

Google Interview Experience for STEP Intern

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Hi!.. I am from pursuing B.tech in field of CSE.

I applied for a Google step internship in November 2020. I was in second year (3rd sem). I filled out the basic form and uploaded my resume with it. At my campus, STEP interviews were going on-campus. I was excited as it was going to be my first on-campus company. But I was unable to make it and was rejected during the resume selection phase. I'm guessing barely a few individuals made it.

It was a fine day in January 2021. I was enjoying my tea and checking my mail around 7 pm. I received a mail from Google saying that I had been shortlisted and the next round was a technical interview. I was literally on the cloud nine at that time.

BEFORE INTERVIEW:

- So, I calculated and I got around 1 week for preparation for the technical rounds. I filled out the availability form and braced myself. I didn't know much about higher data structures, like I have knowledge of Arrays, Strings, Linked Lists, Stacks, Queues and Binary Trees (not so much about trees, just basic).
- I asked my friends who had given their interviews for Google STEP. They suggested I do dynamic programming, and I literally had no idea of DP at that time.
- From that night, I started studying the content of DP from YouTube and from my coding course. I gave 3 days to DP and practiced as many questions as I could. In the last 4 days, I revised all the data structures and questions.

DURING INTERVIEW:

ROUND 1(45-minutes):

- I joined the link and am waiting for the interviewer. Obviously, it's going to happen. When I said "Good Morning" at 2 pm, I felt so embarrassed. I corrected it and wished her. So, the interviewer was a lady. She's quite young. She gave her introduction and asked me to give mine. I introduced myself and it started. She shared a Google document with me and asked the first question.
- It is from trees (data structure). As far as I remember, it was something like the weight of every branch was given, and I had to return the minimum number that balanced the weight of the branches. I'm sorry to put this question like this, but I don't remember it so clearly. She asked me basic questions regarding trees. I answered them all. She said to draw a tree on a Google document. I did it. Then she gave me time to think it out. She muted herself and asked me to do so. After some time, she asked me and I gave the naive approach, but it doesn't work in all cases. Clearly, she was not happy with my solution. As time was passing, she asked me to write code on a Google document. I wrote broken code out there. As last time passed, it came to an end and I asked her a question about the work culture of Google. She replied, and it ended at 2:45pm.
- I got a 15-minute break to pack up my anxiety. I bundled up my all emotions for next interview.

ROUND 2(45-minutes):

- This time it was a male interviewer. started with an introduction, the same as previously. He shared a Google document and I was again ready for this.

- He asked me basic question about vectors and gave me an easy question. I told him an approach and coded it in one go. Then he asked me some edge cases about that. I took time but answered them correctly. I guess he was quite satisfied. But then he gave me a follow-up question which was a bit hard. I told him an approach. He was helpful. He was dropping some hints. I thought for some time and came up with a naive approach and told him. He said okay and it was about to end now. Again, I got a chance to learn about the work culture of Google. He explained it to me and I listened intently. He talked to me about 20 minutes apart from the interview.

AFTER INTERVIEW: I got out of my chair at 4:00 p.m. and turned off my laptop. I dashed straight to my bed and pretended to be dead.

Questions they asked me in the interview:

1. I guess it was from the graph. The question is about weighing branches. I had to return the minimum number that must be added to every path from root to leaf node. I couldn't find the same question on the internet. It was a hard level, for sure.
2. In the second interview, the first question was an easy level, and the follow-up was a medium type. It was like a matrix and related to the wages question.

Well, it was a great experience for sure, getting shortlisted for giving interviews(around 35 people got shortlisted from my campus).

Things that I hated: I was facing a blank screen while giving rounds and my chair is not so comfy.

OUTCOME: I could not make it.

THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND : Rewrite your introduction, practice more questions , be ready to face any data structure, grab hints, listen carefully, speak after thinking it, use correct terms while explaining.

THINGS THAT I DID: I spoke about whatever approach was going through my mind, asked the interviewer about edge cases, and made the interviewer understand with the help of a dry run, checked test cases, grabbed pen and paper for an easy dry run.

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