Technical Interview Best Practices

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Let's start with an example…

Question: Given a very long paragraph, find all the unique words.

What is the first thing you should do?

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- Ask all the basic/"stupid" questions
- Come up with examples!

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    - Does uppercase vs lowercase matter

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Insightful questions

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    - *Gigabytes*?
    - *10,000 words*?
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    - random access?

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    - random access?
    - does it need to be sorted?

- Think about edge cases, but don't get stuck on them

Write down examples as you get answers to your questions

- Speak and explain your solution logic

    - demonstrate your CS knowledge (use technical terms and topics)

- Use your examples to trace out your solution

What if my solution *FAILS*?

- Demonstrate and explain how/why your solution failed
    - *this demonstrates maturity as a programmer*
- Formulate the next solution with new knowledge

All of this should take ~5 Minutes or less

Now, START CODING

- Write clean and clear code
- Clean & consistent indentation
- Name variables and functions clearly
    - Avoid single letter vars
    - Avoid `temp` unless you're swapping
    - Split code into 2-3 short functions if it makes sense

- Don't ignore the interviewer
  - This is a conversation, not a test
  - More important that you address the interviewers questions, than for you to finish the solution

- No pseudo code / code comments
    - explain verbally
    - use real code snippets

- Plan your use of whiteboard space
    - Practice writing clearly on a whiteboard
    - Same for using Google Doc

- Be confident
  - Speak clearly
  - Don't doubt your knowledge of the basics/fundamentals

- If you make a mistake...
  - (This happens to all of us)
  - Acknowledge it, and move on
  - This shows maturity

- Pay attention to the interviewer
  - They are providing you tips
  - *Usually*, NOT trying to trick you

- I'm stuck, what should I do
    - go back to asking questions
    - try to relate this problem to other's you're familiar with
- Avoid being silent
    - You have to think aloud
- And the best way to improve...

PRACTICE, PRACTICE, SLEEP, PRACTICE