

Mock Interview: Understanding Battleship from a Player's Perspective

Interviewer: Aniket Bhatt

Interviewee: Parmeet Singh

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Mode: Zoom Call

Q1: Hey Parmeet, thanks for doing this! Can you tell me how often you've played Battleship and in what formats?

A: Of course, happy to help! I've actually played Battleship quite a lot over the years. I started with the physical board game when I was a kid, mostly with friends or cousins. More recently, I've played a couple of mobile versions and also tried a web-based one during the lockdown.

Q2: Great! What's the basic idea of the game, in your words?

A: It's a guessing and strategy game. You place your ships secretly on a grid and then take turns calling out coordinates to try and hit your opponent's ships. The first player to sink all of the other player's ships wins the game.

Q3: What are the biggest issues you've faced while playing the physical version?

A: The main issue is keeping track of your past moves. People either forget where they've already guessed or they don't mark it clearly, so they end up repeating coordinates. Also, when it comes to placing ships, it's easy to make mistakes like overlapping them or placing them diagonally when that's not allowed. You often don't even realize it unless someone points it out.

Q4: And what about the digital versions? Any issues there?

A: Yeah, quite a few. Some apps are way too flashy with too many effects, and others are super basic to the point where it's hard to know what's happening. One thing I found annoying was that in a few versions, you'd get a hit notification but no indication that you'd sunk a ship. You had to keep counting yourself, which sort of defeats the purpose of playing on a computer.

Q5: If we were to design the perfect digital version of Battleship, what features would you absolutely want?

A: I'd want a clear and clean grid for both my side and the opponent's. There should be a way to see all your previous guesses along with whether they were hits or misses. It should also tell you when a ship is sunk, not just when you hit something. I think having an option to play against a friend online or even a basic bot would make it more fun. And oh, it should

stop me from guessing the same coordinate twice. That's a small thing, but it's surprisingly helpful.

Q6: How do you feel about the ship placement part? Is it easy or does it need better design?

A: That's something that could be better. I've played versions where you had to click tiny boxes to place ships, and it got frustrating. I think it would be smoother if you could drag and drop the ships, and if there was a warning if they overlapped or went off the grid. That kind of feedback would make things a lot clearer, especially for beginners.

Q7: What kind of user interface do you prefer for this kind of game simple or high-tech?

A: Simple, no question. I'm not playing Battleship for flashy graphics. I want clean visuals, intuitive controls, and quick feedback. If the interface is too complicated, it gets in the way of the actual game.

Q8: Anything else we should think about as we design it?

A: A "how to play" section would be a good idea. Some people forget the rules, or they're playing for the first time. Also, an option to restart the game without quitting and reloading everything would be helpful. Oh, and one more thing it should be built in a way that people can't cheat, like moving their ships after the game starts. That was a common issue with the physical game, and even online games without proper validation can have that problem.

Q9: Would you be open to testing a beta version later?

A: Definitely! I'd love to try it and give feedback.

Q10: Have you ever encountered or seen any kind of cheating in Battleship?

A: Oh. Especially with physical games, people sometimes adjust their ship positions after you start hitting them like moving a ship so it doesn't get sunk. Even in some online versions, if there's no proper validation or tracking, a player can reload the game and start over or change their placements mid-game. That totally kills the fun.

User Stories – Battleship Game

User Story 1: Ship Placement

Title: Ship Placement with Validation

User Story:

As a player, I want to place my ships by dragging and dropping them onto the grid so that I can start the game with correctly placed ships.

Description:

Players should be able to drag and drop ships onto a 10x10 grid. The system should validate that ships do not overlap, go out of bounds, or violate placement rules.

Acceptance Criteria:

- The system displays all available ships with correct sizes.
- Ships can be rotated and dragged to desired positions.
- Overlapping or out-of-bound placements are blocked.
- A visual indicator (green/red) is shown for valid/invalid placement.
- Ships are locked in place once confirmed by the user.

Priority: High

User Story 2: Grid UI Design

Title: Interactive Grid for Gameplay

User Story:

As a player, I want a clear and interactive 10x10 grid UI so that I can view my moves and interact with the game efficiently.

Description:

The game should offer two grids: one for the player's ship placements and another to track opponent moves and guesses.

Acceptance Criteria:

- Two distinct 10x10 grids are rendered with coordinate labels.
- Player grid shows ship placement; opponent grid shows guess results.

- Visual states include: unknown, hit, miss, and sunk.
- Grids are responsive and support desktop and mobile play.

Priority: High

User Story 3: Move History and Tracking

Title: Visual Tracking of Previous Guesses

User Story:

As a player, I want my previous guesses to be visibly marked so that I don't repeat the same coordinates.

Description:

The game should track all previously called coordinates and visually differentiate between hits and misses.

Acceptance Criteria:

- Guessed coordinates are marked immediately after submission.
- Hits are shown in red, misses in white or grey.
- Repeated guesses trigger an error message or are disabled.
- Move history is saved until game completion.

Priority: High

User Story 4: Ship Sunk Notification

Title: Notification for Sunk Ships

User Story:

As a player, I want to be notified when I sink an enemy ship so that I can track my progress.

Description:

The system should notify the player with a pop-up or message when an entire enemy ship is hit.

Acceptance Criteria:

- Notification displays ship name when fully destroyed (e.g., "You sunk the Battleship!").
- Opponent's ship status is visually updated.
- Sound or animation plays to enhance experience (optional).
- Notification does not delay gameplay.

Priority: Medium

User Story 5: Multiplayer and Bot Mode

Title: Game Modes – Multiplayer and Bot

User Story:

As a player, I want to choose between playing against another user or a bot so that I can enjoy the game solo or with a friend.

Description:

Game should offer two modes: Player vs Player (PvP) and Player vs AI (PvE). Bot should provide basic random-move gameplay.

Acceptance Criteria:

- Mode selection available at game start.
- In PvP, moves are synchronized in real-time.
- In PvE, both randomly selects valid coordinates for attack.
- Game rules and experience are consistent across both modes.

Priority: High

User Story 6: Anti-Cheating Mechanism

Title: Lock Ship Position After Game Start

User Story:

As a player, I want ship positions to be locked once the game starts so that no one can cheat by moving ships mid-game.

Description:

To ensure fair play, ship positions must be validated and frozen after confirmation. Cheating through DOM manipulation or state resets should be prevented.

Acceptance Criteria:

- Ships cannot be moved after the game begins.
- Game logic checks for manipulation or re-initialization.
- Actions like refreshing or restarting are logged and tracked.
- Backend enforces ship integrity and move validation.

Priority: Critical

User Story 7: In-Game Help and Rules

Title: Help Section and Gameplay Instructions

User Story:

As a new player, I want access to a help section so that I can learn how to play the game properly.

Description:

The help section will include rules, ship details, grid usage, and objectives.

Acceptance Criteria:

- The "Howto Play" button visible on main menu and pause screen.
- Contains detailed text or images explaining rules.
- Accessible on desktop and mobile.
- Does not interrupt active gameplay when opened.

Priority: Medium

User Story 8: Restart Functionality

Title: In-Game Restart Option

User Story:

As a player, I want the option to restart the game so that I can begin a new match without closing the app.

Description:

The restart feature resets all game state and reloads the ship placement screen.

Acceptance Criteria:

- Restart button available in pause or end-game screen.
- Clears both player and opponent grids.
- Brings the player back to ship placement phase.
- Confirmation prompt prevents accidental restarts.

Priority: Medium