose best day is working on a report that improves the company’s bottom-line. Both of these candidates bring with them strong advantages, and this question can help interviewers narrow down the candidate that’s the best fit for the position and the company.

Your Strategy

Be honest, but also keep your audience in mind. While you may be most motivated by receiving a regular paycheck, that answer is not very inspiring from an interviewer’s perspective. It can be hard to think of a good answer for this question on the spot since it requires a bit of self-reflection.

Think about the jobs you have held in the past:

- What happened during your best days?
- When were you most looking forward to a day at the office?
- When did you come home from work bursting with stories, and feeling enthusiastic and excited?

Whether it was a successful meeting with a client, a complex project wrangled into submission, learning a new skill, or anything else, keep this in your mind when framing your answer. As well, consider what skills and abilities the position you are applying to calls for. If you are applying to be a manager, framing an answer around relationship-building and helping other succeed and meet goals might be a stronger answer than a discussion about learning new things or working with clients.

Answering “What Motivates You?” – Quick Instructions

- Name at least one thing that motivates you at work, aside from money or a paycheck
- Your answer for what motivates you can be a personal reason, but doesn't need to be
- Don't lie or make up an answer that isn't genuine; tell the truth about what motivates you at work and you'll be much more likely to get hired
- Don't say you're only motivated by money, or that you work to pay your bills
- Don't say that you're not sure or aren't motivated by anything in particular
- Show excitement and enthusiasm in your answer; your goal is to sound energetic and driven to work hard and learn this new job you're being considered for – that's what will convince them to hire you

If you follow the tips above you'll be able to give a great answer when employers ask questions like, “what motivates you?”, “what motivates you to come to work each day?” etc.

Your answer to this question can be the difference between getting a job offer and getting rejected after the interview... so as a last step, remember to practice and get comfortable with the answer you're going to give.

Example Answers

One of your big goals at the interview is to show them that you'll work hard and “stick with it”, instead of quitting if things get tough. That's why “What motivates you?” is such a common interview question. If you look at the answer example below, you'll see the end of the answer is focused on showing them that I'll stick with the work when it gets tough. You should try to do the same.

(1) *“I like challenging myself and advancing on a personal level. That's what attracted me to Sales to begin with. It's personally challenging, it forced me to develop new skills that I never would have attempted on my own – like cold calling somebody or starting a conversation with a complete stranger. It's changed my confidence level and my entire life, not just my career, and this continues to keep me motivated and get me through tough days, or days where things don't go my way.”*

One more example answer:

(2) *“I’ve watched multiple family members suffer through addiction, so after graduating with my degree in Psychology, I knew I wanted to work in addiction research and treatment. The impact this research can have is huge, and that keeps me motivated. Also, the field is always evolving and providing new challenges to keep me growing professionally. I love the work, and it’s what I want to continue doing throughout my career.”*

You don’t need to get personal in your answer, though. It’s perfectly fine to say something like:

(3) *“I’ve always like math and computers. I don’t have a personal reason, it’s just what I’m excited about doing. I can’t imagine doing something else for my career.”*

And a few more answers to inspire you to write your own answer:

(4) *“I like to be part of a team with a lot of bright people who have interesting ideas.”*

(5) *“It really excites me to work with clients on a one on one basis and see positive results.”*

(6) *“I love preparing and giving presentations. Being in front of an audience, and seeing them respond to my ideas is a real thrill, and making that connection is inspiring and exciting.”*

(7) *“I’m really driven by results – I like when I have a concrete goal to meet, and enough time to figure out a strong strategy for accomplishing it. At my last job, our yearly goals were very aggressive, but I worked with my manager and the rest of my team to figure out a month-by-month strategy for meeting the year-end numbers. It was a real thrill to make that accomplishment.”*

(8) *“I’m motivated by digging into data. Give me a spreadsheet and questions, and I’m eager to figure out what’s driving the numbers. At my current position, I prepare the monthly analytics report around sales. The learnings from these reports help drive and determine how the company charts its next steps and makes sales goals for the following months, and having that influence, and providing the must-know information, is really motivating.”*

(9) *“Learning new things has always been a great motivator for me. From every job I’ve had, I believe I’ve always been able to learn something new, or a new way to look at a problem.”*

(10) *“I’m very deadline-driven and enjoy having the opportunity to figure out a new organizational system that will help keep me on track to meet the deadline.”*

(11) *“I really like providing mentoring and coaching to my colleagues. I’m everyone’s go-to person when they have a question or need a second opinion, and I am always happy to help.”*

(12) *“I was responsible for several projects where I directed development*

teams and implemented repeatable processes. The teams achieved 100% on-time delivery of software products. I was motivated both by the challenge of finishing the projects ahead of schedule and by managing the teams that achieved our goals.”

(13) *“I have always wanted to ensure that my company's clients get the best customer service I can provide. I've always felt that it's important, both to me personally, and for the company and the clients, to provide a positive customer experience. My drive to constantly develop my customer service skills is the reason I earned top sales at my company two quarters in a row.”*

(14) *“I have always been motivated by the desire to meet a deadline. Setting and reaching deadlines gives me such a sense of accomplishment. I love creating an organized schedule for completing a task and achieving my deadlines. For example, when I ran a fund-raising event last year, I set multiple deadlines for a variety of tasks leading up to the event. Achieving each deadline motivated me to keep working, and made the event run smoothly.”*

Essentially, “what motivates you?” is another way of assessing whether you’re passionate and excited about the position and how you ensure you’re always doing good work. By identifying and expanding on your motivations, you can leave the interviewer with a positive impression and clearer expectation of how you’ll be as an employee.

Practice!

Exercise 1. Read the information about answering the interview questions about your motivation, provided above. Write down an essay explaining what motivates you.

Exercise 2. Study the above examples of answers to the question: ‘What motivates you?’ Which of them would you use as a part of your own answer? Why? Exchange opinions with your group-mates. During the discussion, do not forget to use the phrases from the example answers provided above.

Exercise 3. Role-play. Divide your group into two subgroups: interviewers and interviewees. Take instructions from your teacher and prepare to perform your individual roles. Here is your role-play situation.

SITUATION: You are interviewing for a position in the sales office. If you get this job, you would provide analysis and research support for the salespeople when they are traveling. You are a recent university graduate. You are worried about this interview, because you think that other applicants may be more experienced than you. You really want this job and believe that you could do it very well. You also know that people who previously had this job were promoted to salespeople.

Exercise 4. Write down your answer to the question, what motivates you?

Unit 33. Interview Question: Tell Me How You Handled a Difficult Situation

- In this unit:**
- **Why they ask this question and how to answer it**
 - **Points to emphasize**
 - **Mistakes you should avoid**
 - **Your strategy**
 - **Example answers**
 - **Practice section**

Why They Ask This Question and How to Answer It

For this question, the interviewer wants to know what you do in a situation that doesn't have a clear answer. This will help the interviewer know how you respond to unforeseen challenges. Other variations on this question include:

- "What have you done in the past when faced with a problem on the job?"
- "Describe a difficult situation you encountered in a previous job, and how you resolved it."
- "Tell me about a problem you had to solve in a previous position."
- "Describe a difficult task, and how you handled it."
- "Can you provide an example of a time when you (made a mistake at work, under-performed on a task, etc.) and how you overcame this?"

This is actually one of the better interview questions asked, both for you and the interviewer, and here are the reasons why:

It is a basic, open-ended question that an interviewer can ask any candidate.

When asked properly, the question can surprise candidates, as opposed to other questions which are easier to anticipate and prepare answers for.

It allows the interviewer to get a handle on how a candidate responds in a situation that doesn't have a clear, easy, yes-or-no answer.

When an interviewer gets a handle on this, they then know how a candidate will most likely respond to unforeseen challenges and difficult situations in the role they're interviewing for.

For you, the Candidate, interview questions about difficult situations at work give you a great chance to shine, because

- they allow you to flex your storytelling muscles;
- they're a good overall test of your person-to-person communications abilities;
- since the question is about recalling an actual experience (as opposed to imaginatively working through a presented scenario), they should be less stressful to answer; and
- these questions let you show off your personality.

If you have thought about the difficult situation interview question ahead of time and prepared a response, know this: smart interviewers have a simple trick that they can use to catch you off guard by qualifying the question further. For example: Tell me how you handled a difficult situation where . . . (you needed to cover for a supervisor / you had a tight deadline to meet, and needed to act quickly / you could have handled things better, looking back on it now).

For best results, the angle an interviewer puts on the question should be related to any issues of concern they may have about you. For example,

Tell me how you handled a difficult situation where you felt that you didn't have enough experience to properly respond (for a student applying for an entry-level position).
	... with a colleague who is constantly bringing up a sensitive issue for you (for an ex-con).
	... where you had to deal with a much younger supervisor who was clearly in over their head (for an older job seeker).

One straightforward way to respond to interview questions about difficult situations at work is to use the **STAR** technique:

Situation	Describe the challenging situation/task that you needed to deal with. What task did you have to carry out?
Task	
Action	What action(s) did you take to remedy things? Be specific.
Results	What were the results of your action(s)? What would have happened if you hadn't reacted that way?

While following this simple formula, you'll also want to focus on aspects related to your reasoning, integrity, or initiative, or your ability to reach out to superiors when you don't know the answer. For example:

- Talking about an ethical dilemma in which you chose to act with integrity;
- Discussing your initiative in tackling a difficult situation to a positive end;
- Discussing how you worked through a dilemma and found a solution.

Points to Emphasize

When you answer this question, you'll want to focus on aspects related to your reasoning, integrity or initiative, or your ability to reach out to superiors when you don't know the answer.

- Talk about an ethical dilemma in which you chose to act with integrity.
- Discuss your initiative in tackling a difficult situation to a positive end.
- Let the interviewer know that you aren't afraid to seek guidance from your superiors.
- Discuss how you worked through a dilemma and found a solution.

For this question, you want to highlight your ability to work through a problem that arises in the workplace.

Mistakes You Should Avoid

If you haven't thought this question through ahead of time, there's a good chance that you may not be able to think of something off the top of your head. Here are some things to avoid when answering this question.

- Don't speak ill of your company or your coworkers when discussing your response.
- Don't be self-focused to the point of discussing yourself in a superior light.
- Avoid discussing your own shortcomings unless you also mention your growth.
- Don't choose a situation that isn't job-related unless you don't have work experience.

Your potential employer wants to know that you can effectively work through a situation, so be sure to avoid a self-deprecating attitude.

Example Answers

Your potential employer wants to know that you can effectively work through a difficult situation on the job, so be sure to avoid a self-deprecating attitude. Take the question seriously, and answer it seriously. To put together a good answer,

- Recall a professional challenge that was significant, but one that you consider a success;
- Don't just say what you did – explain how you did it; and
- Emphasize the outcome and what you learned from it.

Here are a few examples for you to study:

(1) *“During a summer session I had a student who was writing offensive notes on student papers during peer grading assignments. I let my manager know and she had the student meet with us and his mother in order to address the situation.”*

(2) *“During a difficult financial period, I was able to satisfactorily negotiate repayment schedules with multiple vendors. I developed a mutually beneficial payment plan and barter program that worked with both my company's revenue flow and project schedule, and the vendor needs at the time. In addition, the agreement was easier for me to obtain because I worked very hard at developing a positive relationship with the vendor in the months that we've been working together. From this experience, I learned the importance of thinking outside-the-box while solving a problem. I also learned the importance of developing and maintaining good relationships with vendors.”*

(3) *“During a summer session I had a student who was writing rude,*

offensive notes on student papers during peer grading assignments. I arranged a meeting with the student, and had my principal attend too, as a witness. I calmly yet firmly informed the student that the types of comments she was providing weren't helpful—that they were in fact detrimental. From there, the three of us had a fruitful discussion on the types of comments that work best on student papers. In the end, the student walked away with a solid understanding of how to provide constructive, non-offensive feedback to other students.”

(4) “Late one Friday afternoon at my last job, a client called with an urgent question about the project we were working on for them. My boss usually handles all client contact directly, but he had already left for the weekend. I explained the situation to the client, and said that although I might not know the exact answer to the question, that I was also working on the project and might be able to help. That was good enough for the client, and while it was true that I didn't have the answer immediately, we were able to work through it together fairly quickly, and the client got off the call assured that they wouldn't need to worry about the issue over the weekend. I also left a note for my boss about the call, so that he could check with the client on his return on Monday morning.”

(5) “When the software development of our new product stalled, I coordinated the team which managed to get the schedule back on track. We were able to successfully troubleshoot the issues and solve the problems, within a very short period of time, and without completely burning out our team. I was able to do this by motivating the senior engineering team to brainstorm a technologically innovative solution that would solve the customer's issues with fewer development hours on our end.”

(6) “Our company newsletter was frequently sent late – and worse, sometimes had errors or typos. It was a bad look for the marketing department. I reviewed this newsletter workflow with the team, which revealed several issues: There was no deadline for newsletter submissions and no one person had ownership of the project. Our marketing coordinator had recently requested more responsibility, so I asked her to oversee the process. Together, we created a schedule, a form for submissions, and a review process. Since instituting these changes, the newsletter has gone out precisely on time and error-free – plus, clicks and opens have increased.”

(7) “A long-term client was about to take their business to a competitor. I met with the customer and was able to change how we handled the account on a day-to-day basis, in order to keep the business. From this situation, I learned the importance of being mindful of client relations, and operations, not just after issues arise, but for the duration of the relationship. As a result, other account managers have adopted my check-in and management processes and have also seen improved results with their accounts.”

Practice!

Exercise 1. All-group role-play activity. Work in the classroom. You will imitate a situation of answering hiring managers' questions at a job interview. Your instructor will assign roles and give you a few minutes to prepare for the game. Here is your role-play situation:

SITUATION: You are applying for a 3-month job as interpreter/translator for a well-known sports photographer who will be travelling in Ukraine and Russian and taking pictures. Since he speaks only English, your help will be needed when he meets with athletes and attends sporting events. You know that you will have to help him understand what is going on culturally, as well as translating/interpreting. You've heard that he is very disorganized. Since you're a very organized person, you believe that you may be able to provide organizational assistance and thus improve your chances to get this job.

Exercise 2. Write down your answer to the question of this unit. Prepare to present it to your group and to answer the follow-up questions of your group-mates.

Unit 34. Interview Question: Who's Your Mentor?

- In this unit:**
- **How to answer the interview question: Who's your mentor?**
 - **Points to emphasize**
 - **Mistakes you should avoid**
 - **Your strategy**
 - **Example answers**
 - **Practice section**

How to Answer the Interview Question: Who's Your Mentor?

When interviewers ask you this question, they want to find out if there is anyone in your professional history who has made a difference in your life? They don't really care what the person taught you, but the question is asked in order to discover whether or not you can connect with your bosses and learn from their experience. This is actually one question asking another implied question. The interviewer is not as interested in the "who" of your mentor as much as the "why" and "what" of your mentor. The question gives an indication of your commitment to professional growth and development.

Similar interview questions would be: What person has most influenced your life to date?

Which people influence you in your career decision making? Do you have a hero? Who is it? How do you learn and grow in taking input from others?

A mentor is someone who offers advice and counsel, and who lends you his or her resources to help you advance in your professional or personal life. A mentor can be someone as important as the CEO of a big company, or it could

be the neighbor next door who teaches you simple life lessons while helping you fix your bike.

When you are asked, "Who is your mentor?", really you are being asked "Do you have anyone from whom you have learned a lot?"

As long as the person offered you advice that made a difference in your life, that person could very well be considered a mentor.

To answer this question well, you obviously need to have a mentor, either formal or informal. If you already have a formal mentor in your life, that person will be the focus of your answer. However, most candidates do not have a formal mentor, so answering the question will require you to identify an informal mentor (or mentors) in your life. This is another great example of why it's important to consider questions such as this in advance of the interview. Having to answer this question on the spot in the interview without considering it in advance would be very difficult. Answer not only with who your mentor is, but also what your mentor is doing to help direct you in next steps in your career. This can be either for a formal or informal mentor.

Points to Emphasize

Here are a few pointers to help you craft the perfect response to this question.

- Pick a person who truly has had an outsized impact on you so that your answer is honest and enthusiastic.
- Telling specific stories about your relationship can make the answer more personal and informative.
- Stay positive throughout this response and don't hesitate to play up your strengths while also humbly acknowledging the debt you owe your mentor.
- If you have more than one mentor, feel free to say so. It illustrates how well you learn from and work with others. This question requires you to think back on your work or personal history to come up with at least one person who had a strong impact on you. Be prepared to explain why with specific details.

Mistakes You Should Avoid

This type of question provides an opportunity for you to showcase very positive aspects of your work history. Here are a few "no-no's" to help you avoid any stumbling blocks in your response.

- Only say positive things about your mentor—never badmouth previous bosses or professors in a job interview.
- Try to speak in concrete details rather than generalities.
- Make sure you choose someone whom you were actually close to. If this person doesn't show up on your list of references, that's a potential red flag.
- Don't forget to emphasize results or achievements that you accomplished as a result of this mentorship.

Employers value employees who can form strong relationships with supervisors so a good answer to this question could really help you.

Your Strategy

Don't think of a mentor as someone who is only at work, but try to look at the people in your life that you consider important. If you find someone within your company or at a previous job who helped you, you can mention them as a mentor. However, don't feel obligated to say, "My old boss" or "my former CEO" if you didn't really feel they were your mentor.

Take the time to sit down before the interview, and think about someone who has helped you make progress in your life. It could be someone who helped you to advance your professional career, or who offered you some advice that helped you to deal with some personal issue. There will always be people who have helped to make you who you are today.

Think about the person and what they offered, and try to form that into a short two-sentence answer. For example:

(1) *"I consider my former CEO a mentor. He gave me the push I needed to find my place in the company, which gave me the confidence that made me successful."*

(2) *"A co-worker from my previous company took me under her wing when I was new to the job, and thanks to her help I was able to achieve my goal of (X accomplishment)."*

If you won a big award or achieved something outstanding, there will always be people who helped you to achieve that goal. You can credit them as your mentor, or at least acknowledge that you consider them "like" your mentor even if they didn't offer you any mentoring.

You don't have to have someone in your life who is your mentor, but it always makes you look better in the interview if you can point to someone who helped you out. It makes you look like a person that people would want to mentor, someone who will learn from the advice and counsel of others.

A bit more on this topic:

If the question comes up, be ready to tie your response to the job for which you're interviewing. Keep a couple of people in mind so you have options based on how the interview is going. Be sure to select professional influences, not your parents, partner or pastor. You want to use this easy question as an opportunity to continue to bring out your match to the job.

Choosing a hero might be well suited when you wish to discuss how someone inspired you to overcome adversity or a difficult problem in a previous job. Stress a quality you saw in your hero that directly relates to a quality needed for the desired position. Share a success story in which you used that quality to create value or solve a problem for an employer.

Using a mentor as an example might be good if you are applying for a job in your current industry. Perhaps your mentor helped you get your foot in the door and discover your passion for what you do. Tie that passion to current opportunity and demonstrate how it will make you more effective.

If a manager inspired you, focus on his or her management style and interpersonal skills. If his or her leadership inspired you a certain way, tell a short story and show how it relates to the job.

Remember to keep the stories short, and have fun with it. This can be a great opportunity to showcase some personal qualities and how they will help you excel at the position you are applying for.

Example Answers

A solid response to this question will help show the hiring manager that you're a team player who appreciates learning from others.

(1) *"While I've had several great mentors, perhaps my most influential was my first boss, Dave Smith, I worked under Dave as a paralegal at XYZ law firm. Though he was a partner and extremely busy, he would always take the time to advise me on my cases and allow me to ask him legal questions without judgment or impatience. I truly learned a lot from him and he inspired me to become a lawyer. He set the bar high for mentorship and I strive to live by his example with the people under my supervision."*

(2) An example of how to best answer this question for experienced candidates:

"My professional mentor at work is a director in a different department. She has been working with me for the past two years to make sure that I am taking the right steps to develop for potential future advancement in my career. For example, she helped me to get the right training in prep for taking the industry certification exams, which I was able to pass on first attempt, which is very unusual for most in our industry..."

(3) An example of how to best answer this question for entry level candidates:

"The department chair for my major has been mentoring me for the past two years to make sure that I am both taking the right classes as well as getting the best internship experience. He was instrumental in directing me to take a class which would be important for getting my last internship and has also been my professor for the capstone class in my major this semester. In fact, he was the one who recommended your company on his short list of employers to consider..."

(4) An example of how you should NOT answer this question:

"Well, you ask that question like you assume that I have some sort mentor. Why in the world would I want a mentor? I already have enough people telling me what to do in my job who aren't helpful, so I'm not looking to expand that list. I can tell you about several people have been terrible mentors in my life to date, though, if you want to hear about that..."

Practice!

Exercise 1. Study the information provided in the article ‘How to Answer the Interview Question: Who’s Your Mentor?’ and retell it by answering the following questions:

- (1) What goal(s) do the interviewers pursue by asking the question ‘Who is(was) your mentor?’
- (2) What would be similar interview questions?
- (3) Who is a mentor?
- (4) What do the interviewers really mean to ask by asking "Who is your mentor?"
- (5) Who can you consider as your formal or informal mentor?
- (6) What should you keep in mind to craft the perfect response to this question?
- (7) What are the four useful tips in building your answer strategy suggested by the author in the article?
- (8) What kind of mistakes do candidates make when answering this question?
- (9) What should be your approach to building an answer to this question?

Exercise 2. Role-play. This is an all-group activity. You will imitate a situation of answering hiring manager’s questions at a job interview. Your instructor will assign roles and give you a few minutes to prepare for the game. Here is your role-play situation:

SITUATION: You are interviewing to become the professional assistant of the vice-president for Eastern Europe of a major, American based sports clothing company. The position involves providing general support to make sure that your boss can be effective in his role. Specific tasks will include 1) keeping his calendar and screening the many people from inside and outside the company who want to talk to or meet with him, 2) drafting memos and reports for him, 3) and reading memos and reports both from headquarters and from Eastern Europe, summarizing them for him and identifying any follow-up action needed. However, you know that you may also be asked to do low-level, personal types of tasks, such as finding gifts for his family members or colleagues or filling out his expense reports. You want this job, but do not want to stay in it for longer than 2-3 years, because you hope to be a manager within the company yourself some day.

Exercise 3. Study the example answers provided above. Use them in building your own answer to the question about your mentor. Write down your answer and prepare to present it to your group-mates.

Unit 35. Interview Question: Tell Me About a Time When You Disagreed With Your Boss

- In this unit:**
- **How to answer this interview question**
 - **Points to emphasize**
 - **Mistakes you should avoid**
 - **Example answers**
 - **Practice section**

How to Answer This Interview Question

When you answer this question you want to focus on traits, skills and experiences that helped you diffuse the disagreement. Points to emphasize:

- Talk about how this situation with your boss will prepare you to handle disagreements with coworkers in the future.
- Mention that your laid back personality trait will help diffuse tension.
- Briefly explain the situation of the disagreement, but make sure to do so in a respectful way. Don't be afraid to admit that you were in the wrong, if that's what happened.
- Talk about the importance of communicating with coworkers even if there is a disagreement.

Answer the question in a positive way, even if it was a difficult disagreement.

Points to Emphasize

- Briefly explain the situation of the disagreement, but make sure to do so in a respectful way. Don't be afraid to admit that you were in the wrong, if that's what happened.
- Talk about the importance of communicating with coworkers even if there is a disagreement.
- Be positive.
- Talk about how this situation with your boss will prepare you to handle disagreements with coworkers in the future.
- Mention that your laid back personality trait will help diffuse tension.

Mistakes You Should Avoid

You need to make sure to stay away from accusatory claims.

- Do not speak poorly of your previous boss.
- Do not play down the importance that your character played in the diffusion of the disagreement.
- Don't try to pretend like you never had a disagreement with a previous boss.
- Try not to get edgy. The disagreement may have been recent, but don't let it cloud your judgment.

Hiring managers are looking for honest, confident individuals. Avoid evasive answers.

Example Answers

Remember that hiring managers are looking for someone who will fit in at their company. Try and answer in a way that will show your better qualities. Here is a sample answer:

(1) *"I once disagreed with my boss over how to best help a customer. Rather than question his authority in front of everyone, I talked to him off of the floor. I was open and honest about the problems I had with the way he wanted to do things. It turned out that there was just a simple misunderstanding. That disagreement we had showed me the importance of communicating with my coworkers to make sure that something obsolete doesn't become a bigger problem than it needs to be."*

This is another example of a good answer:

(2) *"My boss and I disagreed about whether my assistant was right for promotion into another department. He believed that she should remain in her current role, and I also knew she wasn't quite ready; however, I knew that we'd lose a valuable team member if she weren't given an opportunity soon. We chose to promote her accompanied by heavy training. The outcome was positive."*

Practice!

Exercise 1. Work in the classroom. This is an all-group role-play game. You will imitate a situation of answering hiring manager's questions at a job interview. Your instructor will assign roles and give you a few minutes to prepare for the game. Here is your role-play situation:

SITUATION: You are recent university graduate. You are interviewing with the Africa program manager for an international famine relief agency for an entry-level position as a field operator in English-speaking Africa. You want very much to work for this agency, which is one of the most highly recognized aid agencies in the world, and you love the idea of helping needy people. You would rather work in another part of the world, but are willing to accept a job in Africa because you think you may be able to later move to another team. You believe that you could be very effective in this position and that you could learn a lot that would build your experience. You worry that other applicants may be better qualified and know that you will need to convince the program manager that you are the best person for the job.

Exercise 2. Keeping in mind the information you learned in this unit, write down your answer to the question about a time when you disagreed with your boss.

Unit 36. Interview Question: How Do You Handle Pressure?

- In this unit:**
- **How to answer the interview question: How do you handle pressure?**
 - **Points to emphasize**
 - **Mistakes you should avoid**
 - **Example answers**
 - **Practice section**

How to Answer the Interview Question: How Do You Handle Pressure?

Your interviewer may ask you, “How do you handle stress?” You'll need to be prepared to respond because the interviewer doesn't want to hear that you never get stressed. After all, everyone feels stress at one time or another at work. Instead, the employer wants to see if you know how pressure affects you, and how you manage it.

To answer this question successfully, you will want to provide specific examples of how you have handled stress well in the past. You might also provide examples of times when pressure actually made you a more productive employee. The best way is to give an example of how you have handled stress in a previous job. That way, the interviewer can get a clear picture of how well you work in stressful situations.

Avoid mentioning a time when you put yourself in a needlessly stressful situation. For example, do not share a story about a time when you were stressed because you procrastinated and had to finish a project quickly. Rather, describe a time when you were given a difficult task or multiple assignments, and you rose to the occasion.

While you should certainly admit that stress happens, emphasize how you dealt with the stress, rather than how it bothered you. If possible, avoid saying you are stressed by a situation that will be common in the job for which you are applying.

For example, if you say you get stressed when you're given multiple projects, and you know the job will require you to juggle many assignments at once, you'll look unfit for the position.

Points to Emphasize

Pressure can be a very productive force when handled well, so it is perfectly acceptable to admit you feel stressed at time. Just make sure you are portraying it positively.

- Talk about how you thrive under pressure
- Mention an example of a time you were stressed and produced good work
- Emphasize how you deal with stress (you might even consider mentioning how a little stress can be a helpful motivator for you; you can

provide an example of a time the stress of a difficult project helped you be a more creative and productive worker.)

- Focus on a time when you were under pressure from outside forces rather than your own doing

Mistakes You Should Avoid

It is very easy to give a response that does not look good to an interviewer, so prepare an answer that avoids these common mistakes.

- Don't say that you never feel pressured
- Avoid talking about a time where you put yourself in a stressful situation (example: you procrastinated on an assignment)
- Don't focus on how the stress made you feel
- Don't talk about a time where you were felt pressured and ultimately didn't succeed

Pressure is a normal part of the workplace, and with this new job, you will probably feel some stress from time to time. It is important for the interviewer to learn how you would react when placed in a stressful situation.

Example Answers

Study a few examples of successful answers below to prepare a sample answer for your own interview response.

(1) *“I find that I do my best work when under pressure. I enjoy undertaking challenging assignments and finding creative solutions. One time I had two projects that were due the same week. Instead of stressing out, I created a detailed schedule that allowed me to complete both assignments on time.”*

Stress is a part of life, and your potential employer wants to know that you will not completely shut down when handed multiple responsibilities. You should be able to tackle anything that comes your way and be a productive employee no matter what you are working on.

Examples of good responses include:

<p>(2) <i>“With stress, I do the best possible job. The appropriate way to deal with stress is to make sure I have the correct balance between good stress and bad stress. I need good stress to stay motivated and productive.”</i></p>	<p>(3) <i>“I react to situations, rather than to stress. That way, the situation is handled and doesn't become stressful.”</i></p>
<p>(4) <i>“I actually work better under pressure and I've found that I enjoy working in a challenging environment.”</i></p>	<p>(5) <i>“From a personal perspective, I manage stress by visiting the gym every evening. It's a great stress reducer.”</i></p>
<p>(6) <i>“Prioritizing my responsibilities so I have a clear idea of what needs to be done when, has helped me effectively manage</i></p>	<p>(7) <i>“If the people I am managing are contributing to my stress level, I discuss options for better</i></p>

<i>pressure on the job.”</i>	<i>handling difficult situations with them.”</i>
(8) <i>“I find that when I'm under the pressure of a deadline, I can do some of my most creative work.”</i>	(9) <i>“I'm not a person who has a difficult time with stress. When I'm under pressure, I focus, and get the job done.”</i>
(10) <i>“I find it exhilarating to be in a dynamic environment where the pressure is on.”</i>	(11) <i>“I find a past pace to be invigorating, and thrive.”</i>

Practice!

Exercise 1. Read the article ‘Interview Question: How Do You Handle Pressure?’ Write down 5 questions related to different passages of the article. Then, discuss the information with a group-mate: ask each other the questions you prepared and answer them right away, by memory.

Exercise 2. Role-play activity. Work in the classroom. This is an all-group activity. You will imitate a situation of answering hiring manager’s questions at a job interview. Your instructor will assign roles and give you a few minutes to prepare for the game. Here is your role-play situation:

SITUATION: You are interested in participating in a summer work-travel program that would give you the opportunity to live in the U.S. or Canada. Your English skills are good. You are very interested in the experience of living in another culture and are willing to do a number of different kinds of work. You have never travelled abroad before, but you have lived away from home in a dormitory as a university student. You have a little work experience from part-time jobs, and you have been active in the _____ club [select some kind of activity that interests you and is relevant] while at the university. You know that there will be a lot of competition for the work-travel program positions, and you want to make sure that you do your best in the interview. You also have a lot of questions about where you might be living and about the help that the agency will provide to you (health insurance, assistance in finding a place to live, what your job will be, etc.). Your parents are worried about your safety and have told you to ask questions about these things, too.

Exercise 3. Write down your answer to the question about having to handle pressure.

Unit 37. Interview Question: Are You a Leader or a Follower? What Are Some of Your Leadership Experiences?

- In this unit:**
- **How to answer: “Are you a leader or a follower?”**
 - **Your strategy**
 - **Mistakes you should avoid**
 - **Example answers**
 - **Practice section**

How To Answer: “Are You a Leader or a Follower?”

(1) Being aware of the role you play within a company is crucial to your success. Regardless of your position, there may be times when you're called to lead a project or asked to fall back and assist someone else. Therefore, when a hiring manager asks, "Are you a leader or a follower?" it's best to demonstrate that you can meet the demands of either role.

(2) While companies are almost always looking for candidates with leadership skills, it is also important to show that you know when to back down and respect another person's leadership.

(3) By asking this question the interviewer wants to understand how you'd fit into the organization given your role. It is not uncommon to be asked, “*Are you a leader or a follower?*” or something similar about your personality.

(4) When an interviewer asks you this question, it might be tempting to just respond that you are a leader since taking on responsibilities sounds like what a potential employer would want. However, a hiring manager is looking for something more complex. He or she is trying to see if you are versatile and are willing to assume different roles based on what the company needs.

(5) To prepare to answer this question, site specific examples which demonstrate that you are a strong leader...then, mention that you also recognize that at times you will need to take a supporting role for other people's initiatives. For instance, if you were asked to lead a presentation at your last job, speak about how you rallied your team around completing the necessary tasks for the presentation to be done. Then follow up by mentioning a time when you offered support to a director or coordinator for a conference, team luncheon or new company program.

(6) Proving that you know how to assist and follow others is key to showing employers how you operate in a team environment. In fact, self-made millionaire Marcus Lemonis says showing your commitment to helping the team succeed is the No. 1 trait that makes a great employee. "If you give of yourself to help somebody else succeed," says Lemonis, "there will be a moment where it comes back to you."

Your Strategy

(7) When answering the ‘Are you a leader or a follower?’ question, prepare to talk about your experience with both. Most jobs require you to

sometimes be a leader and sometimes be a follower. You should prepare a response to both scenarios in order to show that you can handle both positions equally well. Discuss a time when you led a group or took on extra responsibilities. Also talk about a time when you followed orders successfully and managed to bring excellent work to a company without necessarily having a leadership role. Employers do not necessarily want someone who always needs to be a leader– but at the same time they may not want someone who is just going to stand by waiting for instructions.

(8) Focus on what the job needs: While you should mention that you can be either one– you should also take into consideration whichever role will be asked more of you in this particular job. For example if you are asked– “Are you a leader or a follower?” for an entry-level job– then it might be best to focus on how well you work with a manager. However if you are going for a managerial position– then your focus should be on more of your leadership skills. Both qualities are needed– but it is crucial to be aware of context.

(9) Show that you are willing to adapt: A hiring manager may be skeptical of hiring you if they are occasionally going to need you to be a follower but you talk at great length about what a great leader you are. This may imply that you are only willing to lead a team and will be unable to take on a more subordinate role should the need arise. Answering this question effectively truly requires a balancing act of showing that you can do both. Many people fail with these kinds of interview questions because they merely state whether they are one thing or the other. Versatility is vital.

(10) This question should be answered in a way that lets the interviewer know that you possess the capabilities to assume both roles and that you are able to change based on the needs of the position.

- Talk about times where you took charge and assumed responsibilities
- Discuss times when you followed instructions successfully
- Emphasize skills that would benefit both a leader and a follower
- Mention past experiences where you were both

Mistakes You Should Avoid

(11) This is an easy question to slip up on because many people assume that a hiring manager wants to hear that you are a leader. That is not necessarily the case, so avoid falling into these common traps.

- Do not say you are solely a leader and only talk about your leadership traits
- Do not say you are solely a follower and only talk about times where you took orders
- Don't come across as too wishy-washy where you haven't really committed to talking about either role
- Remember to mention how both traits would work for the position you are applying for

(12) Interviewers value honesty, so give a response that accurately depicts your personality type and experience level.

Example Answers

(1) *“In past jobs, I have been able to adapt to whatever was expected of me. When a group needed a leader, I was more than capable of handling that role, but at the same time, I recognize when it is better to take a step back and take direction from someone who is more knowledgeable than I am.”*

A hiring manager is trying to get a sense of how you would benefit the company as a whole, and you are showing your value as an employee by showcasing your ability to serve a number of roles within the organization.

Every organization values some leadership qualities but wants someone who will follow directives as well. Try to maintain a balance between the two. You may also use some ideas from these statements as examples for putting together your own answer:

(2) *“I take a leadership role on those occasions that call for expertise or experience that I have and which my colleagues may not possess. I am always ready to share my knowledge. But as a leader, I understand that sometimes it is important to be a good follower as well in order to learn from others.”*

(3) *“I have quite a bit of retail experience— and over the course of two years working at [company] I took on both leadership and subordinate roles. When I was first hired I was a sales associate— so that entailed taking a lot of instructions and doing whatever was asked of me by the manager. However— after three months of working there I was promoted to shift lead and shortly after that I became a manager myself. In addition to taking on more responsibilities— I also had to delegate tasks to everyone who was working. Even when I became a manager I still had the store owner to be accountable to— so I still needed to follow instructions and be a solid worker. At the end of the day I am perfectly comfortable in either role— and I am willing to adjust based on what is needed of me.”*

(4) *“I am willing to adapt my working style depending on whatever is expected of me. I understand that this is an entry-level position— so being a follower is most likely going to come up more often. However— if the need arises where you need someone to step up and take on a project— I am more than willing to fill the leadership role as well. At my last job I oversaw the implementation of expanding the company’s social media presence. We saw great results— and my boss was very pleased with the work done. I feel like I can do both roles equally well.”*

(5) *“All of my friends tell me I’m the leader of our group since I’m always the one planning our group trips, the one who was President of all of her clubs in college and the one who tends to present after group projects. However, there are plenty of times I can think of when I’ve been a follower*

because it was best for the group. For example, I've never played softball before, so when my friends started a softball league (with me in it), I watched a few games and read a few articles, but I ultimately let my softball-pro friends take charge on where I should go, what the batting order should be and so on."

(6) *"I tend to be the leader in most situations, though I can think of plenty of times when it was better for the group for me to follow along."*

(7) *"I am a perpetual learner and feel that I possess the right qualities of a leader. Any person holding a position or designation does not become a leader. He is a leader who can influence people around him/her positively towards growth and betterment. Also, I believe that follower is a negative word; Learner is a better and positive word."*

(8) *"My role as a leader or follower depends on the situation. I am good at listening and following directions, but I am also great with people and working as a team to solve problems. I would say I have qualities of both, and I know I would rise to the occasion if given a leadership opportunity."*

Practice!

Exercise 1. Read the main article of the unit, How To Answer: "Are You a Leader or a Follower?" Make sure you understand the meaning of the underlined phrases. Retell the material trying to use all of the underlined words and phrases.

Exercise 2. Role-play activity. Work in the classroom. This is an all-group activity. You will imitate a situation of answering hiring manager's questions at a job interview. Your instructor will assign roles and give you a few minutes to prepare for the game. Here is your role-play situation:

SITUATION: You very much want to get an internship position at an international wood products company based in Toronto, Canada. You know that you have good English skills, but you are not sure what you can say about your communication experience. [Hint: Have you ever had a job that involved meeting people and having a self-confident, professional image, for example, as a waitress or sales person? Think also about school or university activities or hobbies that involve communication, such as theater, writing for the student newspaper, participating in a music group, writing your diploma paper or other papers.] This interview will be the first serious video-conference you have ever had. You know that you have very strong language skills, have a pleasant appearance and dress professionally. You know that you can do the job. You have some self-doubts, but you realize that it is very important for you to convince the interviewer that you can project a self-confident image. You think this might be easier to do in person than by video-conference.

Exercise 3. Study the example answers. Which answers do you find most relevant to your situation? Why? Which phrases from the example answers would you like to use when composing your answer to the question? Provide the reasons why.

Exercise 4. Write your answer to the interview question “Are You a Leader or a Follower?” Try to follow all the advise provided by the author of the above article.

Part 6: Working Through Interview Questions Related to Your Employer Company



Unit 38. Interview Question: How Did You Hear About This Position?

- In this unit:**
- Answering question “How did you hear about this position?”
 - Points to emphasize
 - Mistakes you should avoid
 - Example answers
 - Practice section

Answering Question “How Did You Hear About This Position?”

This question usually comes at the beginning of an interview and is meant to be an icebreaker, not a trick question. In asking this question, interviewers are judging if you are an active or passive job seekers. Those who appear eager for the position may be perceived as more willing to put forth the needed effort to fulfill the position.

Considering this, you want to be strategic in the way you answer this question.

1. State the source

This will give your interviewer an idea of how much research you did on the company before applying.

2. Mention the eye-catcher

Tell them what caught your eye about the job and made you want to apply. This will show the interviewer that you're actively looking for a job and that you were motivated by what you found. Remember to talk about the duties of the position or values of the company you liked instead of just how much money you could be making.

3. Talk about your qualifications

Mention why you feel qualified for the job and show excitement for the opportunity.

4. Sound enthusiastic

Employers want people who are passionate and care about what they do on a daily basis.

5. Let them know who told you about the job

If you heard about the position from someone who already works with the company, it could be helpful to mention their name. Having a professional contact shows that you've taken the steps to do some networking during your job hunt.

Points to Emphasize

Depending upon how you heard about the position, there are different ways that you can answer the question. Still, there are certain points to mention that can help you to properly answer such type of inquiry.

- Clearly state the source from which you heard of the position, but do not go into elaborate detail, other than the name of the individual, company or resource.

- Explain what aspects drew you to the position.
- Briefly state why you feel qualified for the job.
- Express your excitement about the possibility of obtaining the position.

Mistakes You Should Avoid

Review these mistakes to avoid when answering this question.

- It is not good to say you're not sure or don't remember (you'll seem scattered or disorganized in your job search – which will make it harder to get hired);

- Do not do anything to make it sound like you are applying for every job you find, like a desperate job seeker who doesn't care what job they get as long as they get hired;

- Never say lies that could get you caught (like saying you saw them on a job board, if you're not sure they posted any jobs on a job board);

- Even if you heard about the position from someone who works in this company, do not go into great detail about your relationship with that employee;

- Do not give vague one word answers;

- If you do not recall what job board you found the position through, do not dwell on that fact or make something up;

- If you heard of a job from an employee who is on rocky terms with the company or recently departed on negative terms, do not mention their name.

Example Answers

Even though your answer for this question can reveal a lot about you, there's no need to stress over it. Taking some time to research and prepare can help you form a response that will leave a positive impression on your interviewer and make you stand out from your competition.

Here are some examples for you:

(1) *"I heard about this position through a current employee, Jane Doe. She was a previous co-worker of mine at XYZ Company where I served as a project manager. After reviewing the position and researching the company, I felt qualified to fulfill the position and excited about the possibility of joining such a reputable company."*

(2) Example answer for active job seekers:

"I'm actively job searching right now, and found your job posting on LinkedIn while searching for Senior Engineer positions. I reviewed the job description on LinkedIn before applying and it seemed like a great potential fit so I wanted to apply and learn more about the opportunity to see if it's a good match."

(3) Example answer for passive job seekers:

"I wasn't actively looking for a job change, but a colleague mentioned that she saw you were hiring on your website, and said she had heard good things about your work environment. I went to your website and did some reading on the Careers page and liked what I saw, so I decided I should apply and learn more about the opportunity."

(4) "I heard about this position from one of your current employees– Theresa Doe. She was my coworker when I worked for Company– where I served as a sales representative for five years. She recently notified me that your company might have a few positions opening up– so I did a little research to see what might be available. This position really stood out to me as somewhere where I can use my talents and my skills to the best of my ability and learn a lot more about the industry as my career grows and develops. I'm very excited for the opportunities which getting this position can provide me and the chance to work in such an excellent company."

(5) "I found this position on an online listing. There were several similar positions available– but this one really seemed to stand out as a golden career opportunity. After doing a little research on the company and the requirements of this position– I decided it would be a place which could benefit from my unique set of skills and which would provide me with a great atmosphere in which to grow professionally– so I decided to apply. I'm very excited about the potential to obtain this job."

Remember, the question is asking more than just who sent you. Make sure that you address why you applied to the position and how you qualify.

Addressing these things can help to avoid certain additional questions and possibly help you to secure the position.”

Practice!

Exercise 1. The article Answering Question “How Did You Hear About This Position?” offers five tips on how to structure your answer for the interview. What are they? Would you like to add anything else to these five items?

Exercise 2. The author of the article offers the candidates to emphasize on certain important points. Do you remember them? Complete the sentences with the words from the article:

Depending upon how you heard about the position, there are different ways that you can....

Still, there are certain points to mention that can help you....

Clearly state the source from which you..., but do not go into....

Explain what aspects drew you

Briefly state why you feel ...

Express your excitement about...

Exercise 3. Review the paragraph that shares about mistakes you should avoid when answering the interview question “How Did You Hear About This Position?” Check how well you memorized the information by putting in the missing words into the gaps:

- It is not good to say you’re not or don’t (you’ll seem scattered or disorganized in your job search – which will make it harder to get hired);

- Do not do anything to make it like you are applying for job you find, like a job seeker who doesn’t what job they get as long as they get

- Never say lies that could get you (like saying you saw them on a job, if you’re not sure they posted any jobs on a job

- Even if you heard about the from someone who works in this company, do not go into great about your relationship with that

- Do not give one word answers;

- If you do not what job board you found the position through, do not on that fact or something up;

- If you heard of a job from an who is on rocky terms with the company or departed on negative terms, do not their name.

Exercise 4. Write down your answer to the interview question “How Did You Hear About This Position?”

Unit 39. Interview Question: Why Are You Interested in Working For [Company Name]?

In this unit:

- **How to Answer Question: “Why are you interested in working for us?”**
- **Points to emphasize**
- **Example answers**
- **Practice section**

How to Answer Question: “Why Are You Interested in Working for Us?”

The interviewer is looking for similar things whether asking about company or position. The hiring manager wants to:

- Learn about your career goals and how this position fits into your plan
- Make sure that you are sincerely interested in the job and will be motivated to perform if hired
- Find out what you know about the company, industry, position (and if you took the time to research)
- Understand your priorities and preferences – which aspects of the company and/or job are appealing to you and why?

A good answer will demonstrate knowledge of the company and industry. That means you must do your homework so that you can identify specific reasons for wanting to work for the firm.

These reasons could include one or several of the following:

- Company general reputation
- Reputation of key leaders
- Admiration of products/services
- Admiration of other company initiatives (marketing campaign, community involvement, training programs)
- Company awards
- Company management philosophy
- Company values
- Company positioning in market
- Company growth/success

Answering this question incorrectly could greatly diminish your chances of a securing the position you seek. So, when you answer, do not forget about the following:

- Stay away from general answers that could be applied to any company.
- Do not focus your answer on you; it could seem as if you feel the company needs you.

- Even if you have applied for several similar jobs, do not mention that fact.
- Do not try to breeze over the question; you may appear uninterested.

Points to Emphasize

In asking this question, interviewers are trying to gauge how much you truly want to work for their company. If you can show a genuine interest, then they can feel more assured that you would be committed to the position and the company. Therefore, it is critical that you answer this question correctly. In properly answering this question, there are a few points to emphasize.

- Demonstrate that you are knowledgeable of the company by sharing facts that you have uncovered.
- Make a few correlations between the company and your particular skills, talents or characteristics.
- If you have a positive relationship with a productive employee of the company, mention it.
- Show enthusiasm about the opportunity to join and contribute to the company.

- NOTE: *“It’s close to my house”* is not a good reason.

To be able to craft the best possible answer to this question, you will want to look up some information on the company. This can easily be accomplished through a quick internet search.

You can probably think of other reasons that would also work.

Example Answers

(1) *“Well, the JP Morgan reputation is certainly a factor. I would be proud to work for a company with such a long history of leadership in the industry.*

Also, a good friend of the family has been working in corporate finance at JP Morgan for the last two years and he told me that the culture supports learning and development on the job – and really rewards hard work.”

In this case, the candidate is interviewing for a very well-known firm. In a situation like this, the tendency for many candidates is to basically answer, *“Well, it’s JP Morgan. Duh.”* In today’s job market, that’s not going to be enough to set you apart from other candidates, even if your resume is stellar.

This sample answer addresses the company’s brand and history, but also demonstrates that the candidate took the time to do some additional research through his network (read on for some tips on how to research companies before you interview). The answer goes on to emphasize the candidate’s interest in working hard and developing on the job.

(2) *“I saw an article in Business Week about your new CEO John Jacobs and the firm’s renewed focus on technology innovation.*

I consider myself an innovator and I would love to work for an

organization that's leading the future of the industry."

It is smart to seek out recent press on any company that interviews you. In this case, the candidate found an article about the firm's new CEO and quoting it makes her sound smart, prepared, and interested.

She also singles out the bit from the article about innovation and articulates that this is a shared value. It doesn't hurt that she compliments the firm as a leader in the industry. A little flattery can be effective – just be careful not to cross the line into pathetic kissing up.

A great sample answer to inquiries about your interest in working for a particular company might sound like this:

(3) "In researching your company I saw your numerous recognitions and awards, including your high ranking as one of the best places to work. I am also connect with a few of your employees on a business networking site and noticed that we share many of the same skill sets, so I believe that I could fit in and flourish with your company."

Remember, you want to show that you have given some thought to applying for this position and that you did not just submit your application on a whim.

(4) "When I read about your company's unique approach to customer service last year in [Name of Magazine]– the attraction was immediate. I'm intrigued by your approach to employee wholeness and putting employee happiness first. Happy employees in turn provide better customer service– so it's a win-win. That tactic is different– to be sure– and I love innovative approaches. In addition I like the fact that you allow employees to choose their own work hours as long as their results speak for themselves. Companies who trust their employees matter a great deal to me– and the opportunity to set my own work-life balance is immense."

When answering this question, be specific – show you've done your research – and be positive.

(5) "I noticed your company last month at [Name of Charity Fundraiser]. In the span of just a few minutes I picked up on what your company is all about: giving back to the community– fostering an atmosphere of employee togetherness outside of work– laughing and having fun– and clowning around– literally! I chatted with a few of the employees working the booth– and everyone was so warm and positive. Further research I conducted when I got home from the event only confirmed what I'd picked up on. My personal values include giving back to the community and having fun doing it– so I knew I had to investigate opportunities to work for your company."

Here is one more example of a great answer to this question:

(6) "I have been watching this company for a long time. I read this article a year ago about how you are innovating the way people use appliances, and that really caught my eye. I think that innovation and

creativity are an important part of success. I would be so excited to be a part of that innovation here. Not only the innovativeness of the company attract me, but also the way they treat their employees. I have a friend who works here, and she just raves about how well she is treated and how the company feels like a family. I would love to work somewhere where I can be that close with my coworkers.”

Practice!

Exercise 1. Read the information of the unit about answering interview question “Why Are You Interested in Working for Us?” Think of the company of your dream – the place where you would absolutely love to work. Then, look at the list of possible reasons which you can mention answering this question. Select what is relevant for you and provide your explanations why.

- Company general reputation
- Reputation of key leaders
- Admiration of products/services
- Admiration of other company initiatives (marketing campaign, community involvement, training programs)
- Company awards
- Company management philosophy
- Company values
- Company positioning in market
- Company growth/success

Exercise 2. Study the example answers. Which answer(s) do you find most attractive? Provide your reasons why. Write down 10 words/phrases which you would like to use when writing your own answer to the interview question “Why Are You Interested in Working for Us?”

Exercise 3. Write down your answer to the interview question “Why Are You Interested in Working for Us?”

Unit 40. Interview Question: What Would Your Direct Reports Say About You?

- In this unit:**
- **What would your direct reports say about you?**
 - **Your strategy**
 - **Points to emphasize**
 - **Mistakes you should avoid**
 - **Sample answer**
 - **Practice section**

“What Would Your Direct Reports Say About You?”

(1) Although this question may be tough to answer, what the interviewer really wants to know is how you perform as an employee based on records

from your prior job. This way, they gain a better understanding into whether or not there are past incidences on your reports that could keep you from getting the job or situations of outstanding performance that could make you a good fit for the position. Zachary Painter of ResumeGenius says that applicants should be honest and strategic in crafting their answer.

(2) "Emphasize your strengths while acknowledging your weaknesses and how you made efforts to improve in those areas," he says. "Present a well-rounded, honest picture of yourself, while using your strengths to posture yourself as a viable and well-suited candidate for the position at hand."

(3) Aurora Meneghello of Repurpose Your Purpose believes, that interviewees should think of positive experiences they have had with their direct reports. "Share a specific example if you can," she says. "Can you recall a time when you helped a direct report? And what did he or she say afterwards?"

(4) By using a specific example, you can demonstrate your strengths as a manager without bragging. For instance, you could say, "My direct reports would say that I am organized. I have a big calendar with all of our team deadlines and I send a weekly email with our priorities. One of my direct reports used to struggle with time management, so I worked with him to schedule his time more productively."

(5) Or you could say, "My direct reports would say that I am a good teacher. By hosting monthly career development sessions and weekly check-ins I have helped my direct reports master new skills and made my team smarter and more productive."

(6) Saying nice things about yourself tends to be a lot harder than saying nice stuff about others. For most people, it can be really awkward to talk about their own accomplishments –which is why interviewing is so uncomfortable for many.

(7) Thankfully, there is one question that can (kind of) bridge this gap. When an interviewer asks you, "How would your boss or colleagues describe you?" this is your chance to use the words of others to talk about your own positive traits. Here are a few ideas about how you can take advantage of this opportunity. No matter what example you think of, being honest and specific is always the best way to nail this question and ace an interview.

Your Strategy

(8) The easiest way to answer this question is to paraphrase a recent positive performance review. Referencing specifically where you're getting your information from makes it easier to describe yourself as "trustworthy, dedicated, and creative" without cringing. You'll also want to give some big picture context about your role and responsibilities to fill in the gaps around your answer. Altogether, it'll sound something like this:

"Actually, in my most recent performance review in April, my direct supervisor described me as someone who takes initiative and doesn't shy away

from hard problems. My role involves a lot of on-site implementation, and when things go wrong, it's usually up to me to fix it. Rather than punting the problem back to the team, I always try to do what I can first. I know she appreciates that about me."

(9) Another way to do this is to start off with the story and conclude it with how your boss or co-workers would describe you. Since the question is pretty open-ended, this is a great opportunity for you to share something you really wanted to mention in the interview but haven't had the chance to yet.

(10) There might be some trait or skill you know the hiring manager is looking for, and the opportunity to talk about it hasn't come up yet. This is your chance.

"One thing I've noticed is that I'm always the one people turn to for recommendations on how to handle a new event or program—the latest fundraiser that I just told you about would be one. I have a lot of institutional knowledge, which helps, but I think the reason people come to me is because I work through what a new program might look like very methodically. If you were to ask my colleagues, I'm confident they'd describe me as logical, organized, and meticulous."

(11) Try to think of three positive traits you bring to your work or workplace. Then, have a short example after each. It might go something like this:

"I don't want to speak for anyone else, but I'm pretty confident my colleagues would describe me as thoughtful—I'm the one in the office who remembers everyone's birthdays—and hard-working, since I never leave my office until it's been dark out for a couple of hours. My boss in particular would say audience development—it's why I kept taking on more and more responsibilities in that domain."

(12) Next time you get this question, you should be smiling because of what a great opportunity it presents to talk about pretty much anything you want to framed in a way that makes it easier for you to talk about. That's what you call a win-win.

(13) Points to Emphasize

- Describe how often you had reports done and what they included.
- Make sure that you point out the good things on your reports.
- Make connections between common information on these reports and tie it into why you are a good employee.
- Keep your answer clear and concise.

(14) Ultimately, it's a good idea to answer this question in a way that promotes your strengths, without putting emphasis on your weaknesses.

(15) Mistakes You Should Avoid

If you're not careful, it's easy to answer this question incorrectly. To prepare yourself properly, avoid making these mistakes during the interview.

- Refrain from bragging about how all of your reports were positive and there isn't anything bad on them.
- Do not dwell on past mistakes that could be on your past reports.
- Avoid skipping any information that could help you in the interview.
- Be careful not to get nervous when answering this question if there is information on your past reports that resulted in a negative mark.

(16) It is important not to hide information that exists on your reports. In interviews, it is always best to be confident, yet open and honest.

Sample Answer

“The reports from my past employment experiences will say that I am a hard worker and that I consistently showed up to work on time every day. They will also say that I did my best in any given situation. I feel that my reports would accurately describe me as an employee.”

(17) Remember, this question is just one of many you will be asked during any interview. For this reason, it's essential that you do not stress too much about answering it and just provide a response that accurately highlights your strengths and abilities.

Practice!

Exercise 1. Read the materials of the unit about answering the interview question “What Would Your Direct Reports Say About You?” The passages of the article are numbered. Write down a question to each paragraph,

Exercise 2. Study the example answers provided in the body of the article. Pay attention to the use of the following phrases in the example answers:

performance review, someone who takes initiative, shy away from, on-site implementation, Rather than punting the problem back to the team, I'm always the one people turn to for recommendations, I'm pretty confident my colleagues would describe me as, I'm very knowledgeable about, taking on ... responsibilities, consistently showed up to work on time, my reports would accurately describe me as...

Exercise 3. Write down your answer to the question “What Would Your Direct Reports Say About You?”, taking into account the recommendations provided in this unit.

Unit 41. Interview Question: What Is the Name of Our CEO?

- In this unit:**
- **How to answer: What is the name of our CEO?**
 - **Points to emphasize**
 - **Mistakes you should avoid**
 - **Sample answer**
 - **Practice section**

How to answer: What Is the Name of Our CEO?

One of the worst interview mistakes you can make is not prepping yourself with background knowledge about the company where you're interviewing.

To test just how interested a candidate is in a position, interviewers will often ask, "What is the name of our CEO?" in order to assess how much research an applicant has done.

"[Employers] seek to understand one thing: Did you do your homework?" says career strategist Mary Grace Gardner. "If you want to prove you are a good fit for a job, you have to put in the time to research the company."

Every interviewer wants to make sure that you know the answer because you took the initiative to find out essential information about the company prior to your interview. There are lots of ways that you can look up information about the company's CEO and a lot of information that you can glean about the company from what you know about their CEO.

Points to Emphasize

- Try to show the interviewer that you took the time to find out essential information about the company.
- Emphasize similarities between yourself and the CEO. In addition to their name, mention specific qualities the CEO has that align with your own.
- Bring up specific points in their education and experience. Your interest in the job will shine through if you show that you did thorough research.
- Project confidence and enthusiasm. Your answers to all interview questions should be stated confidently and enthusiastically.
- Act interested. Perhaps a better tip would be to *be* interested. If you are not interested in the job, this will be apparent to your interviewer.

Mistakes You Should Avoid

- Don't act like you are interested in replacing them. Even jokingly, responding with an answer that implies you are going to replace them is in poor taste.
- Avoid saying anything negative about the company's CEO. Instead, highlight the good things about him or her.
- Avoid making something up. You might not have done your research to find out about the CEO. In this instance, be candid and honest.

• Don't act like it doesn't matter. This question might seem trivial but it actually tells the interviewer whether you have qualities that already align with specific people in the organization.

Sample Answer

This is an example of a good answer to the question "What is the name of our CEO?"

"Thanks for the easy question! In my research, I found that your CEO John Doe has had a lot of volunteer experience. I read that he spent a lot of time in Mexico with XYZ Foundation, which is impressive to me since I did the same thing a few years ago. I would love to talk with him about his experiences there."

Practice!

Exercise 1. Read the main article of unit 41. What information in it was new to you? What are the five points to emphasize when answering the question about the company's CEO? Why are they so important? Share your opinion with your group-mates.

Exercise 2. Pay attention to the use of the following phrases; to memorize them well, compose sentences with each of them:

prepping yourself, background knowledge, be a good fit for a job, Bring up specific points, shine through, thorough research.

Exercise 3. Study the sample answer to the interview question "What is the name of our CEO?" and take into account the recommendations provided in this unit, then think over and compose your answer to the question.

Unit 42. Interview Question: Who Are Our Competitors?

In this unit:

- How to answer the interview question "Who are our competitors?"
- Points to emphasize
- Mistakes you should avoid
- Practice section

How to Answer the Interview Question "Who Are Our Competitors?"

This question is another way of asking, how well do you know the field If you aren't aware of the companies with which this firm competes, it may be difficult to contribute to its competitiveness. Your answer to this question shows whether you've adequately prepared for this interview and have some degree of global understanding of the industry. This is a question that requires advanced preparation and one you should be ready to answer if you want to convince your interviewer to take you seriously.

Points to Emphasize

To demonstrate your savvy when it comes to the playing field in your industry, follow these tips:

- Research not only the company to which you're applying, but also its chief rivals.
- Make sure you interpret the information you've gathered rather than just reporting it.
- Bring the focus back to you at some point in your answer.
- Be prepared to talk about industry and market trends, and what sets this firm apart from others.
- Preparation is key for success with this question. It's one that you may spend more time researching than some others.

Mistakes You Should Avoid

Assuming you know your stuff when it comes to the company where you want to work, here are some possible traps to sidestep:

- Never disparage the firm in any way, even when discussing potential areas for growth.
- Avoid implying that competitors are the same or better.
- Don't just list information about the company without demonstrating an understanding of it.
- Don't try to wing it. If you inadvertently give even one piece of wrong information, you may destroy your credibility with the interviewer.

This question can be intimidating, but it doesn't have to be a stumbling block if you're ready for it. This is information you really should know if you're going to work here.

Sample Answer

This is an example of a good answer to the question: "Who are our competitors?":

"My research indicates that Competitor A is currently outselling your product due to their line's greater functionality. However, given the improvements you're working on for the next generation being released this fall, I would anticipate that you'll recover a good portion of the market share. Your planned upgrades will put you ahead in terms of functionality, and at a lower price. I would love to be able to apply my experience with improving efficiency in order to help this company keep costs low and maintain its competitive edge."

Remember, the interviewer wants to know how you're going to be an asset to the company and help it outpace the competition.

Practice!

Exercise 1. What was new to you in the article How to Answer the Interview Question "Who Are Our Competitors?" Write a short essay on the topic; in it, answer the following questions:

Why do the interviewers ask this question?
What do they want to know about the candidate by asking it?
How should one approach answering this question?
What are the ‘red lights’ which put the candidate in risk and how to avoid making upsetting mistakes?
What is the best way to structure one’s answer?

Exercise 2. Read the two answers to the interview question “Who are our competitors?” below. Analyze them in a group discussion. Why is the shorter one considered a bad answer, while the other is considered a good one? Provide your reasons. Then, compose an answer to the question, taking one of your local mobile companies as an example.

Bad Answer:

“I know that your lead competitor, OpposiTech, offers a product called the ‘EyeSoar’ that offers similar functionality. I also know that they offer 3 other products and they have a lot of the market.”

These are just listing facts. It is not that impressive an answer.

Good Answer:

“From what I have researched, OpposiTech offers the most competitive program to your own. Their software has slightly greater functionality, including the ability to gauge user trends, but their program is not considered user friendly and would take about 3 years of reprogramming to improve ease of use. On the other hand, it appears that your product has the functionality in the pipeline for later this year, so I suspect their share of the market will decrease dramatically before their Ui upgrade is out.”

Here you show much greater knowledge of the product. This is an in depth answer that shows you not only did your research, but you also compared and contrasted, and are intelligent enough to do so effectively.

Interview Tips:

Research the company’s products and its competitors by investigating:

- The company website and social assets.
- Online forums and product review websites.
- Press releases.
- feedback from the company’s current and past employees if possible.

Exercise 3. Write down your answer to this interview question. Pay attention to the tips provided in the paragraphs about mistakes that you should avoid and about building the strategy of your answer.

Unit 43. Interview Question: Are You Willing to Travel?

- In this unit:**
- Interview question: Are you willing to travel?
 - Points to emphasize
 - Mistakes you should avoid
 - Example answers
 - Practice section

Answering Interview Question: Are You Willing to Travel?

“Are you willing to travel?” is a common question, one you may encounter on your next job interview. If a hiring manager asks you whether you are willing to travel for the job, it may set off alarm bells. You could worry that you’ll be overburdened with extensive travel responsibilities that take you away from home. What makes this question even more challenging is that it tends to come very early in the job interview process.

In most cases, the job description contains information about travel, so hopefully this question will not catch you by complete surprise. You’ll likely know a little bit about the travel requirement before applying, and should set aside some time to think through this question in advance of your first interview.

When the hiring manager asks this question, they are looking to gauge your willingness to travel—and the extent to which you will travel for the job. Often, the hiring manager will explain the travel requirements for the job during your interview, after you answer the question regarding willingness. The hiring manager will share their expectations with you, so that you can decide whether or not the position is a good fit for you.

You can help the manager know that you understand the necessity of travel in the normal function of the company by answering the question openly and honestly.

Points to Emphasize

When you answer this question, you want to emphasize your positive experiences with travel and try to maintain a positive tone.

- Talk about how travel in previous situations has benefited your education or training.
- Emphasize your commitment to completing your job responsibilities, regardless of where they take you.
- Mention that travel increases a company’s networking capacity.
- Explain how travel expands your opportunities.

Mistakes You Should Avoid

If you are not prepared for this question, you might easily focus on the negative and make some of the following mistakes.

- Do not complain about travel or talk about past misfortunes in airports.

- Be careful not to explain that you enjoy sight-seeing or going on vacation.
- Avoid going into descriptions of your family responsibilities.
- Do not give a specific maximum percentage of preferred travel.

To this question, you want to give a general answer that does not make the manager feel as though travel burdens your life. You also do not want to define an amount of travel that will affect the manager’s ability to consider you for the job. If your number is even slightly below the company’s expectation, it can label you as not interested in the job.

Example answers

(1) *“Of course I am willing to travel for the job. Travel in my previous jobs has allowed me to go to special conferences and trainings that have expanded my knowledge. Travel is required in many cases to network and complete job responsibilities, and I always like to be an asset to the company for which I work.”*

When you answer this question, you want to show that you are not opposed to the idea of travel. The manager wants to see that you understand the role of travel in the normal function of a company.

An excellent answer to “Are you willing to travel?” might go something like the following:

(2) *“Yes, I’m willing to travel. Travel in my previous jobs has allowed me to go to special conferences and trainings that have expanded my knowledge of our industry. I always strive to be an asset to the company for which I work—if travel is needed to help the company succeed, I’m definitely game for traveling.”*

When you answer this question, you want to show that you are not opposed to the idea of travel—if the idea of traveling is something that excites you, let that enthusiasm register!

Here’s another sample answer that would be a great response to “Are you willing to travel?”

(3) *“I’m definitely willing to travel. I’ve been looking for a job that will allow me to travel as part of my responsibilities because I find that travel allows me to expand my knowledge of the many facets of a company’s customer base. Travel allows me to not only grow my education, but also my professional network.”*

“Are you willing to travel?” is typically used as a screening tool during the job interview, rather than a point of discussion. Prepare your answer in advance to ensure that you quickly pass the test!

An example of how to best answer this question for experienced candidates:

(4) *“I do have flexibility to travel and have done so in my most recent*

role, which requires approximately 20% travel. How much travel is required for this role and what are some examples of the travel that would be involved?"

An example of how to best answer this question for entry level candidates:

(5) "I have no limitations on my ability to travel for my work and I have done extensive travel to date, including my semester abroad last year. Can you tell me more about the type and scope of travel which may be involved for this role?"

An example of how you should NOT answer this question:

(6) "Well only if I've got a big fat expense account to draw from when I travel. Then I don't mind, since I can pad in all the extra expenses that would make it worthwhile. Would I get to fly first class?"

Practice!

Exercise 1. Read through the main article of the unit. What is the central idea that the author is trying to deliver?

Exercise 2. Fill in prepositions and articles wherever necessary:

"Are you willing to travel?" is a common question, _____ one you may encounter _____ your next job interview. If _____ hiring manager asks you whether you are willing to travel _____ the job, it may set _____ alarm bells. You could worry that you'll be overburdened _____ extensive travel responsibilities that take you away from _____ home. What makes this question even more challenging is that it tends to come very early _____ the job interview process.

In most cases, _____ job description contains information about travel, so hopefully this question will not catch you _____ complete surprise. You'll likely know _____ little bit about the travel requirement before applying, and should set aside some time to think _____ this question _____ advance of your first interview.

When _____ hiring manager asks this question, they are looking _____ gauge your willingness to travel—and _____ extent to which you will travel _____ the job. Often, the hiring manager will explain the travel requirements for _____ job during your interview, after you answer _____ question regarding willingness. The hiring manager will share their expectations _____ you, so that you can decide whether or not _____ position is _____ good fit for you.

You can help _____ manager know that you understand _____ necessity of travel _____ the normal function of _____ company by answering _____ question openly and honestly.

Exercise 3. In the section Mistakes You Should Avoid, four tips on preparing to answer the question about travel are listed. Discuss each of them using the following scheme:

- (1) explain why the experts believe that this point must be mentioned;*
- (2) why making this mistake is upsetting and increases the risk of losing employment chances for to a candidate;*
- (3) how important is preparing the answer to this question in advance for a candidate*
- (4) why should a candidate avoid giving any figures to the interviewer when answering this question?*

Exercise 4. Write your answer to the question “Are you willing to travel for work?” Prepare to discuss it in the classroom and answer your group-mates’ questions about it.

Unit 44. Interview Question: What Makes You Uncomfortable?

- In this unit:**
- **How to Answer “What Makes You Uncomfortable?”**
 - **Your strategy**
 - **Mistakes you should avoid**
 - **Sample Answer**
 - **Practice section**

How to Answer “What Makes You Uncomfortable?”

When in an interview, it is important that you know what is actually being asked. Many questions have hidden meaning, but if you are able to recognize what they are getting at, your answer will be even more impressive.

Being asked what makes you uncomfortable is one of the most difficult questions to deal with. You walk a thin line between not answering the question and hurting your chances of being hired. The interviewer wants to know what could potentially affect your performance. This means it is okay to admit that certain things make you uncomfortable, while emphasizing how you are able to function despite discomfort.

Mary Grace Gardner, a career strategist at The Young Professionalista, shares that there are many reasons a hiring manager may pose this question.

"If an employer wants to understand what makes you uncomfortable, they want to better understand your limits, both in terms of how far you are willing to push yourself to grow as well as your ethical boundaries," she says.

No matter what your answer, it's important to avoid saying that an essential function of the position you are applying for makes you uncomfortable. "You don't want to highlight anything that's a key part of the role," says career coach Angela Copeland. "For example, if you're in sales, you don't want to mention that talking to people you don't know makes you uncomfortable."

Instead, Copeland suggests using this question as an opportunity to communicate your strong ethical values.

"Select something that will reflect positively on you – perhaps it makes you uncomfortable when a coworker behaves in an unethical way at work," she says.

By taking this approach, you can make sure you nail your interview and feel comfortable with your performance.

Your Strategy

- Be honest. Denying that anything makes you uncomfortable only makes it seem like you are dodging the question.

- Be sensitive. It is okay to admit that certain things make you uncomfortable, but you should portray yourself as open-minded and considerate of others' situations.

- Be confident. After answering the question, confirm that being uncomfortable never interferes with your work.

- Be reasonable. There are reasonable things to be uncomfortable about, and there are unreasonable things to be uncomfortable about.

Mistakes You Should Avoid

- Do not get upset. If a story or example clearly affects you emotionally, the interviewer will question whether you are able to work with discomforts.

- Avoid complete denial. It is best to admit that something makes you uncomfortable, even if it is a minor annoyance.

- Do not go on too long. The interviewer will be concerned if the list of uncomfortable things is too long.

- Do not be too serious. Having a good humor about what makes you uncomfortable instills confidence that you will perform well in the workplace.

Always try to remain positive and collected. Remember, they are not looking for someone completely unaffected by their surroundings. They want someone that has a healthy relationship with their situation.

Sample Answer

“At my previous job, several employees seemed like they worked different amounts. It was a little uncomfortable to see one person work weekends, while another coworker was leaving early most days. It never interfered with my work, but it was slightly concerning. A manager finally addressed it, so it did not have any long-term consequences.”

Practice!

Exercise 1. Study the information provided in the article *How to Answer “What Makes You Uncomfortable?”* Was it new for you? How did you understand it before reading the article? Do you agree with the author that this question should be used as an opportunity to communicate your strong ethical values? What else would you like to communicate by answering it?

Exercise 2. Read through the author’s tips about mistakes which you should avoid. Why are these four items so important? Explain in your own

words what the author meant to say when listing the four possible mistakes of the candidates:

- Do not get upset.
- Avoid complete denial.
- Do not go on too long.
- Do not be too serious.

Exercise 3. Write your answer to the interview question “What Makes You Uncomfortable?” Try to keep to the approach used by the candidate in the sample answer (above):

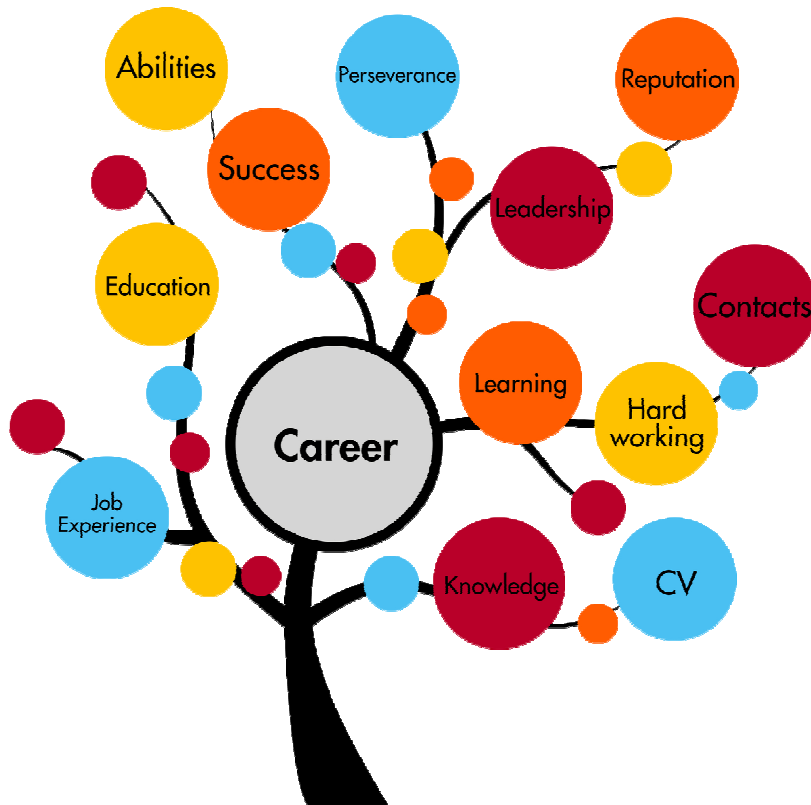
(1) “At my previous job, (provide an example)

(2) “It was a little uncomfortable, (provide reasons why)

(3) It never interfered with my work, but (be gentle, but identify the area of your concern)

(4) A manager finally addressed it, so (explain how the issue was resolved and how your comfort was restored).

Part 7: Working Through Some Unusual and Tricky Questions



Unit 45. What are your co-worker pet peeves?

- In this unit:**
- Answering the question “What are your co-worker pet peeves?”
 - Your strategy
 - Sample answer
 - Practice section

“What Are Your Co-worker Pet Peeves?” Interview Question

“This is a probing question designed to find out how you function within the workplace, specifically working with other people. Presenting a long list of personal irritants might give the impression that you’re not always able to block out distractions, or that you’ll have difficulty working with certain types of people.

Discussing pet peeves which are more work-related can help produce more grounded responses, showing that you’re focused on the job. Make it clear that the only quirks which you take notice of are those which take away from the task at hand.”

Points to Emphasize

Even though you're talking about behaviors which get on your nerves, keep a generally positive tone with your response:

- Think of work-related pet peeves, such as co-workers cutting corners.
- Consider highlighting actions you might take to curb problems rather than ignoring them.
- Maintain a sense of humor while responding honestly to display patience and understanding.
- Keep a constructive outlook overall—talk about making progress and finding resolutions.

You'll probably have plenty more pet peeves in reality, but a focused answer is better than a comprehensive one in this case."

Your Strategy

- Think of work-related pet peeves, such as co-workers cutting corners.
- Consider highlighting actions you might take to curb problems rather than ignoring them.
- Maintain a sense of humor while responding honestly to display patience and understanding.
- Keep a constructive outlook overall—talk about making progress and finding resolutions.

You'll probably have plenty more pet peeves in reality, but a focused answer is better than a comprehensive one in this case.

Mistakes You Should Avoid

It's easy to get carried away when venting about things that bother you, but don't lose sight of why you're being asked this question.

- Avoid taking a negative tone, rolling your eyes, voicing exasperation, etc.
- Try to suggest pet peeves which are resolvable. Listing off problems without solutions isn't a highly productive behavior.
- Don't get into specifics about particular people or situations—the question is general in nature.
- Stay focused on work matters. Even if messy microwaves and empty coffee pots send you up the walls, it's not necessarily interview material.

Don't get hung up on petty problems. Talking about how you can't stand co-workers who cover their desks with pictures of their pets shows you're focused on the wrong priorities at work.

Sample Answer

Now, look at this sample answer.

"Honestly, I try to keep focused on work, so the only real pet peeves which bother me are when people cut corners. It's a little frustrating when people don't fill out forms properly, for example, because it usually requires someone from our department to chase down the missing information, which costs everyone extra time. Weekly or monthly reminders and e-mail bulletins

definitely can help stem those kinds of issues, though—you just have to be diligent.”

This is a good example which answers the question directly, keeps the focus on work, and also touches on possible solutions for good measure.

Practice!

Exercise 1. What are pet peeves? How do you understand the title of the article What are your co-worker pet peeves? Retell the article paying attention to the following statements:

This is a probing question;

One should discuss only the work-related pet peeves;

It is important to remain positive;

The answer should be constructive and suggest a way out of the irritating situation.

Exercise 2. Write a short essay about the possible mistakes that candidates make discussing their co-workers’ pet peeves. What are the four typical mistakes candidates make when speaking about their co-workers’ pet peeves? How can they be avoided?

Exercise 3. Study the sample answer provided above. What is good about the candidate’s approach? What idea(s) of the candidate would you like to use in structuring your answer? Write down ideas for your answer and prepare to answer possible follow-up questions of the interviewer.

Unit 46. Interview Question: What Are Some of Your Leadership Experiences?

- In this unit:**
- Talking about leadership in a job interview
 - How to answer questions about leadership?
 - Sample answer
 - Practice section
 - Study STAR approach to interview techniques

Talking About Leadership in a Job Interview

(1) You might think that leadership questions are only relevant for management positions, but that’s a common misconception. Most companies are looking for people with leadership potential even when hiring for entry-level positions. Every job seeker should prepare at least one example of a leadership experience and get comfortable speaking about it in an interview situation. It doesn’t necessarily have to be an on-the-job leadership role. Recent grads can speak about leadership experience gained through volunteering, hobbies, clubs, and academic projects.

(2) What Does Leadership Mean?

The term “leadership” means different things to different people.

In the basic dictionary sense, “leadership” just means leading a group of people or an organization. However, most people see true leadership as something that goes beyond just managing people and projects.

(3) There are countless books and articles about leadership and countless definitions. Here are some of the competencies typically considered “leadership skills”:

taking initiative, communicating a vision, translating vision into reality, inspiring others, making tough decisions, motivating others, empowering others, developing others.

(4) Most hiring managers are looking for the type of leadership skills required to run a team, department or organization and most frequently, ask these questions:

“Tell me about a time when you demonstrated leadership skills.”

“Tell me about a time that you took the lead on a difficult project.”

“When have you delegated effectively?”

“Describe a time when you led by example.”

“Who have you coached or mentored to achieve success?”

“Tell me about a time that you led an important meeting.”

(5) For the interviewer, the goal is to find out if the candidate has true leadership potential. For more senior-level roles (any position with direct reports), it’s important to communicate your ability to jump in and assume a leadership role immediately. The best way to do this is to demonstrate that you’ve done it successfully in the past.

(6) For other roles, the leadership challenge may be to lead and motivate people who DON’T report to you. For example, any project management role or position that requires gaining cooperation and/or buy-in from other departments.

(7) For other positions (even entry-level jobs), companies ask about leadership because they want to hire people with leadership potential – individuals who can grow with the company and have superstar potential. Most companies want to hire the best of the best. Your interviewer wants to know if you have what it takes to help lead the organization into the future.

(8) In most job interviews, you will be competing against many qualified candidates. Most of them can do the job. However, to get hired in a competitive job market, it is essential to be more than qualified. You want to show that you are a leader, a superstar, an influencer.

How to Answer Questions About Leadership?

(9) This type of question can seem daunting. It requires a bit of bragging and many of us are not comfortable with “selling” ourselves. If you’re too humble when talking about your leadership experience or potential, you risk selling yourself short. This is why it’s so important to prepare a great leadership interview story in advance using the STAR* format.

(10) The goal is not to script out an answer word-for-word. The STAR format allows you to structure the general shape of your response by jotting down bullets for each of the key aspects of the story. Check out Big Interview for more guidance on structuring great STAR stories – and an Answer Builder tool that you can use to make the process much easier.

** To learn more about STAR approach, go to unit 30 and unit 33.*

Sample Answer

Situation/Task: Briefly describe the project or situation. Give just enough history and/or background to provide context.

Possible ideas for the answer:

(1) <i>“When I was at ABC Company, we went through some company-wide lay-offs.”</i>
(2) <i>“The team of five that remained in the department had to absorb the duties of the two that left.”</i>
(3) <i>“As a result, people were overworked and morale suffered.”</i>
(4) <i>“At the same time, more mistakes were being made because attention was so scattered.”</i>
(5) <i>“As the manager, it was my job to get performance back on track.”</i>

With these bullets, the candidate quickly paints a picture of the challenge faced. She had to motivate a team of people who were stressed out, negative, and overworked. This scenario obviously required strong leadership skills.

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• NOTE: Avoid the temptation to get bogged down in too much detail. You don’t need to fill the interviewer in on the reasons for the lay-offs, exactly how individual team members responded, or exactly what mistakes were being made.
--

- Talk about the key actions that you took. When telling a leadership story, make sure that you convey specifically how you stepped up as a leader. What actions did you take and why? How did your actions demonstrate leadership?

- **A few more ideas for the answer:**

(1) <i>“I scheduled a meeting of the full team to discuss strategies.”</i>
(2) <i>“I communicated my appreciation for all of their hard work during a challenging time for the company.”</i>
(3) <i>“I asked for their assistance in identifying ways for us all to be more efficient –including me!”</i>
(4) <i>“I made it clear that this was a brainstorming meeting to come up with options – that no idea was stupid and that it was a safe environment for making suggestions.”</i>
(5) <i>“We spent an hour capturing ideas on a white board, then voted on</i>

the five with the most potential. I then assigned each person to do more research on how we might implement one of the ideas.”

The candidate who used these answers provides us a step-by-step breakdown of her leadership strategy. She empowered her people to help solve the problem, she opened herself up to constructive feedback, and she made everyone feel valued and heard.

- NOTE: Remember that managing a team doesn't necessarily make you a great leader. It's important to choose a story that demonstrates true leadership – stepping up to guide or motivate or take initiative, ideally in challenging circumstances.

A strong STAR interview story always includes a happy ending. Wrap up your example by describing the positive outcome(s) of your action. Quantifiable results are particularly impressive (boosted sales by 32%, saved the organization \$19K), but anecdotal results also can work well (My client was delighted and sang my praises to my manager, my VP loved our creative approach and promoted me).

Example Answers

Study these examples and select some ideas which you would like to use in your own answer:

(1) *“First of all, the team responded very positively to this approach. They loved the idea of being empowered to help find a solution. Instead of complaining, they channeled their energy in a more productive way once they knew that they would be heard.”*

(2) *“Right off the bat, we came up with two ideas that could be implemented quickly and save us a lot of time.”*

(3) *“One idea was to eliminate a weekly report. This freed up 8 hours each week – including two hours of my time and three hours for my top account manager.”*

(4) *“Another was to train Penny, our administrative assistant, to take on some of the tasks that were burdening our account managers.”*

(5) *“We also decided to incorporate brainstorming and idea evaluation into our staff meetings each month.”*

(6) *“We are now more efficient and morale is way up.”*

(7) *“My boss even asked me to help him roll this process out to the other departments in our division.”*

This is a great happy ending. The candidate covers a number of positive outcomes:

- Increasing morale by empowering the team members
- Improving efficiency and saving 8+ hours per week

- Impressing the big boss so much that he wants other departments to follow the candidate's approach

It is nice to have some specific numbers (freeing up 8+ hours per week), but the anecdotal results are equally impressive in this example. The fact that the candidate's boss "stole" the idea for other departments shows it was a real success

- Choose a Strong Example

Select an example that really shows off your leadership skills.

Do NOT provide weak examples like, *"I was the leader for my group project and everything went okay for the most part."*

Customize the example if you can. Review the job description carefully and identify the type of leadership skills required for the role. Often, the desired leadership capabilities are spelled right out in the job description. One position may require managing a large team and another may be looking for someone who can take initiative.

Do NOT try to surprise anyone with an answer like, *"I consider myself a born leader and have always sought out leadership opportunities over the years."* It's boring and it doesn't answer the question.

This should go without saying, but avoid examples that could raise red flags. For example, don't talk about leading a project that was an utter failure due to your mistakes.

- Get Specific About What You Did

The best stories include enough detail to be believable and memorable. Show how you were a leader in this situation and how it represents your overall leadership experience and/or potential.

At the same time, you must make an effort to keep the story concise. It can be tempting to go off on tangents, particularly if you haven't prepared in advance. Using the STAR format will help you keep it focused.

Don't try to script your story out word-for-word. The example above is far more scripted than you want or need. We took this approach to make it easy for readers to understand. However, for your own stories, you can just jot down the key bullet points for each section. The idea is to create a framework that ensures you cover the most important and impressive aspects of the experience.

- Practice

Once you have framed your story using the STAR approach, it's time to practice. Please do not skip this step. Practicing interview answers is not exactly the most exciting activity, but it really does make a difference. Academic studies consistently show that candidates who practice get more job offers. I've also seen this over several years of working with thousands of clients: Practice makes you a MUCH better interviewer and significantly increases your odds of getting hired.

When you get asked about your leadership experiences, a hiring manager is trying to figure out what you find important. The way you answer this

question will show them the qualities in leaders that you deem most vital. They probably also genuinely want to hear about some leadership experiences you have to better understand your qualifications for the job. As with most interview questions, this is supposed to give the interviewer some insight into you as an employee. They want to figure out if you would be a good fit for their company.

Your Strategy

When you answer this question, make sure to talk about experiences that highlight your positive traits and attributes.

- Discuss your abilities that make you a leader like communication skills, ability to motivate and dedication to goals.
- Demonstrate how you are a good team builder. This will show the hiring manager that you can build a team rapport with a group of people.
- Talk about experiences in which you developed and learned new ways to inspire people.
- Mention why you think you are a good leader.

Talking about positive leadership experiences you had will show the interviewer that you are a capable leader.

Mistakes You Should Avoid

- Don't talk poorly about others whether they were your peers, underlings or managers.
- Beware of telling negative stories.
- Avoid telling stories where leadership was thrust upon you because of someone else's incompetency.
- Try to not talk about managerial qualities since they are different than leadership qualities.

Understand that the interviewer is trying to get a sense of you, so you should keep the answer positive.

Sample Answer

“I’ve always found myself in leadership roles. I’m good at helping people find what they’re best at. One time there was this crisis at work. A shipment had gone awry and we were about to be swamped with angry customers. We had about five minutes to prepare. Everyone was nervous and didn’t know what to do to get ready. It was chaos. There wasn’t a real leader because we were all at the same level, so I just took the reins. I put our best communicators at the front line, and then a few of us stayed in back to try to mitigate the problem. It was a long day, but we were all dedicated to figuring out the problem. It was a rush.”

Bringing up experiences that highlight positive traits makes it easy for the interviewer to see that you're a good fit for the company.

Practice!

Exercise 1. Why is the talk about leadership so important at a job interview? Read the article Talking About Leadership in a Job Interview and make notes about the most ideas it brings up. Pay attention to the use of the underlined words and phrases. Make sure you understand their meanings in the context of the article.

Exercise 2. Study the examples of answers which were structures with STAR approach. Why are they considered good? Make notes about your own answer to the question of leadership with the use of STAR approach.

Exercise 3. The section Your Strategy suggests you to focus on positive traits and attributes during your answer. Why is it so? Discuss the suggested items of how to build your answer strategy; share your understanding of why they are important..

Exercise 4. Study the example answers provided in the unit 46. Based on the information you learned in this unit, write down your answer to the interview question about leadership. Prepare to answer possible follow up questions of the interviewer. Revise your sample answer a few times; prepare more than one example of your leadership roles; be ready to answer follow-up questions of the interviewer.

Unit 47. Interview Question: What Do You Like the Most and Least About Working in This Industry?

- In this unit:**
- How to answer ‘What do you like the most/least about working in this industry?’
 - Your strategy
 - Mistakes you should avoid
 - Example answers and analysis
 - Practice section

How to Answer ‘What Do You Like the Most and Least About Working in This Industry?’

Interviewer's thoughts: While our company is stable now, there are no guarantees about the future. This guy sounds like he may have some burnout and flexibility issues. Question: *“What was the worst part about your last job?”*

- NOTE: Do NOT provide answers like this: *"In my last job, my boss was overbearing and wouldn't let me do my job. If she didn't like the way I was doing something, she'd criticize me."*

An answer like this one might make the interviewer think that, as you criticize your previous boss, you could be a problem to supervise in this company. So, the best strategy here would be to focus on tasks rather than company politics or people. A good response would be:

GOOD ANSWER:

“I’ve given this question some thought, and overall I’ve been very satisfied with my jobs. I’ve been able to work with some really interesting people. I have to say that I did have a job where there was an inordinate amount of paperwork. Because working with people is my strength, the paperwork really bogged me down at times.”

Notice the word "inordinate." Not a normal load paperwork, but an unusually large amount, which kept you from doing what you do best: working with people.

Now, think back to previous jobs when you have been dissatisfied—times when you didn't look forward to going to work and you hated what you were doing. Was the nature of the work or the office environment causing the dissatisfaction? Create a list of those things responsible for your dissatisfaction. Spend some time looking at your list for patterns. Are there some projects that recur on your list? Are there some situations you don't want to get into again? This exercise will help you identify areas to watch for and to ask questions about during the interview.

When you can identify the factors that give you job satisfaction, as well as the factors that were unpleasant or tedious for you, you can determine if this is the right job for you. People perform best when they are doing something they enjoy. Thinking about your answer to this question as an opportunity for you to identify what you want—doing the things you like to do best—as well as what you don't want.

"What did you like least about your last job?" is something of a trap when it comes to interview questions, because your interviewer is asking for a negative answer. If you haven't given the subject some thought, you may blurt out something about your boss or the company, and talk yourself right out of a job.

Your Strategy

- Customize your answer to be relevant to the position
- Talk about things you love that are important aspects of the job
- Talk about things you do not love that are not that important to the job
- Be truthful

If you genuinely despise something about the industry, and that thing is an essential part of the job, you do not have to outright say that you hate it. You can just avoid mentioning it altogether.

Mistakes You Should Avoid

It is very easy to poorly answer this question, so watch out for these common blunders.

- Avoid saying that you love something about the industry that isn't relevant to the job
- Avoid saying that you hate something about the industry that is crucial to the job

- Don't say there is nothing you hate about the industry
- Don't make the interviewer worried that you would be unhappy in the position

An interview is a chance to make a first impression on a potential employer, so avoid instilling the fear that you would hate working at this company by giving the wrong answer.

Example Answers and Analysis

If you're asked "What did you like least about your last job?" in an interview, be sure to keep your answer honest, but incorporate a positive angle if possible. One of the purposes of this interview question is to find out if you're going to be satisfied in the job for which you're interviewing. If you were dissatisfied before, you may be dissatisfied again if the circumstances are similar. Here's how three different candidates might answer this question:

(1) *"I didn't have enough challenges. After a while, all the projects became repetitive. I thrive on challenge."*

The interviewer's thoughts in this connection would be: *A lot of the tasks here are repetitive. What makes this candidate think he will like it here any better? Will we be able to keep him challenged?*

Let us look at another answer:

(2) *"Lack of stability. After three company acquisitions, I had five bosses in three years. I couldn't take it any longer. What I am looking for is stability in a job and company."*

Regardless of the field in which you are applying, you should be prepared to talk about your history with it. Therefore, you should be prepared to answer, "What do you like the most and least about working in this industry" This question is asked in order to gauge certain pieces of information. It is asked to see if what you like most is a part of what the job will entail and if what you like least is not relevant to the position. If the things you hate are integral parts of the job, then the hiring manager will know that this position is not right for you. You should frame your answer around what will be required of you if offered the job.

Here is one more example answer:

(3) *"I think I would make a great sales associate because my favorite part of any retail job is when I make a customer's day by going above and beyond what's expected. I like being out on the floor with the clientele as opposed to being behind a desk not interacting with anyone."*

This is a good answer for a job that requires a lot of customer interaction where you would not be required to be behind a desk anyway. Customize your answer to reflect your desire to work with the organization.

Practice!

*Exercise 1. Survey information provided in the article **How to Answer ‘What Do You Like the Most and Least About Working in This Industry?’** What was new for you in it? Study and analyze the example answer marked as a good answer. Why is this answer successful? Share your ideas about building a good answer to this interview question.*

*Exercise 2. Read the section **Mistakes You Should Avoid**. Why did the author put an accent on these particular mistakes. Share your look on the problem.*

Exercise 3. Study the examples of successful answers to the question. Based on the information discussed in the article, put together your own answer to the question. Read it to your group-mates in classroom and conduct a discussion of its strong and weak points. Then, revise and rewrite your answer. Do this a few times, if necessary, until you feel that your final answer really reflects your desire to work in a particular position.

Unit 48. Interview Question: Would You Work 40+ Hours a Week?

In this unit:

- **How to answer: ‘Would you work 40+ hours a week?’**
- **Mistakes you should avoid**
- **Sample answer**
- **Practice section**

How to Answer: ‘Would You Work 40+ Hours a Week?’

When an interviewer asks, “*Would you work 40+ hours a week,*” you may feel a little conflicted about how to respond. Do they need you to work more than that? Do they just need a few nights of overtime here and there?

Depending on your industry, the hiring manager may expect you to work more than the average full-time employee. However, this can also be a question of productiveness. Can you get all of you tasks completed in the allotted time frame To figure out the best answer, you will have to consider the type of job and company for which you are applying. Regardless, be honest. You don’t want to get hired and realize that you cannot maintain the expected schedule.

Points to Emphasize

Unless you know exactly what the company expects, you don’t want to be too specific on how much you will work. Feel free to give examples of past experiences where you worked extra hours for the sake of a project.

- Highlight your workplace productivity.
- Showcase your talent for time management.
- Be confident when you state how much you can work.
- Focus on your willingness to do what needs to be done.

Try to be as positive as possible in your answer. Draw attention to your strengths as an employee and refocus the conversation away from a set number of hours.

Mistakes You Should Avoid

- Avoid stating an exact number of weekly hours when possible.
- Do not show distaste for overtime or a longer than average workweek.
- Do not imply that overtime signifies inefficiency.
- Do not forget to factor in the industry you are a part of.

If you don't know what you're hiring manager is looking for, be honest and avoid being too specific. However, be cautious if they expect 80 hours a week in an industry where most workers have 40-hour workweeks.

Sample Answer

"I know this job will require extra work hours as projects come in and deadlines approach. I work efficiently, but when my colleagues need me to put in the extra time, I will gladly oblige.

In this field, I've always been able to complete my tasks within the typical 40-hour workweek, but I understand that some projects simply require a little more. I am happy to occasionally come in early, stay late or work weekends."

Remember, if you don't want to work more than 40 hours a week, it is fine to say so, but keep your response positive.

Practice!

Exercise 1. Read the article How to Answer: 'Would You Work 40+ Hours a Week? Then, make two lists of ideas, answering two questions:

- (1) How do I really feel about having to work extra hours?***
- (2) What should I say to succeed at the interview?***

If your lists contain contradictory statements, think of some ways to smooth down your answer; look for a compromising solution. If you find alternative ways to answer the question, write down those ideas.

Exercise 2. Study the information about possible mistakes of the candidates. How can you avoid making these mistakes in your interview? Make notes for yourself in order to later use them in building your answer.

Exercise 3. Study the sample answer provided above. Why is it good? What is the applicant's approach and strategy? Make notes for yourself about the good ideas you would like to use in your answer.

Exercise 4. Write down your answer to the question 'Would You Work 40+ Hours a Week?' Revise and edit it a few times to make it sound smart and reasonable.

Unit 49. Interview Question: What Questions Do You Have for Me?

- In this unit:**
- **Interview question: What questions do you have for me?**
 - **What not to say**
 - **The questions you should ask**
 - **Your strategy**
 - **Practice section**

Interview Question: What Questions Do You Have for Me?

As an interview draws to a close, it's very likely that the interviewer will ask, "Do you have any questions for me?"

When you hear this query, you may groan inside, since it can feel like you've covered absolutely everything during the course of the interview. However, it's better to respond to this question than politely demur. Otherwise, you could leave interviewers with the impression that you're not engaged with the conversation or interested in the position. Plus, since this question typically comes at the end of the interview, it's one of your final chances to leave an impression on your interviewers— so make sure it's a good one!

Here's what you need to know about how to respond – and how not to respond – when interviewers ask if you have any questions for them, plus some sample questions.

Prepare for the Question

Since this question is so common, it makes sense to plan for it. Come to your interview prepared with a list of questions that you want answered. Keep in mind that your questions may change based on who is interviewing you. If you're meeting with someone from Human Resources, for instance, your questions might focus on the interview process or overall company organization. If you're meeting with the person who will be your manager if you get the role, you might ask questions around responsibilities in the role.

Prepare several questions that you can use during this moment, in case some of them may be addressed during the interview.

What Not to Say

It may be an open-ended question, but that doesn't mean any response goes. Stay away from questions on these topics:

Off-work activities: It's fine to ask questions about the culture at the job, but stay away from queries that are focused on non-work activities, like happy hour outings, lunch, or vacation time. These types of questions will make you seem uninvested in the company or work, which isn't the right impression to leave. Similarly, don't ask how many hours you'll need to work each day.

The interviewer's personal life or office gossip: Give interviewers the same courtesy you'd want them to give to you – don't ask about their family or living situation, and don't delve into gossip about people you may both know.

Things you could answer yourself: If your question could be easily answered with a quick online search or by glancing at the company website, skip it. Time-wasting questions won't be appreciated. Interviewers expect that you will have done a bit of research on the company, and familiarized yourself with the basics.

Salary and benefits: This just isn't the right time, particularly if this is a first-round interview. Getting specific about salary and benefits can make you seem uninterested in the work and the company, and focused only on yourself.

Very complicated or multi-part questions: Asking multi-part questions can overwhelm interviewers. Make it easy on them: Ask just one question at a time. You can always follow up. Aim to make the moment feel conversational.

One more thing to avoid: Don't ask too many questions at this moment. You want to be prepared and ask one or two, but when interviewers begin to shuffle paper, glance at their watch or a phone, or wake up sleeping computers, take the hint and wind down your questions. Review these examples of what not to ask during a job interview.

Don't ask:

- *“What are some of the latest developments at your organization?”*
- *“How much can I expect to earn during the first year, including commissions?”*
- *“What do employees do for fun with colleagues after work?”*
- *“Do you have children? Is this a child-friendly employer?”*
- *“What are five strategic goals for the organization during the next five years?”*

The Questions You Should Ask

So, What Should You Ask?

Ideally, your response will make it clear that you were engaged during the interview and have a good sense of the company's goals and priorities. You can reflect back to earlier moments in the interview (“It sounds like you were saying that XYZ is a real priority. How is your department involved in that project?”). Or, you can mention questions that build off of company news, or information you read on the company website.

Aim to always ask open-ended questions, and not questions that can be answered with a “yes” or “no.” Here are a few broad categories of questions that are appropriate to ask.

Questions about the role: This is a great opportunity to learn more about what you'll do, if it hasn't already been thoroughly covered in the earlier part of the interview. Here are some questions you can ask:

“Can you share more about the day-to-day responsibilities of this position? What's a typical day like?”

“Why is this position open – is this a new role? If not, why did the person who held this role leave it?”

“If I were hired for this role, what would you want me to achieve in my first months in the position?”

“What mechanisms are in place for performance reviews and when would I receive my first formal evaluation?”

“In your opinion, what is the single most important indicator for success in this job?”

Questions about the company or the interviewer: This is also a good opportunity to get a sense of company culture and how the company is doing.

“What's the company organization and management style like?”

“What's one thing that makes you happy to come into work today?”

“How long have you been at the company?”

“What did you do before you were at the company?”

“Can you talk about the company culture a bit?”

“What are some of the issues facing the company?”

“What are the company's goals for the upcoming year?”

Questions about you: You can use this moment to get a sense of how the interviewer perceived you, and if they think you're a good candidate. With these questions, you might want to preface by expressing your excitement for the position. And then, based on the feedback you get, you can address the issue on the spot or follow up in your thank you letter. You can ask:

“Do you have any concerns about my candidacy?”

“What are you looking for in a candidate?”

“Are there any qualifications that you think I'm missing?”

Your Strategy

Clarify Your Uncertainties. Your first step should be to ask anything about the position that hasn't been covered in the interview (though not questions you'd know the answers to by looking at the job description or company website). “You want the questions to be well thought-out and meaningful to the position and industry,” says Smith.

Sample questions could include:

“What does a typical day look like?”

“What are the biggest challenges that someone in this position would face?”

“How will I be trained? How will my performance be reviewed?”

“What are the performance expectations of this position over the first 12 months?”

“What are the most immediate projects that need to be addressed?”

Remove Their Doubts. Ask questions that will allow you to talk about any strengths or accomplishments you didn't cover in the interview, or to make sure that you are sharing with the interviewer the same types of qualities they are looking for. “I ask what kind of person they see ideally fitting the job,” says Brittany Mazin, a young professional. “It's good to be clear on exactly what they are looking for and whether you are a good match for the job.” Once they

answer, you can clarify or reiterate why you'll be a good match. Some ways to phrase this:

“What are the skills and experiences you’re looking for in an ideal candidate?”

“What attributes does someone need to have in order to be really successful in this position?”

“What types of skills is the team missing that you're looking to fill with a new hire?”

“Is there anything that concerns you about my background being a fit for this role?”

Uncover Red Flags. This can be tricky to do tactfully, but asking questions about turnover, culture, and growth opportunities during the interview process can prevent unpleasant surprises down the road. Questions you could ask include:

“What is the company culture like?”

“Can you tell me about the team I’ll be working with?”

“Where is the last person who held this job moving on to?”

“Where have successful employees previously in this position progressed to?”

“What are the career paths in this department/company?”

Get a View of the Future. Asking questions about the growth of the company and its employees is a good idea for two reasons. “I always ask what a company's goals are for the next five to ten years. It gives a good perspective on what their values are and how I may or may not fit with a company,” says Diane Kulseth, another young professional. Plus, asking about the future of the company and opportunities for your own growth shows that you’re committed and eager to learn. You can ask:

“Where do you see this company in the next few years?”

“What can you tell me about your new product or plans for growth?”

“What training programs are available to your employees?”

“Are there opportunities for advancement or professional development?”

Build a Relationship. When in doubt, ask the interviewer about himself or herself. “I ask interviewers about their journey in their career, such as what field they were in before and how it led to where they are now,” says Sasha Rice, a recent graduate. “People love talking about themselves... Plus, if you have similarities, it creates a bond between you and them.” But “be careful,” suggests Smith “to not get too personal, and pay attention to how the interviewer reacts.” Try questions like:

“How long have you been with the company?”

“What did you do before?”

“Why did you come to this company?”

“What’s your favorite part about working here?”

At the end of the interview, don't forget to ask about next steps. First, reiterate that you're interested in the position (assuming you still are, of course!), and ask the following non-presumptuous questions about what's next in the hiring process:

"What are the next steps in the interview process?"

"Is there anything else I can provide you with that would be helpful?"

NOTE:

Never ask any question you should already know the answer to. You must do your homework and research before going to the interview.

Salary is another taboo. Never ask about benefits, pay, what they will do for you—particularly in a first or even second round interview. This will be negotiated once they make you an offer and prior to you accepting.

Do not bombard the interviewer with a laundry list of questions. If she seems engaged in the conversation and encourages you to keep asking, great, but if you see her looking at her watch, time to wrap it up! It's best to pick a handful of questions that are most important to you and leave on a positive note.

Practice!

Exercise 1. Read through the material provided in the unit. Why is it important to prepare a number of questions to ask the interviewer? While reading, make notes for yourself about using some ideas in your future interview.

Exercise 2. Write down underlined words and phrases from the unit 49. Make sure you understand their meanings. Provide at least one synonym opposite every word/phrase.

Exercise 3. Study example answers and notes provided by the author of the article.

Exercise 4. Write down 5-6 questions which you would like to ask the interviewer at the time of your interview.

Unit 50. Some Simple, But Tricky Interview Questions

- In this unit:**
- Some simple, but tricky interview questions
 - Interview question: ‘Are you innovative?’
 - Interview question: ‘Give an example of your lateral thinking.’
 - Interview question: ‘Give us an example of a time when you faced an ethical dilemma.’
 - Interview question: “What is your favorite website?”
 - Interview question: “What are your hobbies?”
 - Interview question: “What was the last book you’ve read for fun?”
 - Interview question: “What questions haven’t I asked you?”
 - Practice section

Some Simple, But Tricky Interview Questions

Forewarned is forearmed, which is why we've compiled a list of the tricky interview questions that recruiters love to use and candidates sometimes stumble over. This overview will help you understand what employers are really asking for. You'll also pick up tactics for answers that show you in the best possible light, and find some extra examples of questions that could throw you if you haven't thought about them in advance.

Interview Question: ‘Are You Innovative?’

Graduates are sometime asked to give an example of when they were innovative, ‘thought outside the box’ or used creative thinking to solve a problem. Many graduates are concerned that their examples are just not innovative enough, but worry not: the interviewer won’t expect you to have given the prime minister tips on handling Brexit! Instead, talk about times when an idea from you had a positive impact: for example, if you came up with a fundraising idea for charity or found a way to save time on an assignment.

Think about what innovation means to you – and to the company. Its website could give you some clues, especially what it says about its values and priorities. It might also help you to think of somebody who you would describe as innovative. Why did you pick them? What skills and qualities do they possess that you admire?

Some skills and qualities that go hand-in-hand with innovation are:

- the confidence to take on big, ambitious goals and take risks;
- the ability to adapt and be resourceful in unexpected situations;
- the motivation to identify where things can be improved and then act on it;
- the enthusiasm to try new things and gain new skills;
- a creative approach to problem solving;

- the ability to think imaginatively, but also strategically and practically (after all, it doesn't matter how creative an idea is if it isn't realistic commercially);

- the ability to work independently without much input from others as well as to work with a team towards a shared goal.

While it isn't essential, the recruiter will be impressed if you can draw on your work experience, extracurricular activities, university studies and so on to explain how you've developed these skills and qualities.

Your examples don't need to be extraordinary. The recruiter will appreciate that you're just starting out in your career; they won't be expecting you to have invented a time machine.

More realistic examples include:

- thinking of a unique way to fundraise for charity
- brainstorming how to increase ticket sales for your drama society's theatre production

- finding a less time-consuming way to complete a group project for your degree

- suggesting a new weekday deal that will bring in more students to the restaurant where you have a part-time job

Focus on what *you* did, although that doesn't mean the example shouldn't be team-based. Just highlight how you led the team and worked well with others.

Other interview questions you could be asked about innovation

There are several competency-based questions that you could be asked, such as:

"Tell me about a time when you were innovative."

"Tell me about a time when you took an innovative approach to solving a problem."

"Tell me about a time when you thought of a better way to do something."

"What's the best idea you've ever had?"

"In your opinion, what's the greatest innovation in history?"

"Can you think of a new way to...?"

"Do you like to experiment?"

"If you had one month to spend £30,000 on one project, what would it be?"

"If you met our CEO for half an hour, what future opportunities would you suggest to them?"

Careers where innovation is in demand

If you're applying for jobs in any of the following areas, you could be asked about innovation at interview, as it is seen as a particularly important quality by employers in these industries:

Banking, charity and the public sector, consulting, engineering, fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG), IT, marketing and advertising, retail, science and research

Interview Question: ‘Give an Example of Your Lateral Thinking.’

Lateral thinking is the ability to use your imagination to look at a problem in a fresh way and come up with a new solution. Companies value employees with lateral thinking skills because without them, they can’t innovate and create new products. Think about times when you’ve been faced with real-life problems and have somehow managed to overcome them. Chances are your solution involved an original, creative approach, and that’s what employers want to find out about.

This skill is highly prized in creative industries such as the media and publishing, and is valued across a range of different industries and professions, including retail, law, management consultancy and IT. Any graduate who takes up a management role is likely to need to draw on lateral thinking skills to solve problems and take forward the work of the team. Lateral thinking can also be assessed using psychometric tests.

Your answer will give the employer some insight into the following:

“Can you think in an innovative way?”

“Are you capable of coming up with a creative solution to a problem?”

“Can you overcome difficulties when the answer isn’t immediately obvious from all the information that is already available and from the way things have been done before?”

“How do you cope when you’re up against a challenge you’ve never previously experienced?”

As you prepare for your interview, think about real-life problems that you’ve overcome. Here are some possible examples:

- A difficult customer at work, or disagreement with a landlord
- A student society you were involved in that was struggling financially
- A team you were part of that wasn’t doing well, or where there was a conflict that needed resolving
- A deadline you realized you couldn’t meet
- Being lost somewhere, mislaying something essential, or having travel problems
- Running low on cash and needing to come up with a way to make more
- Needing to find work experience in a profession you are interested in but know little about

Most real-life problems – especially ones involving other people – call for a creative approach and some lateral thinking. Try to think of situations that were heading for failure until you came up with a new approach that turned them around.

For example, if you’ve been involved with a student society that was struggling financially, a logical solution to the problem might be to seek to cut costs. If you use lateral thinking, however, you might come up with a great new fundraising idea, devise a novel initiative to boost membership, or approach a contact you’ve made through some other means to secure sponsorship.

When you hear about students who have come up with original ways of grabbing employers' attention, the ruse they've used is often testament to their powers of lateral thinking. Careers planning in itself often involves lateral thinking, especially if it's not immediately obvious to you what you want to do when you graduate.

Interview Question: 'Give Us an Example of a Time When You Faced an Ethical Dilemma.'

When you're asked in a graduate job interview to discuss an ethical dilemma you've faced, you need to show both your integrity and your approach to analyzing and resolving problems.

This is not the time for dramatic confessions. No one wants to be the candidate who, halfway through their interview, finds the recruiter furtively dialing 999 because they've just admitted a felony. Workplace dilemmas are typically more likely to be about potential grey areas than jailable offenses: for example, what's the trade-off between a good deal for the organization and a good deal for the client... between being ambitious and stepping on colleagues – or doing a deal that helps one group of people but not others, indeed perhaps puts others at a disadvantage?

You may feel you've never encountered a genuinely challenging ethical dilemma in the workplace. However, if you give this tricky graduate job interview question some thought in advance, you should be able to identify a situation you've come across where there could be different points of view about the right course of action.

What the employer is trying to measure is: How transparent you are in your dealings with people; whether your core beliefs chime with those of the organisation. In particular, a lot of corporations are now defining themselves as being 'values-based' in their operations; how well you articulate your own ethical framework, and how it affects your behaviour; not only whether you are a decent person to work with, but how thoughtful and intelligent you are when it comes to difficult decisions. That's what they want from a graduate.

The example you choose is far less important than how well you cover the points outlined above.

Don't try to make up a scenario for the interviewer, who will probably be able to tell that you're being inventive. It's fine if your dilemma is relatively commonplace – most ethical decisions in work are like that. It could be a situation that many of us are likely to encounter in everyday life.

What you need to do is to mesh your observations into a coherent overview. You might say that your dilemma here is to balance wanting to help an individual (homeless person) with focusing your resources effectively. If you have time, your first action might be to offer to buy a warm snack as that resource is targeted. Failing that, you could make a small cash donation and a one-off larger donation to a charity that has the experts to deal with the bigger picture.

Then the smart thing is to link what you've said to the workplace. For example, you might observe: 'For me, this shows that ethical issues are often complex and that applies to ethical issues at work. If there are ethically tough choices to make, I would always want to look at every possible course of action and the consequences of each – and then consult with colleagues before making a decision.' This both addresses the question posed by the interviewer and provides an answer to another question that you haven't been asked directly, but which puts you in a good light.

Interview Question: “What Is Your Favorite Website?”

When an interviewer asks you what is your favorite website, they're looking for a number of things:

What you do with your free time. If your favorite website is 9GAG, Instagram, Facebook, or Tumblr, it shows that you like to enjoy yourself. It isn't bad, but the interviewer may take it as a sign that you waste a bit more time than you should-particularly on the job.

What your passions are. Do you spend all of your time studying WebMD, TechCrunch, PCWorld, or Mashable? If so, it shows that you're interested in things that will benefit you in your daily life, far beyond what you'll learn by hitting up social media or spending hours surfing funny videos on YouTube.

What you're willing to do to improve yourself. People who spend large quantities of time on useful websites tend to be better at self-improvement, both in their personal life and professional life. If you spend all of your time on TMZ or Deadline, you're not really interested in the kinds of things that will help you get ahead in life.

Think about the websites where you spend most of your time. Probably most of these sites are social media sites (Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, YouTube, Digg, Reddit). All of these sites are good for interacting with others, but that shouldn't be a part of who you are as a professional looking to get hired. You DON'T want to list any of these above sites as your "favorite" sites in a job interview. Instead, why not think about other sites where you spend a lot of your time (HowStuffWorks, TechCrunch, BuzzFeed, Mashable, Upworthy, Uproxx). These sites offer a lot of entertainment value, but they also offer a lot of value in terms of professional and personal growth.

For example, Upworthy has a lot of funny videos, but there are thousands of inspiring, motivational videos as well. BuzzFeed has a lot of fun and funny pages, but a lot of what the site offers is news as well. Highlight one of these sites that combine entertainment with education, and focus your answer on the educational side of things.

So, your answer may sound like this:

"My favorite website is BuzzFeed. I love to see the latest news in the world of technology, particularly the latest advancements made in computer science and robotics. I've been a computer geek for years, even though it's not

my profession. It's fascinating to see where computers are going, and how technology is evolving."

Whether or not you actually spend all of your time on BuzzFeed researching computer technology doesn't matter, but you are giving an honest answer. Be honest with the sites you like, but make sure the answer paints you in a professional life.

Interview Question: "What Are Your Hobbies?"

Questions like these could stem from a number of concerns the employer might have, such as your overall health and energy level, your mentality, or how you might engage and entertain clients and coworkers.

They could also be asked because the hiring manager wants to learn as much about you and what you're like as a person as possible. Doing things besides working shows that you're a well rounded person, and your hobbies and personal interests give an interviewer insight into the type of person you are. Be prepared to share examples of what you like to do during your spare time with hiring managers. But, also be cautious there are some activities that are better off kept to yourself.

What you should NOT say:

You probably already know there are certain subjects you should leave out of any interview, so even if your favorite way to spend time is gambling, partying, or any type of illegal or questionable activity, don't bring it up in the interview.

The Best Ways to Respond:

- Do make sure that your answers are genuine. For example, if it's been a decade since you had a gym membership, don't brag about being a "fitness junkie." However, you should focus on answers that demonstrate a positive quality that might indirectly help you achieve success at work.

- Exercise and Health-Related Activities. It's true that exercise and fitness related hobbies can demonstrate health, energy, vitality, and the ability to manage stress. Older candidates should be especially careful to make some points of this sort if possible. Sports like golf, tennis and skiing can be useful ways to interact with clients and build relationships. But, remember to be honest first and foremost. You don't want to brag about being a "golf pro" and then get to the driving range with your new employer, only to have no idea what to do.

- Volunteering and Community Participation. In addition, you might mention your volunteer work or community activities, like coaching your child's baseball team. Volunteer work shows high character and a concern for someone other than yourself. Working for community-based organizations is also a great way to source potential clients while pursuing a common interest.

- Professional Development and Continuing Education. Professional development activities are another potentially rich area of sharing how you use your spare time.

- Maybe you take classes or seminars, read journals, or complete online tutorials that enhance skills related to your job. Maybe you're learning another language in your spare time. In addition, helping to coordinate conferences or carrying out duties for a professional association are other ways to show that you are professionally engaged outside of work.

- You can also share anecdotes from your daily life. Maybe you like to spend your spare time bonding with your spouse or children; maybe you enjoy going hiking with your dog. Maybe you're a fan of the New York Times crossword puzzle; perhaps you love to read mystery novels or make quilts. Whatever you choose, make sure it paints you in a positive light.

- Mix Personal and Professional Pursuits. Overall, the best approach to this question is to mix in personal hobbies with more professional or work-related pursuits. This combination will enhance your response.

- Finally, when you're discussing your hobbies, remember to speak with enthusiasm – and a smile.

Interview Question: “What Was the Last Book You’ve Read for Fun?”

Although you should expect to be asked about your skills and previous work experience in a job interview, you should also be prepared to answer personal questions like, “What’s the last book you read”

This question is typically asked so that the hiring manager can get a better idea of who you are as a person when you are not working. These types of questions may not be asked at every interview, but it is important to be prepared and be well-read. You do not necessarily have to be well-versed in the literary world, but it helps if you had read something fairly recently.

Your strategy:

- Talk about a book you actually read and liked
- If possible, talk about a book you read that is relevant to the field in which you are applying
- If the interviewer has read it too, feel free to ask their opinion on it
- Be truthful in your response

If you are asked this question, the interviewer is just trying to learn more about you as a person. There is no need to get caught up in trying to give the perfect response.

Mistakes You Should Avoid

It is hard to give a “bad” answer to a question about what you like, but you should still be wary of these common mistakes.

- Avoid saying a book you haven’t actually read
- Avoid saying you haven’t read anything lately
- Avoid mentioning a book that could reflect poorly on you in this position
- Don’t pause for too long before answering

Hopefully, you read fairly frequently, so you should not have to think about the last book you read. You should just have an answer already prepared.

Here is an example answer:

*“I recently read *Outliers* by Malcolm Gladwell, which provided a really in-depth look of what it takes to achieve success in anything.”*

The good part of being asked these types of personal questions is that there is a good chance the interviewer enjoys the same things you do. Then you can both talk about it and develop a good rapport. You may be coming into this interview with the same type of skills as other candidates, but being asked about your personal life is your opportunity to make yourself stand apart so that a hiring manager will remember you when the interview is over. Liking good books will not automatically get you the job, but it is another factor employers consider.

Interview Question: “What Questions Haven’t I Asked You?”

Sometimes interviewers will ask questions that are meant to catch you off guard to see how well you respond. One of these questions is: *“What questions haven’t I asked you”*

A hiring manager does not ask this question because he or she knows she has forgotten something but cannot remember what it is. Interviewers ask this to see what kind of response it will bring out of you. Not being able to answer it may show that you have not really been paying attention to the interview. However, having a creative response may show that you are capable of thinking outside the box and have something unique to contribute to the company.

Points to Emphasize. This question may not be asked for every single interview; however, if you are asked it, then there are some points to keep in mind.

- Mention questions that are not typically asked during an interview
- You only need to bring up a few questions
- Prepare beforehand to answer this question
- Mentions questions that relate to the overall tone of the interview

If the interview has been pretty fun and relaxed, then feel free to bring up questions that are lighter in nature. If the interview has been all business, stick to questions that fit in with that tone.

Mistakes You Should Avoid. Many job applicants make harmful mistakes when it comes to answering this question, so do not fall into the same traps.

- Avoid saying that you cannot think of anything
- Don’t mention questions that have already been asked
- Avoid getting nervous or making it appear as if you are unprepared
- Avoid mentioning questions where you cannot give a positive response

Being able to answer this question efficiently will indicate that you have prepared for this interview beforehand, and you know what kinds of questions should be asked.

You may also expect questions like:

“What was the last book you read?”

“If you won the lottery, would you continue working?”

“What was your favorite class in college/high school?”

“What is most important in your life?”

“What is something interesting about you that cannot be learned through your resume?”

It would not make a lot of sense to ask questions that would portray yourself in a negative light, so this is your chance to bring up questions where your answer will make you stand out. Spend some time coming up with a few unique questions before the interview so that you will be ready if this question comes up.

Practice!

Exercise 1. Study the material of this unit. As it suggests lots of useful information about a number of interview questions, you may need to read it more than once. When reading, pay attention to the underlined words and phrases, make sure you understand their meanings. If needed, use a dictionary.

Exercise 2. Write sample answers to the interview questions discussed in this unit and keep your notes at hand till the time when your real interview is scheduled. When you have the description of the job and the information about the company to which you want to apply, you can revise and edit your notes to adapt them to particular situation.

Part 8: Additional Information and Vocabulary



Unit 51. After the Interview

- In this unit:**
- Write a follow-up letter
 - Follow-up thank you email
 - Checking in email
 - Staying in touch email
 - No response after an interview? Here's how to follow up by email
 - What to do if you aren't hearing back from employers
 - No response after an interview? Here's how to follow up by email
 - Practice section

Write a Follow-Up Letter

(1) In general, there are three kinds of follow-up emails you can send after an interview. In the best case, you only need to send one email – a note that thanks your interviewers for their time and expresses your enthusiasm for the job.

(2) But sometimes, weeks can pass after an interview without a response from a potential employer. If this happens, you can send a second follow-up email to check in. Finally, you can send an email asking to stay in touch with the hiring manager. If you didn't get the job, this is a great way to expand your network and learn how to improve your chances the next time.

(3) Below are guidelines and examples for writing a follow-up thank you email, a “checking in” email, and a “staying in touch” email.

Follow-Up Thank You Email

(4) In your follow-up thank you email highlight the ways your talents align to the role. Refer to your notes from the interview and the job description to choose words that will resonate with the hiring manager. If there's something you forgot to say or want to elaborate on from your interview, this email is a great place to mention it.

(5) Communicate your enthusiasm for the job by restating your interest in the job and your conviction that you are the right fit for the position.

(6) Send your follow-up thank you email within 24 hours. Start with the name of the person who interviewed you. Use their first name if you are on a first-name basis. If not, include "Mr./Ms." and their last name.

(7) Choose an appropriate length. In the examples below, you'll see a short version and a long version. The short version will be appropriate for most cases. Close the letter with your name and contact information, including your phone number and your email.

(8) Carefully proofread before you hit send. As with everything else you've sent to potential employers, give your follow up a final edit before you send it.

Short follow-up thank you email example

(9) In the short version, you'll want to be concise:

- In the first paragraph, mention the specific job title and thank your interviewer.

- In the second paragraph, note the company's name as well as a conversation point and/or goal that seemed especially important to the person you spoke with. Connect that point to your experience and interests.

- In the final paragraph, invite them to ask you any additional questions and close by saying you're looking forward to hearing back.

Subject line: Thank you for your time

Dear [Interviewer's name],

Thank you for taking the time to speak with me about the Marketing Coordinator role. It was great to meet with you and learn more about the position.

I'm very excited about the opportunity to join [Company name], and am particularly interested in the details you shared about the upcoming launch of the brand campaign. I'm enthusiastic about the prospect of taking on some of the project management and bringing my experience in successfully coordinating cross-functional initiatives to the table.

After our conversation, I'm confident that my background in marketing and my interest in brand growth will enable me to fill the job requirements effectively and support the vision of [Company name]. Please feel free to contact me if I can provide you with any further information or samples of my work. I look forward to hearing from you.

Thanks again,

[Your name]

Tel.: 555-555-5555

E-mail: youremail@email.com

Long follow-up thank you email example

(10) In the long version, you have more opportunity to explain your skills in detail (although you'll notice that this long version is still relatively short). Here's what to include:

- In the first paragraph, thank your interviewer for their time and express your continued interest in the job and company.
- In the second paragraph, mention something from the conversation and expand on it. Get as specific as possible while keeping it short and to-the-point.
- In the third and final paragraph, close with a summary statement on what sets you apart as a candidate and what you'll bring to this new opportunity.

Subject line: Thank you for your time

Dear [Interviewer's name],

Thank you very much for your time yesterday – it was a pleasure speaking with you about the Account Executive role. From our conversation, it's clear that [Company name] has the energetic and hard-working environment I'm seeking.

I especially enjoyed discussing your need for someone who can create value and insight during client conversations. It's an interesting challenge, and I've continued reflecting on it since our meeting. Over the last few years, I've encountered many of the same roadblocks we discussed: tightening client budgets and lengthy decision making processes. Prioritizing the quality of the conversation, over simply delivering information, has been one of my most successful tactics in overcoming those roadblocks and one reason I've routinely exceeded my quotas.

In my relationships with clients, I focus on building trust and boosting credibility – and I'm excited about the prospect of bringing that skillset to [Company name]. If you need any further information, please feel free to contact me by email or phone.

Thanks again,

[Your name]

Tel.: 555-555-5555

E-mail: youremail@email.com

(11) Keep in mind, particularly for the longer version, that you'll want to spend time customizing the elements to your specific experience and the interview conversations. The more you customize these general examples, the more you'll stand out as an applicant.

Checking In Email Example

(12) If you haven't heard back from a potential employer after your interview and after your thank you follow up, you can send a "checking in"

email, ideally to the recruiter. You should send this email if you haven't heard back after two weeks since your interview.

(13) You don't need to worry that checking in makes you seem desperate or annoying. The truth is that these decisions take a different amount of time at each company. You're simply giving them a gentle nudge for an update. And, if you really want the job, there's no harm in reiterating that.

(14) You want to keep it short. Indicate that you're looking for more information without being overeager:

- In the subject line, include the job title you interviewed for.
- Send this email to the recruiter. They are the most likely to be up-to-date on what's going on in the hiring process.
- Keep it to one paragraph indicating that you are still interested in the job and looking for an update. Offer to provide additional information if they need it. Sign off with a thank you.

Subject line: Checking in about Marketing Coordinator role

Dear [Recruiter's name],

I hope you're well! I'm checking in on the Marketing Coordinator role. It was great to meet with the team earlier and I'm looking forward to your update. Please let me know if there's anything else I can provide to assist in the decision-making process.

Thank you,

[Your name]

Tel.: 555-555-5555

E-mail: youremail@email.com

What to Do If You Aren't Hearing Back From Employers

Staying in Touch Email

If you haven't heard back after checking in or you've learned that you didn't get the job, you can still venture to stay in touch with the hiring manager. The goal of this email is to establish a professional relationship with a person who can help you grow.

Be aware that if you received a firm "no" on this job, it is highly unlikely that this email will change that. What it can do, however, is reinforce your interest in the company and indicate to the hiring manager that even though you may not have been the right fit for this job, there may be a future role for which you are well suited.

Just like your checking in email, this one is short:

- Send this email to the hiring manager. This person is probably at a senior level and could be a potential mentor if you're looking to grow in this field. In your first paragraph, mention what about them you found interesting or inspirational.
- Limit to two paragraphs and include a proposed timeframe for a phone call or coffee meeting.

No Response After an Interview? Here's How to Follow Up By Email

By Biron Clark

So, you finished your interview, went home excited to hear back, but now what? Maybe it's been a few days (or more) and you haven't heard anything.

I'm going to show you exactly how to send a follow up email after your interview if you've gotten no response, with examples and templates.

One WARNING first though: Don't use these follow-up templates to email the company after one day! It takes time for the company to interview people and make decisions. If it's one day after your interview, you should be sending a "thank you" email instead (I'll cover that too).

Follow Up Email After An Interview

Step 1: The Follow-Up Email Subject Line

Follow up email subject lines are important. They decide whether your email gets opened, and how fast.

I'd recommend following up with whoever said they'd been in touch. Or follow up with whoever you've been talking to for scheduling, etc.

The best subject line, and the one that's going to get opened faster than anything else, is to simply reply to the latest email between the two of you.

It'll look something like this:

"Re: Interview on Thursday at 10 AM"

They'll open it immediately because it'll appear as part of the previous conversation. Much better than starting a whole new email for this.

Step 2: The Body Of Your Follow Up Email

I'd keep it simple and straight-forward. Don't be shy or unclear. Tell them you're excited to hear back and wanted to check if there's an update or a decision yet. This is the best follow-up email if you already sent a "Thank You" email.

How to write a follow up email after an interview:

- Greet them by their first name
- Say you're following up in regard to the job you interviewed for
- Be specific when mentioning the job – include the job title, the date you interviewed, or both
- Reaffirm that you're still interested in the position and excited about what you learned in the interview, and that you're eager to hear about next steps
- Then ask for an update. Tell them any information they can provide would be appreciated, and that you're looking forward to hearing back from them
- Finish by saying "thank you," and then signing off with your first and last name
- Keep it short, to-the-point, and well-spaced (2-3 sentences per paragraph)

- Run spell-check and proofread everything before sending your follow up email. Don't risk having a mistake in your email.

- Note: This strategy above is best if you've already sent a "Thank You" email a day after your interview.

We can't go back in time though. So if you didn't send a "Thank You" email after your last interview and a few days have passed, I'll show you what to send... You just need a follow up email that also thanks them for interviewing you, since this is your first contact with them.

Best follow-up email if you DIDN'T already send a "Thank You" email:

The interview follow up steps above will still work, but we need to add one piece near the start. After greeting them by their name, you should thank them for taking the time to interview you.

I'd mention the specific date you spoke to remind them, too. Something like this: "*Dear Jeff, thank you for taking the time to meet with me on Thursday*".

Then you can jump right into step #4 above. Say you enjoyed learning about the position you discussed (be specific and refer to it by the job title).

Then tell them you're hoping for an update. Be clear and direct, and ask for what you want.

Finish by thanking them, and ending the email with your full name, just like in the steps above.

For next time, here is a "Thank You" email template I recommend right after your interview. Send it at lunchtime the following day:

"Hi <NAME>, I wanted to take a minute to thank you for your time yesterday. I enjoyed our conversation about <SPECIFIC TOPIC>, and the <JOB TITLE> position sounds like an exciting opportunity for me at this point in my career. I'm looking forward to hearing any updates you can share, and don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or concerns."

"These Emails Seem Too Simple. Should I Add More?"

No. Don't complicate it. Be up-front and say what you actually want, which I assume is an update on the status.

This email is your best shot at getting that update without seeming pushy, anxious, insecure, desperate, or any of the things that'll turn a company off.

In all likelihood, the person you emailed will get back to you and apologize and say they're still working on a decision. Or there's a chance they have news to share and will update you as soon as they get your email.

Either way, you reminded them you're waiting for news and still interested, which is important if 4-5 days have passed because companies love to hire people that seem genuinely interested. If you want to know why, or what else a company looks for first, you should check out my complete list of job interview tips. It'll help you understand the company's mindset a lot better.

What If The Company Says They Don't Have Any News Yet?

This is a pretty likely scenario, they respond to your email and say they're still waiting for something to happen. Sometimes they'll be specific on what that 'something' is but usually not. Either way I'd respond with something to keep the conversation alive and give yourself an opening to follow up again if needed.

Here's an example of an email reply you could send them:

“Thanks for the update. Do you have a sense of what the timing will look like moving forward? Or when would be an appropriate time for me to check back in? I'm excited about the opportunity, but I know these things take time so I don't want to follow up too often here.”

What If The Company Still Hasn't Responded To Any Emails After The Interview?

If you sent your followup email after the interview and didn't hear back, here's what to do:

First, make sure you've waited a one or two days for a response (not counting weekends). Give them some time.

Then send a followup to the same person, replying to the same email you already sent and keeping the subject line.

Email Body:

*“Hi <NAME>,
Just wanted to make sure you saw my last email and follow up again to see if you had any updates regarding the <JOB TITLE> position. Please let me know when you get a chance. Thanks!”*

Be Patient After This...

If you still haven't heard back at that point, I'd be very patient. There's a chance someone necessary for the decision is on vacation or the person you emailed is extremely busy. If you get nothing after 48 MORE hours, you can email somebody else in the company.

I might wait even longer though. Really, at this point, you're not going to gain anything by sending more followups one day sooner. So if in doubt, just wait a bit. I might wait a full week at this point if it were my job search.

However, when you do feel it's time to take things further and check back in, here's what to do...

Pick the next logical person and send them an email. If you were emailing an HR person before, try the hiring manager or somebody in the department you interviewed in. Or the other way around – if you've been emailing with the hiring manager before the interview and they've gone silent, try checking in with HR.

Example Subject Line:

“Any interview updates? I emailed <CONTACT'S NAME> and didn't hear back”

It's a bit long, but it's specific which means it'll get opened and the person on the other end will know it's not spam.

The contact's name is who you've been emailing previously – the person who isn't answering your emails.

The Email Body:

“Hi <NAME>, I emailed <CONTACT'S NAME> last week and hadn't heard back so I wanted to send you a brief note. Is there any feedback you can share about my interview or the status of the <JOB TITLE> position? I'm looking forward to hearing any new updates when your team has a chance. Thanks!”

More Tips For Following Up

If you follow the advice above, you will have great emails to send after any interview – from a phone interview to a final stage in-person interview.

However, there are also a few other tips I can share that will make the process easier and worry-free:

Tip 1: If you're still not 100% confident about anything above, you can always have a friend or family member look at your follow-up email before you send it out.

They can double-check everything and tell you if it sounds polite and is clear on what you're asking.

Tip 2: Try to end each interview by asking when you can expect to hear feedback. Simply say: “When can I expect to hear feedback, and who will be in touch?”

Sometimes it's normal for it to take 1-2 weeks for a response after your interview. For example, maybe you were the first person they interviewed and they need to talk to a couple other candidates before making a decision.

So this will save you a lot of stress because you'll know whether it's time to follow up or not, and you won't be worried if you've gotten no response after a couple of days.

Practice!

Exercise 1. Read the article ‘Write a Follow-Up Letter’. While reading, select and write down a keyword for each paragraph in the article (the paragraphs have been numbered for you. Then, retell the article with the help of the list of keywords.

Exercise 2. Study the information provided in the article What to Do If You Aren't Hearing Back From Employers. Answer the following questions:

What should you do if you haven't heard back from the employers after the interview?

What is the goal of ‘staying in touch’ email?

To whom should you address this email?

How long should it be?

When should you send it?

Exercise 3. Practice writing follow-up emails by taking the sample letters provided in the above article as examples, studying their structure and looking at the way the paragraphs are formed.

.Unit 52. Useful Notes About Business Correspondence

- In this unit:**
- **What is business writing? Definition, tips, and examples**
 - **Grammar and style in business writing**
 - **Tips for effective business writing**
 - **Useful notes about business correspondence**
 - **Developing thank you letters**
 - **Email vs. handwritten**
 - **Job offer letters**
 - **Using E-mail for correspondence**
 - **Accept offer letters**
 - **Decline offer letters**
 - **Practice section**

What Is Business Writing? Definition, Tips, and Examples

Business writing includes memorandums, reports, proposals, emails, and other forms of writing used in organizations to communicate with internal or external audiences. Business writing is a type of professional communication and is also known as business communication and professional writing. Learning how to write proper business documents is immeasurably easier by studying examples of proper business writing as well as tips on how to accomplish it.

Purpose of Business Writing

Business writing is informative, instructive, persuasive, and transactional. The goal of business writing is to transmit information to a reader, so clear language is necessary to help a reader understand information easily.

Business writing style has developed in order to serve a number of purposes:

- **Convey information:** Business communications such as research reports or policy memorandums seek to distribute knowledge.
- **Deliver news:** Professional writing is often used to share recent events with an audience made up of others from inside or outside the company.
- **Direct action:** Many professionals use their business writing skills to tell others what to do or how to do it.
- **Explain or justify:** Professional writing is a suitable way to provide an explanation or justify an action that has already been taken, particularly if the matter is a complicated one.

- Influence someone to take action: Business communication is often used to influence others to take a specific action, whether to use a certain tool during the course of business or to purchase a product or service that is on offer.

Brant W. Knapp, in his book, "A Project Manager's Guide to Passing the Project Management Exam," notes that, "The main aim of business writing is that it should be understood clearly when read quickly. The message should be well planned, simple, clear, and direct."

Additionally, business writing should be transactional, meaning that it relates to business, of course, but also that it relates to buying or selling products or merchandise or that it relates to the specific and purposeful transaction between two people. Business writing is never frivolous: It always seeks to achieve a specific purpose.

Grammar and Style in Business Writing

Business writing must include certain style and grammatical requirements and norms as follows:

- Know your audience. Also be mindful of your tone, which will vary depending on the message you wish to convey, notes "Technical & Business Writing." For example, a letter of complaint will have a far different tone than a grant proposal, says the reference guide.

- Use nonsexist language. It should be obvious in today's business climate that sexism is not tolerated at most companies. Work to eliminate gender-biased language.

- Don't overuse visuals. Graphic displays should make up no more than 10 to 25 percent of the business writing, says "Technical & Business Writing."

- Use simple, active verbs. Passive writing is harder for your audience to read and it's generally more convoluted. So, don't say: "Two students have been assigned to assist the professor." Instead, keep it simple, direct, and active: "Two students will assist Professor Smith."

- Avoid jargon and words that simply seek to impress. So, say complete not aggravate, aware not cognizant, and prevent not obviate, for example.

- Avoid unsupported generalizations, says "Technical & Business Writing." Don't say: "The study proves that the only way to lose weight is by counting calories." Instead, write, "The study suggests one very successful way to lose weight is to count calories."

Business Writing Examples

There are numerous types of business writing, which is by no means restricted to letters or emails, but memos, business letters, and emails are the most common.

Business Memo

A memo is generally an internal business document that is sent from one person within a company to another person in the same department in that company or a different department in that company. A sample memo, adapted from Purdue OWL, might read:

TO: Kelly Anderson, Marketing Executive
FROM: Jonathon Fitzgerald, Market Research Assistant
DATE: May 23, 2018
SUBJECT: Fall Clothes Line Promotion

Market research and analysis show that the proposed advertising media for the new fall lines need to be reprioritized and changed. Findings from focus groups and surveys have made it apparent that we need to update our advertising efforts to align them with the styles and trends of young adults today. No longer are young adults interested in sitcoms as they watch reality television shows. Also, it has become increasingly important to use the internet as a tool to communicate with our target audience to show our dominance in the clothing industry.

Internet Advertising

XYZ Company needs to focus advertising on internet sites that appeal to young people. According to surveys, 72 percent of our target market uses the internet for five hours or more per week. The following list shows in order of popularity the most frequented sites: Google, Facebook, YouTube, Ebay, iTunes.

Shifting our efforts from our other media sources such as radio and magazine to these popular internet sites will more effectively promote our product sales. Young adults are spending more and more time on the internet downloading music, communicating and researching for homework and less and less time reading paper magazines and listening to the radio. As the trend for cultural icons is to go digital, so must our marketing plans.

Television Advertising

It used to be common to advertise for our products on shows like Blue Bloods and Chicago Med for our target audience, but even the face of television is changing. Young adults are tuning into reality television shows for their entertainment. Results from the focus group show that our target audience is most interested in shows like America's Got Talent, So You Think You Can Dance, and American Ninja Warrior. The only nonreality television show to be ranked in the top 10 most commonly watched shows by females 18 to 25 is The Bachelor. At Blue Incorporated, we need to focus our advertising budget on reality television shows and reduce the amount of advertising spent on other programs.

By refocusing our advertising efforts of our new line of clothing we will be able to maximize the exposure of our product to our target market and therefore increase our sales. Tapping into the trends of young adults will help us gain market share and sales through effective advertising.

Attachments: Focus Group Results, January–May 2018; Survey Findings, January–April 2018

Note a few important stylistic and grammatical norms here: The salutation is very direct; the "TO," "FROM," "DATE," and "SUBJECT" are in all caps,

though that is not a hard-and-fast rule. It is also acceptable to uppercase just the first letter of each part of the salutation. The name of the person sending the memo (such as you) is listed in full, followed by your title. On the next line, with one space in between, list the name and title of the person receiving the memo, followed on the next line (leaving one space) by the date, followed on the next line with the subject. In four short lines, the sender, receiver, date, and subject are known.

Include an introductory paragraph, just as described above, followed by body paragraphs that give the details, or in this case, explain the argument (that research shows that advertising should be geared toward younger adults). Because the memo is longer than four or five paragraphs, the writer correctly broke up the text under informative subheads. Just as in most newspaper and other writing styles, the subheads are in title case (with major words starting with an uppercase letter and minor words all in lowercase).

As shown here, list any attachments (and their dates) at the end of the memo.

Business Letter

A business letter actually follows a very similar style as a business memo with some notable exceptions, as in this example adapted from Writing-Help-Central:

Ms. Raymond Gaudet
Manager, Corporate Programs
Final Edition Publications
3535 E. Third Street
New York, NY 10002
(292) 745-2398

May 23, 2018

Ms. Margaret Champion
Director, Corporate Services
Riviera Industries Inc.
245 Dearborn Park Road
Chicago, IL 60610

Dear Ms. Champion:

It was a pleasure meeting you briefly at last week's Board of Trade event. It's amazing how small the world does seem sometimes, considering that we both earned our undergraduate degrees at U. of Kansas, even overlapping for one year! I suppose we were destined to eventually meet face-to-face.

I was fascinated by your synopsis of the history of Riviera Industries over the past almost half-century. Clearly, your company has a rich corporate heritage and tradition. At the same time, the company has been blessed with a continuum of leaders of foresight and imagination who had the courage to change course at key points along the way so that the company could remain competitive and continue to lead its industry.

As I was mentioning to you, Final Edition Publications is a specialty publisher that focuses on corporate publications, including annual reports, corporate profiles, and corporate histories. We have been in business for over 15 years and during that time have grown from a two-person start-up to a serious corporate publisher with over 100 employees. We have been contracted by over a dozen Fortune 500 companies to produce both annual and special-occasion publications on their behalf.

After our chat at last week's meeting, it occurred to me that with Riviera approaching its 50th anniversary, it would be the perfect occasion to produce a Corporate History to celebrate your company's first half-century. It so happens that these are exactly the types of corporate publications that we specialize in here at Final Edition. In fact, we have produced corporate histories for dozens of companies.

With Riviera's 50th just around the corner, I'm sure that you have been thinking about ways to make that anniversary a special one. Accordingly, I would very much like to meet with you and show you some of the corporate work we have done, and brief you further on our services. I have a strong feeling that what we offer at Final Edition might be just the kind of thing you've been looking for to celebrate Riviera's 50th.

Please feel free to call me at (292) 745-2398 so that we can discuss this further. If I don't hear from you by the end of next week I will follow up with you and see if we can set up a meeting at your convenience.

Yours truly,

Raymond Gaudet

Manager, Corporate Programs

Enclosure: Final Edition Publication, Company Brochure

Note how this business letter is just a bit long—5.5 paragraphs—and a bit personal, but it is effective. Any use of the first person is included to remind the receiver of a previous contact and something the sender and receiver have in common.

Since this letter is clearly a sales pitch, the writer chose to wait until the third paragraph to mention the true purpose of the correspondence: The sender wants the receiver to purchase his company's publication services. The text actually covers most of the basic areas a business letter should cover: It seeks to inform, instruct, and persuade (through the sales pitch), and it's transactional,

After providing the details of the sales pitch, including information about what his company has to offer, the writer finishes the letter with a proper closing. Similar to the memo, enclosures are mentioned after the closing, next to the word, "Enclosure."

Emails are an increasing and growing part of business writing. Business emails should be brief. In today's fast-paced business world, it's unlikely that most receivers would take the time to read lengthy emails. An email should be

topped with a subject line, followed by a brief salutation listing the person's name, as in this example:

To: Jsmith@gammagamma.com
Subject: Barney Self Report/Invoice for Week Ending May 20
Dear Mr. Smith:
I am reporting the hours that I worked for Gamma Gamma Publishing for the week ending May 20. I worked on the following projects:

- Jumping Fish Project: 2 Stories, 6 Hours
- Catfish Are Swimming: 3 Stories, 5 hours
- Camping in the Wild: 4 Stories, 10 Hours

The Camping in the Wild stories took a bit longer because I had to drive to Joshua Tree to research the articles. My invoice is attached, as well as the required form for mileage reimbursement.

Thank you for the chance to write for your company. Please keep me in mind for future projects.

Sincerely,
Ben Barney

You don't need to include the date or address in an email. You are not sending a letter, so you are, technically, not sending correspondence to a physical address. The fact that you have sent the email to the receiver's email address is sufficient. For the same reason, you do not need to include an "inside address" listing your physical address in the email.

Bullet points may be OK as is the case in this example, but you should study emails you receive from the company to determine the level of formality. You don't need to add the words "Attachments" or "Attachments Enclosed" because you have mentioned in the body of your email that you are enclosing attachments. Note that on those attachments—your invoice and your mileage reimbursement form—you may need to include your address depending on the company's policy and requirements.

Any reports, invoices, detailed discussions, position papers, etc. should be attached to the email either as a word-processing document or a PDF. You might also attach it as a Google Doc. Ensure that the company will be able to open your attachments or that it accepts Google Docs.

Writing the Letter

What to Include:

The first paragraph should state where & when you met the interviewer. Also, thank them for their time and reaffirm your interest in their company or organization.

The second paragraph should mention what particularly appeals to you about their company and should reinforce points in support of your interest or application.

The third paragraph is the place to mention things that you wish you had communicated during the meeting or event. You can also restate your understanding of the next steps in the application/interview process, if necessary.

The closing paragraph should thank the interviewer for their time and effort for their communication and/or consideration, and provide a way to follow up.

Following an Interview

If needed, you can clarify something you may have said, or address lingering concerns.

Remind the interviewer of some of the qualities you have to offer, and reiterate how you would be a good fit with the company.

Notify them if you are no longer interested in the position.

Always remain positive.

Following an Informational Interview/Meeting

Thank the interviewer for the information provided.

Keep the door open for future contact.

Following a Career or Job Fair

- Thank the interviewer for the specific information they provided.
- Reiterate your interest in the company and, if applicable, a specific position you learned about.
- Request additional information and a business card from the recruiter.

Job Offer Letters

Job offers require that you respond in an appropriate manner. You may contact the employer by phone after you have received an offer, but you should always send a letter notifying the employer if you are accepting or declining the position. Below you will find guidelines on how to write a letter to accept or decline a job offer.

Accept Offer Letters

Consider it a joy to write letters accepting a position. Verbal acceptance is suitable for initially accepting a position; however an acceptance letter is important for several reasons. A letter formally acknowledges in writing your acceptance of the position. With this letter you have the opportunity to restate the given start date and salary in the offer letter. This is also your opportunity to let your new employer know how to contact you in the time leading up to your first day, and to let them know if you will be unavailable at any point.

Decline Offer Letters

The need to decline a position can arise for a variety of reasons. However the employer may not need to know exactly why you have decided not to accept the position. Your letter should be addressed to the person who sent you the offer letter. Begin by expressing your gratitude for being offered the position, and then clearly state that you are not accepting the position. It is in

your best interest to maintain a positive tone as this employer may be one that you need to work with, or even work for, in the future.

Using E-mail for Correspondence

E-mail has become a primary method of communication for professionals in our culture and it is subject to several simple rules of etiquette. Once an e-mail, is sent it cannot be retrieved, making it imperative that your e-mails reflect you in the best possible way.

Guidelines to Follow When Writing Professional or Business E-mails:

- Send your e-mail from an address that is appropriate. Remember, your e-mail address is a direct reflection of you. i.e., John_Smith77@yourworld.com is appropriate, but johnnylikestoparty@funlife.com is not.

- Do not use emoticons! As a professional you should possess the writing skills which allow you to express yourself without emoticons.

- Use proper punctuation, capitalization and grammar. Again, e-mails are another testament to your writing skills.

- Your subject line should be informative and brief

- Include your contact information

- Consider how the recipient will hear your e-mail. Will it portray the tone you intended?

- Don't be afraid to save your draft and come back to it later.

The above principles can be applied to most types of business correspondence.

Informational Interview and Job Shadow Requests

Accept Offer Letters

Consider it a joy to write letters accepting a position. Verbal acceptance is suitable for initially accepting a position; however an acceptance letter is important for several reasons. A letter formally acknowledges in writing your acceptance of the position. With this letter you have the opportunity to restate the given start date and salary in the offer letter. This is also your opportunity to let your new employer know how to contact you in the time leading up to your first day, and to let them know if you will be unavailable at any point.

Decline Offer Letters

The need to decline a position can arise for a variety of reasons. However the employer may not need to know exactly why you have decided not to accept the position. Your letter should be addressed to the person who sent you the offer letter. Begin by expressing your gratitude for being offered the position, and then clearly state that you are not accepting the position. It is in your best interest to maintain a positive tone as this employer may be one that you need to work with, or even work for, in the future.

Practice!

Exercise 1. Read the article What Is Business Writing? Definition, Tips, and Examples. Answer the following questions:

What kinds of business writing are mentioned in the article?

What is the best way to learn how to write proper business documents?

What are the purposes of business writing?

What differs business writing from other writing styles? Characterize it in a few words.

What does the author mean by saying that business writing should be transactional?

What is typical of business style grammar and style?

Exercise 2. The article Business Writing Examples provides a few examples of business letters. Survey them thoroughly. Pay attention to their structure, characteristic style, grammar and layout. Practice writing similar letters, then exchange letters with group-mates and discuss their strong and weak sides.

Exercise 3. The article Writing the Letter reveals the basics of business writing style for you. Study it thoroughly, paragraph after paragraph. Make notes about the information which was new to you.

Unit 53. Self-Evaluation Techniques for Job Applicants

- In this unit:**
- **How to do a self-assessment of your skills**
 - **10 tips for making self-evaluations meaningful**
 - **Practice section**

How To Do a Self-Assessment of Your Skills

When you look for a new role, don't start by updating your CV. Instead, do a self-assessment to help you identify all the key information about yourself.

Doing this will help you provide valuable content for your CV and interviews, as you will uncover examples that illustrate your capabilities. It will also enable you to benchmark your employability, flag up any gaps and ensure you keep on track with the type of opportunities that are right for you. In effect, it prepares you to run an effective job search campaign.

So how do you go about conducting a careers self-assessment?

Assess your skills

Think about the skills that are required to do your job effectively. You might find it helpful to think about the difference in skills between someone who would do your job well and someone who would do it poorly. Add to this list any other key skills you have deployed elsewhere. What do you do especially well and which skills do you enjoy using?

Now think of two or three examples where you demonstrated each skill in action. If you look closely, you will usually find that within each example there are a host of other related skills you employed. For instance, you might have written down "negotiation skills when dealing with a supplier", but when you

break it down you may also reveal relationship-building skills, conflict management and flexibility.

Now benchmark your skills by looking at adverts for roles that interest you to see what employers require from their candidates. You can also talk to agencies and headhunters for their opinions. Do you have the skills they are looking for with the examples to prove it? Are these skills transferable to other roles? Are there areas you need to develop? How will you do this? Can you step straight into your target role, or will a stepping-stone role be more realistic?

What do you know?

Candidates often underestimate their knowledge and how it can be of use to an employer. This could range from applied technical know-how, to knowledge about a particular product, service, sector or type of customer. Are you up to date with the level of understanding required for your next role? If not, make this an immediate goal.

Can you add value?

How have you helped your organisation generate income, reduce costs, solve problems and improve the quality of its service? Your contribution may have been as an individual or as part of a team, but include it all. Have you met or exceeded your individual and or team targets at work? Do you have access to people, information and resources that could be of benefit to a potential employer? Prove that an investment in you is likely to reap a return.

What do you want?

This will include the salary level, of course, but what else is important to you? How do you want your next job to be different from your current one? What are the things you would like to keep the same? This might encompass looking at your day-to-day work activities, personal values and work environment, as well as logistics such as commute time or working hours. Write down your wish list and prioritize it so that you have your decision criteria for considering future opportunities.

Ask for feedback

Supplement your careers self-assessment with feedback from others who know you in a professional context, such as your manager, colleagues, business contacts or a career coach. Ask them what you do well and any areas that you need to develop. Where appropriate, also tell them what you are looking for next.

It may not be a good idea to tell your boss that you're thinking of leaving, but you can certainly ask for their advice and feedback on your career development. They are more likely to be more responsive if you position this discussion as being motivated by your wish to enhance your job performance or because you are interested in other opportunities that may become available in the organization.

Although those giving feedback will all have different perspectives or agendas, there will be areas of consistency, which are likely to be part of a shared picture that others may have about you. If these differ from your own self-perception, or don't match the types of roles you are looking for, then at least you're aware of it and can do something about it.

Once your assessment is completed, you should have a much more detailed idea about what it is you have to offer prospective employers and you can now start writing your CV.

Tips for Making Self-Evaluations Meaningful

Whether you think your company uses the information or not, self-evaluations are a necessary device for professional development. Here's how to make the most of the dreaded self-evaluation process.

Whether you're a manager or employee, reviews aren't a particularly popular subject; self-evaluations are particularly despised. It's hard to know how to highlight your achievements and accomplishments without sounding like a braggart, not to mention that it often seems companies file evaluations away and never use them to improve performance. But there are steps you can take to ensure your self-evaluations help to advance your own career and provide valuable feedback to your organization.

According to John Reed, from Robert Half Technology, companies with effective performance review processes use self-evaluations for two reasons: to ensure that employees set aside time to evaluate their performance; and to help managers get a sense of whether an employee has an accurate understanding of their impact in the workplace.

"The self-assessment is an essential part of performance evaluation because it's an opportunity for you to assess your own achievements. You own the performance appraisal. You should look across the past year and tell your manager what you've done and areas you'd like to focus on," says Michelle Roccia, executive vice president of Employee Engagement at WinterWyman.

Talk about your career map

The self-evaluation should not be focused solely on your job, according to Ford Myers, author of the book *Get The Job You Want, Even When No One's Hiring*. It should also be focused on your long-term career plan. "It's an opportunity for you to reflect on how you're doing in your career, not just your job," says Myers. Use it to think about where you are going long term and where you are in your career.

From an employee perspective, if there is not a career plan in place, or if there is one but it's not consistently followed, then "this is an opportunity to sit down with your manager and say, 'Hey, this is what's really important in my career. I want to build these additional skills, I want to be certified, I want to be a manager, I want a raise... .' Then you need to map out a plan together and make sure you're in agreement. Doing this makes expectations very real and tangible," says Reed.

Keep an open dialogue

Mapping your accomplishments to business value is essential to a more meaningful self-assessment, especially if your company's performance reviews have a direct effect on wage increases or bonuses.

"Use [the self-assessment] as an opportunity to build your perceived value, distinguish yourself and show how strong your contributions are. This is a time to really leverage your accomplishments," says Myers. In a perfect world, the self-evaluation will open an ongoing dialogue where you can discuss with your supervisor your career path and performance as it relates to the business by asking, for example:

"What are our biggest priorities right now?"

"Am I on track?"

"Is there anything you'd like me to focus on?"

"Where do you think I need to devote more time and energy?"

"How can I help make your job easier?"

Having a dialogue like this makes the annual review and self-evaluation a mere formality. This is how it should be, according to Myers. "It's ideal to have ongoing conversations with your boss throughout the year. Keep the dialogue open; otherwise, you can get lost in the dust," says Myers.

Ask how self-evaluations are used

Approach your supervisor and ask how self-evaluations are used by the company. Are they tied to bonuses, promotions or rewards? Who will they be shared with? Knowing the answers will give you insight into the tone you should take and how much effort is required.

Ask yourself the hard questions

Experts agree that you should use this as an opportunity to do an impartial self-appraisal of your skillset. Start by honestly answering these questions:

"What could I have done better this year?"

"What are my strengths?"

"What are my weaknesses and how can I improve on them?"

"Where can I take personal initiative and become a stronger employee who contributes more next year?"

Stay positive

According to Myers, don't use your self-evaluation to bash your manager, your company or strategic direction, because this could come back to bite you later on. Employee remarks should be 90 percent positive comments and 10 percent what Myers refers to as "areas for development" comments. Use this 10 percent of the self-evaluation to explain your own plan to grow and develop in specific areas over the next year. Don't bash bosses, co-workers or vendors, instead focus on you, your accomplishments and your professional development, he says.

Handle your shortcomings

“Try to do a balanced self-assessment,” says Reed. “We all have areas for improvement and he recommends beating your boss to the punch. If you give yourself great marks in all areas, that tells me that you're not really thinking about how you can improve.”

Instead, Reed suggests calling out the areas where you think you fall short and using "developmental language" to explain that you really want to improve in these areas and how you are going to achieve that.

For example, Myers says, you could explain that over the past year you noticed your software skills needed some work in a particular environment, for example, in HTML5. Then, according to Myers, you could say something like, "My goal for this year is to take some advanced courses in HTML5 because we are using it more and more as our site evolves," he says.

Frame any shortcomings not as problems or things you did wrong, but as areas for development and improvement. "They should always be approached as how you can make a stronger contribution to the company," says Myers. It should appear more like an area where you want to learn more, do better and contribute at a higher level than a negative mark on your report card.

Ask for training

Once you've outlined the areas where you'd like to grow, it's a good idea to demonstrate a plan for how to get there. Use this as an opportunity to ask for whatever type of training could help you contribute more, whether it's attending an SEO conference or taking a course on the newest version of SQL Server. Now is a good time to put in the request.

Document your achievements

Be specific. Cover the achievements you completed and be sure to include how and who it helped, as well as the impact on the business. Whether it's adding numbers to the bottom line or streamlining processes to create a better tech support workflow, using specifics makes sure everyone is on the same page and that you concisely tell the full story including the problem, the fix and the end results, instead of simply describing a deployment. "As long as you can tie it to tangible data points and facts, you can use it to your advantage," says Reed.

"This is really your chance to let your boss know all the good things that you've achieved. You can do that without braggadocio or tooting your own horn too loudly about the things you've done. As long as it's fact-based, there is nothing wrong with this," says Reed.

Myers agrees. "Be very, very specific," he says, and recommends keeping a 'success file' or 'achievement journal' throughout the year to write down all your contributions as bullet points throughout the month. At the end of the year, you'll have twelve documents to reference for your self-evaluation.

"I personally like the idea of sending this to your boss at the end of each month," says Myers, as it keeps your performance right in front of your manager or supervisor. He says he has seen people get raises and promotions

based on this type of documentation. This way, says Myers, "they are ready to give you a raise or promotion, instead of wondering whether to give you a raise and/or promotion."

Differing points of view

But what happens if your self-assessment differs wildly from your manager's assessment of your performance? If the performance review and the self-assessment diverge significantly, according to Reed, this likely indicates that you and your manager are not meeting often enough and that a discussion needs to be had in order to sort out expectations from the employee and management positions.

"If I'm doing an annual review and we're off by this much, that tells me that we're not talking and putting in place corrective actions and adjustments throughout the course of the year," says Reed.

Ask for guidance, direction and mentoring

Believe it or not, there are businesses and managers out there who never offer feedback or performance reviews, even as employee satisfaction, engagement and morale become important business metrics and issues that affect the CIO. If your employer refuses to give any kind of feedback, Roccia says, you may want to question if you are in the right environment.

"Employees need feedback and need to know how they are doing. I've heard managers whose style is, 'If you're not hearing anything from me, you're doing a good job,' but I don't subscribe to that management style. In fact, I would send that manager to management training," says Roccia.

That said, you should try opening a dialogue with your boss to set up a schedule for continuous review and assessment. Myers advises that you get your boss on board. "Try talking your boss into having meetings at least every month or so. Ask for guidance, direction and mentoring," says Myers. However, if he/she refuses to budge, the experts agree, it may be time to look for greener pastures.

The same goes when applying for jobs. "If you're applying for a job where the boss says, 'Forget it, that's a waste of time,' I suggest you go find another job. Who wants a boss who refuses to give feedback and guidance throughout the year?" says Myers.

Practice!

Exercise 1. Read the article *How To Do a Self-Assessment of Your Skills*. To memorize the information of the article, read it again and write in the missing words:

When you look for a new role, don't start by (1) _____ your CV. Instead, do a self-assessment to help you (2) _____ all the key information about yourself.

Doing this will help you provide valuable (3) _____ for your CV and interviews, as you will uncover examples that illustrate your (4)

_____. It will also (5) _____ you to benchmark your employability, flag up any gaps and ensure you (6) _____ on track with the type of opportunities that are right for you. In effect, it prepares you to run an effective (7) _____ search campaign.

So how do you go about conducting a careers self-assessment?

Assess your skills

Think about the skills that are (8) _____ to do your job effectively. You might find it helpful to think about the difference in skills between someone who would do your job well and someone who would do it (9) _____. Add to this list any other key (10) _____ you have deployed elsewhere. What do you do especially well and which skills do you (11) _____ using?

Now think of two or three examples where you (12) _____ each skill in action. If you look closely, you will usually find that within each example there are a host of other (13) _____ skills you employed. For instance, you might have written down "negotiation skills when dealing with a supplier", but when you break it (14) _____ you may also reveal relationship-building skills, (15) _____ management and flexibility.

Now benchmark your skills by looking at adverts for roles that (16) _____ you to see what employers require from their candidates. You can also talk to agencies and (17) _____ for their opinions. Do you have the skills they are (18) _____ for with the examples to prove it? Are these skills transferable to other roles? Are there areas you need to (19) _____ ? How will you do this? Can you step straight into your (20) _____ role, or will a stepping-stone role be more realistic?

What do you know?

Candidates often underestimate their knowledge and how it can be of use to an (21) _____. This could range from applied technical know-how, to knowledge about a particular (22) _____, service, sector or type of customer. Are you up to date with the level of understanding required for your next role? If not, make this an immediate (23) _____.

Can you add value?

How have you helped your organization generate income, reduce costs, solve (24) _____ and improve the quality of its service? Your contribution may have been as an individual or as (25) _____ of a team, but include it all. Have you met or exceeded your (26) _____ and/or team targets at work? Do you have access to people, information and (27) _____ that could be of benefit to

a potential employer? Prove that an investment in you is (28) _____ to reap a return.

What do you want?

This will include the salary level, of course, but what else is important to you? How do you want your next job to be (29) _____ from your current one? What are the (30) _____ you would like to keep the same? This might encompass looking at your day-to-day work activities, personal values and work (31) _____, as well as logistics such as commute time or working hours. Write down your wish list and prioritize it so that you have your decision (32) _____ for considering future opportunities.

Ask for feedback

Supplement your careers self-assessment with (33) _____ from others who know you in a professional context, such as your manager, colleagues, business contacts or a (34) _____ coach. Ask them what you do well and any areas that you need to develop. Where appropriate, also (35) _____ them what you are looking for next.

It may not be a good idea to tell your boss that you're thinking of leaving, but you can (36) _____ ask for their advice and feedback on your career development. They are more likely to be more responsive if you position this discussion as being motivated by your wish to enhance your job (37) _____ or because you are interested in other opportunities that may become available in the organization.

Although those giving feedback will all have (38) _____ perspectives or agendas, there will be areas of consistency, which are likely to be part of a shared picture that others may have about you. If these differ from your own self-perception, or don't (39) _____ the types of roles you are looking for, then at least you're aware of it and can do something about it.

Once your assessment is completed, you should have a much more detailed idea about what it is you have to offer prospective (40) _____ and you can now start writing your CV.

Exercise 2. The article *Tips for Making Self-Evaluations Meaningful* offers a few paragraphs on making an objective self-evaluation. Look at the list of its paragraphs and compose 1-2 sentences outlining main idea of each paragraph:

1. The value of self-evaluation
2. The importance of having a career plan
3. Discussing your career path
4. A talk about how self-evaluations are used
5. *The importance of staying positive*
6. The right look at your shortcomings
7. Ask for training

8. Documenting your achievements
9. Accept and study differences in opinions
10. Ask for guidance, direction and mentoring

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Про авторів

About the Authors



Dr. Antonina Badan has a doctorate in Germanic languages from Kyiv Linguistic University and has been Head of Business Foreign Languages and

Translation Dept. at National Technical University since 1999. Back in the USSR she worked as a guide-interpreter at Kharkiv branch (Ukraine) of the Intourist company which gave her a vast international experience in interpreting for tourist and business purposes.

In 1997 she won a grant from International Research Exchange program in Business Communication to work at Eastern Michigan University, USA. It was at this period that she was inspired to write a number of articles on Cross-cultural Linguistics and Business Communication, and two of them were published in "American Language Review" journal.

Her scientific interests lie in Cross-cultural Studies, Socio- and Psycholinguistics and American-Ukrainian Translation peculiarities.

Про авторів

Антоніна Бадан, канд.

філол. наук з германських мов (Київський лінгвістичний університет), обіймає посаду завідувача кафедри ділової іноземної мови та перекладу у Національному технічному університеті «Харківський політехнічний інститут» з 1999 р. За часів СРСР працювала гідом-перекладачем у Харківській філії ВАО «Інтурист», і ця діяльність відкрила їй широкий міжнародний досвід роботи перекладача у туристичній та бізнес-індустрії.

У 1997 вона отримала грант як учасник міжнародних дослідницьких обмінів у сфері бізнес-комунікації і працювала у Східно-Мічиганському університеті, США. Саме у цей період виникла потреба написання наукових статей з міжкультурної та бізнес-комунікації, дві з яких були опубліковані у журналі "American Language Review".

Її наукові інтереси зосереджені на міжкультурній комунікації, соціо- та психолінгвістиці, а також на особливостях американо-українського перекладу.



Dr. Maryann McGuire has both a graduate degree in business and an Ivy League doctorate in English.

She taught at two major American universities before moving to the business world where she served as an executive at one of the largest international corporations. As part of her duties she was involved in interviewing and hiring projects in the United States, Europe and Latin America. After retiring from the corporate world, she served as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Ukraine, teaching English at Kharkiv Polytechnic University from 2008 to 2010.

After returning to the United States she was asked to create a model for supporting women entrepreneurs. Her work, which has been widely imitated, led to being named the Global Volunteer of the Year by Goodwill International.

Dr. McGuire was delighted to contribute to the portions of this book devoted to structured interview processes and behavioral interviewing.

Д-р Маріанн Макгвайер є магістром в галузі бізнесу та має ступінь доктора філології з англійської мови.

На початку кар'єри она викладала у двох великих американських університетах, а потім займала керівну посаду у великій міжнародній корпорації. У рамках своїх обов'язків д-р Макгвайер проводила співбесіди з працевлаштування співробітників для роботи в США, Європі та Латинській Америці.

З 2008 по 2010 рік вона працювала добровольцем Корпусу миру в Україні: викладала англійську мову в Харківському політехнічному університеті. Після повернення до Сполучених Штатів їй запропонували створити модель підтримки жінок-підприємців. Її напрацювання набули широкого застосування, а д-р Макгвайер отримала почесне звання всесвітньо визнаного добровольця року від організації Гудвіл Інтернешнл.

Д-р Макгвайер запропонувала свій внесок в ті частини цієї книги, які присвячені організації процесу співбесіди і питанням поведінкового характеру.



Dr. Iryna Tymchenko, an inspiring teacher, translator, interpreter and author of coursebooks and monographs, has devoted decades of her life to

academia. Her higher education diploma was in philology of the English language; later she defended a doctorate thesis in pedagogic. Her research works and translations were published in Ukraine, Europe, Canada and the USA.

During her career, Dr. Iryna Tymchenko took part in dozens of successful business and non-profit projects, first as an interpreter, and later as an expert in international relations and tourism, where she acquired a variety of experiences as a project manager, CEO, and employer.

This book is a result of the author's long-term work with youth; Its purpose is to help young university graduates to make their first steps toward successful careers.

Ірина Тимченко,

натхненний педагог, перекладач і автор навчальних посібників та монографій, присвятила десятиліття свого життя викладанню і науковій роботі. Вона отримала вищу освіту як філолог, а пізніше одержала докторський ступінь в галузі педагогіки. Її академічні роботи і переклади опубліковані в Україні, США, Канаді та Європі.

Протягом багатьох років д-р Тимченко брала участь в десятках успішних бізнес-проектів, спочатку як рядовий перекладач, а пізніше, протягом 15 років працювала в галузі міжнародного туризму, де набула багатого досвіду управління проектами в сфері послуг, у тому числі і досвід проведення співбесід з працевлаштування.

З 2007 р. працює на кафедрі ділової іноземної мови та перекладу в Національному технічному університеті «Харківський політехнічний інститут».

Ця книга стала результатом тривалої роботи з молоддю; мета її – допомогти молодим дипломованим фахівцям зробити перші кроки до успішної кар'єри.

Навчальне видання

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МАКГВАЙЕР Мерієнн
ТИМЧЕНКО Ірина Ігорівна

Як підготуватись до першої робочої співбесіди

Навчальний посібник для студентів та молодих фахівців
з підготовки до успішного працевлаштування за фахом

Відповідальний за випуск проф. Бадан А. А.

Роботу до видання рекомендувала проф. Снігурова Т.О.

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