Cheat Sheet – Preparing for Coding Interviews

Part 1 – How to prepare for coding interviews?*

- **The timeline:**

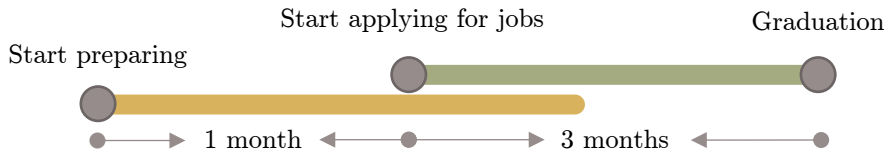

Fig. 1 – Preparation Timeline for Coding Interviews

- **Review Data structures and Complexities:**
  The following 7 data structures are necessary for the interview, and their time/space complexity
  - List/Arrays, Linked List, Hash Table/dictionary, Tree, Graph, Heap, Queue
  - Click here for tutorial.
- **Practice coding questions:**
  - Multiple online resources such as LeetCode.com, InterviewBit.com, HackerRank.com etc.
  - Pick one online resource and aim for easy and medium coding questions (approx. 100-150).
  - Beginners start preparing 2-3 months before the interview, and intermediates about 1 month.
- **Note:**
  - From my personal experience, paid subscription of LeetCode.com was worth it.
  - Facebook, Uber, Google and Microsoft tagged question of LeetCode covered almost 90% of the questions asked

Part 2 – How to answer a coding question?*

- **Listen to the question**
  The interviewer will explain the question with an example. Note down the important points.
- **Talk about your understanding of the question**
  Repeat the question and confirm your understanding. Ask clarifying questions such as
  1. Input/Output data type limitations
  2. Input size/length limitations
  3. Special/Corner cases
- **Discuss your approach**
  Walk through how would you approach the problem and ask the interviewer if he agrees with it. Talk about the data structure you prefer and why. Discuss the solution with the bigger picture.
- **Start coding**
  Ask the interviewer if you could start coding. Define useful functions and explain as you write. Think out loud so the interviewer can evaluate your thought process.
- **Discuss the time and space complexity**
  Discuss the time and space complexity in terms of Big O for your coded approach.
- **Optimize the approach**
  If your approach is not the most optimized one, the interviewer will hint you a few improvements. Pay attention to hints and try to optimize your code.

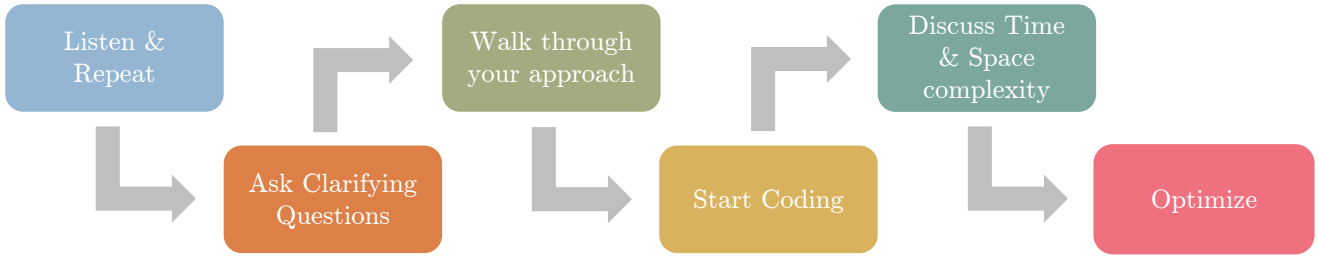

Fig. 2 – How to answer a coding question?

*Disclaimer: The recommendations are based on personal experiences of the author. The mentioned approach and resources might work great for some, but not so much for others.

Source: https://www.cheatsheets.aqeel-anwar.com