

Flatiron NYC Students Interview Practice Group

This document will be our “manual” to help us keep track of how we run our meetings; code challenge sites, and other resources we use to guide the meeting content; and any other helpful info. If we find our methods successful, this manual may provide helpful ideas that other students or tech coaches can use in future.

MEETING TIMES:

Unless otherwise specified in the Slack Channel:

Webinar: Mondays & Wednesdays from 6:45 PM - 8:00 PM

In-Person: Please see Slack for the date & time of the monthly in-person meeting.

Recommended Guidelines for Group Sessions (In-Person & Online)

This agenda may be used for either in-person or webinar sessions. An asterisk (*) indicates that the rule must be followed.

- (1) Maintain a safe learning environment. Offer constructive feedback, but be kind and don't judge. We're here to learn and help each other build confidence and reach beyond our limits, not to make anyone uncomfortable. *
- (2) The difficulty level of the challenges may be wide-ranging, but the topic and difficulty level for a given session may be decided and announced beforehand.
- (3) Each participant is expected to provide a challenge s/he has attempted and knows the solution so that the other group members can try it. It is only fair.
 - a. The participant will present a link to the challenge to another participant (driver/ interviewee) during the meeting. Benefits for doing it this way include:
 - i. The responsibility of coming up with coding challenges is distributed among all participants for any given session.
 - ii. This, in turn, increases the likelihood of each participant having a chance to attempt at least one challenge.
 - iii. At least one person in the group will have an idea of how to guide the interviewee (w/ hints) towards the correct solution in case s/he is completely stumped.

- b. Due to the randomness of this process, the remaining participants have less of a chance of knowing what to expect, which will be the case during interviews.
- (4) Participation is strongly encouraged. A minimum of 2 - 3 individuals must participate.
 - a. If no one volunteers, the participants will be chosen at random through a program (code will be on GitHub)
 - b. The rest of the participants act as interviewers. Please resist the temptation to help unless asked.
- (5) Try to resist volunteering for a problem you find very easy or know how to solve. Pass the baton. This is especially true during paired coding sessions—give the other person(s) an opportunity to do so first.
- (6) On their turn, a participant can decide whether they want to tackle the problem in “interview mode” or “group mode.”
 - a. “Interview mode” is defined as tackling the problem on your own and explaining it to the rest of the group without help or guidance.
 - b. “Group mode” is defined as tackling the problem with help from other members in the group via hints.
- (7) There is a time limit for completing the challenge.
 - a. Generally, 15 - 20 minutes are provided, as this is the average time employers offer for coding challenges, but this may change.
 - b. The time limit can vary based on:
 - i. The length of the session and number of participants (*e.g. 90 min session = 15 min per person*)
 - ii. A challenge’s difficulty level (harder problems may require more time)
 - c. The time limit can be adjusted to increase difficulty as we improve (this may push us to become more efficient planners/thinkers and work better under stress.)
- (8) Participants are required to communicate what they are doing. This is what is expected during interviews. This is meant to enhance your ability to think about and communicate code in English: *
 - a. At the very least, talk out loud
 - b. Make notes about the problem as comments
 - c. Provide pseudocode with easy to follow logic, no matter how simple the problem.
- (9) No can one say or type anything for at least the first 5 minutes except to answer clarifying questions about the challenge. This will allow the “interviewee” to work through the problem without stress. After that time, either wait for the interviewee to ask for a hint or, if you see her/him struggling, ask the interviewee if they want help before chiming in. *

(10) Once the time limit expires, the participant:

- a. Will stop working.
- b. Will be required to finish on their own time after the session and submit it to the Google Doc for challenges. [link]
- c. Will receive a couple of sentences of feedback from one or more interviewers.

(11) The weekly challenges and answers will get posted on the following GitHub repository:

https://github.com/AAM77/Flatiron_Code_Challenger_Group

Only repo collaborators—@paula, @wendisha, @paulcherian, @alwinao, @isaacV and @adeel—are able to update and make changes to the repository.