

Canada Ultimate Masterclass

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HOW TO EXCEL IN CANADIAN JOB INTERVIEWS

As a newcomer in Canada or as someone coming to Canada, you may likely have one or many job interviews. However, interviewing for the first time for a role in Canada, in a new culture, can be nerve-wracking. A little information, access to valuable resources, and some practice can go a long way in helping you feel confident and ready for your first interview.

Interview preparation can help professionals strategize how to answer questions that an interview or interviewing committee might ask them. For professionals seeking roles in Canada, taking the time to prepare for a job interview is especially important. Understanding how to market yourself in particular markets and share your credentials is valuable, as it highlights your ability to excel in an available role.

Essential Steps To Help You Prepare For A Job Interview In Canada

1. Analyze The Job Description

Take your time to read the job posting in its entirety and use it as a guide to inform your questions for the interviewer. A typical job posting will outline the responsibilities, desired qualifications, skills, and previous experiences.

Reading the job description thoroughly will give you a fair idea of what the employer is looking for. The more you are able to align yourself with the employer's expectations, the better are your chances of landing the role. If there are specific areas where you sense a gap, prepare compelling responses to demonstrate your ability to learn and grow.

Reviewing the job description of the position for which you're interviewing is important because it can provide you with insight into specific topics that may be helpful to highlight. For example, this can help you understand how to feature your experiences and skills that directly relate to the listed job duties. Items to note when reviewing job descriptions include:

- Duties and required experience
- Skills needed to complete duties
- Technology the company uses
- Keywords or industry language

When reviewing the job description, it may be beneficial to write notes about these components so you can reference them as you prepare for your interview. Incorporating important elements into your documents and verbal discussions can highlight similar, transferable credentials or skills you have.

2. Do Your Research

Researching the company where you're applying for a job is an important step in preparing for a job interview. It will not only help you ask relevant questions but also help you learn about the company and provide context during your interview conversations.

Researching specific job requirements is important when preparing for an interview in Canada because they may differ from requirements for similar jobs in your home country

While researching, you may want to look up the company website as well as their LinkedIn and Glassdoor pages for-

- Product and service offerings
- Key executives and their career paths
- Any recent news articles on the company or the executives
- Company culture
- Size of the company
- Market competition

3. Build Your Elevator Pitch

Elevator pitches, as the name implies, are short (20-30 seconds or approximately 75 words) introductory speeches to introduce yourself. A good elevator pitch sounds natural and compelling. During an interview, it works as a great way to –

- Introduce yourself to a recruiter or an interviewer, and
- Answer the “Tell me about yourself” question.

You may use the following framework to craft an impressive elevator pitch for a job interview:

- **Introduction:** Start enthusiastically by mentioning your full name and providing a brief overview of your education and work experience.
- **Expertise and ambition:** Add in your Unique Selling Proposition (USP) and a couple of things you want to highlight about yourself. Also, remember to focus on the problem you solve, not the actual job you do.
- **Call-to-action:** It’s good practice to end your elevator pitch by asking a question and allowing your contact to respond to it, thus making the pitch more conversational in nature.

4. Organize Your Portfolio Or Work Samples

Compiling portfolios, work samples, or a self-managed blog are great ways to stand out from the competition, showcase your domain knowledge, and demonstrate how you can add value to the role and the organization. For those in creative fields such as design or art, having a portfolio is generally a requirement. For non-creative or marketing or strategy roles, going the extra mile by imagining yourself in the role and preparing a strategy with the job description is an excellent way to build employer trust.

Developing a portfolio that includes examples of your previous work is beneficial because you can share it with your interviewer or interviewing committee. This also provides them with materials to reference regarding your work after your interview concludes.

Typically, professional portfolios include items such as:

Writing samples: Sharing your writing samples includes examples of your professional writing abilities, which can be especially important if a job description mentions writing as a primary duty. Typically, it's beneficial to include two to three samples if you have them.

Design samples: Providing relevant design samples is important if a job you're applying for requires artistic abilities, such as a graphic or animation designer role. Similar to writing samples, you might want to include more than one sample if possible.

Project information: This is beneficial to showcase projects you've worked on during your previous experiences. You may choose to highlight specific details about your process and the measurable results you achieved.

5. Prepare To Answer Common Interview Questions For Your Role

In Canada, a phone interview is usually the first step to getting hired for a role. On the phone call, the recruiter will ask you questions about your professional experience and skills. This is usually followed up with in-person (or video) interviews with the hiring manager and other team members to test your domain knowledge and organizational fit.

The initial interview rounds or screening rounds, as they call it, will often have similar questions ranging from “Tell me about yourself” to “What are your strengths/weaknesses.” It’s important not to memorize answers to each of these questions but instead have an overall idea of key points that you would like to convey and adopt a very natural, conversational style while answering them.

This step can help you determine how you might answer questions your interviewer or interviewing committee asks you. These may include general, experience-based or in-depth questions about the position's duties. To help you determine specific questions they might ask, consider researching interview questions related to your applied position in Canada. This can allow you to discover localized information that can demonstrate your professionalism and excitement regarding the available role.

6. Think About Questions You Would Like To Ask The Interviewer

At the end of interviews, whether virtual, on the phone, or in-person, the interviewer will usually ask you if you have any questions for them. It is a good idea to prepare some questions in advance based on the company research you do or considering the points you may have read in the job posting. However, be mindful of not asking questions that can be easily found online.

Asking questions during an interview is a great opportunity to:

- Learn more about the position and the organization, and
- To clarify any doubts or questions you may have.

Asking relevant questions at the end of the interview,

- Reflects your genuine interest in the position;
- Demonstrates your attentiveness during the interview;
- Shows that you've done your background research; and
- Helps you evaluate if the organization and the team are a good fit for you.

7. Know Your Resume

Once you have identified what your interviewer or interviewing committee wants in an ideal candidate, you can update your resume and cover letter to ensure to reflect that information. Updating these documents is important to ensure you use language similar to what employers write in their job descriptions. For example, if you're applying for a marketing position in Canada and the job description mentions qualifications such as A/B testing and market research, you might consider incorporating those terms into your resume and cover letter when explaining your experiences.

If you don't have experience performing the key tasks or possess the qualifications the job description mentions, you can use your cover letter to explain how your experiences still provide you with the skills required to excel in those operations. For example, your skills in research and analysis may help you handle A/B testing and market research duties effectively, even though you don't have direct experience with those tasks. When updating your resume and cover letter, consider saving both your original and any new versions to prevent you from losing any documents.

Ensure that you are well aware of all information on your resume and be prepared to elaborate on any of the points mentioned. Have specific case examples of your work experience ready to support your resume.

8. Plan Your Journey To The Interview

For in-person interviews, be sure to arrive at least 15 minutes earlier than the scheduled time.

If you are having the interview online, ensure you are there early, never allow the recruiter to be the one waiting for you.

Answering Job Interview Questions

1. Answer briefly but try to avoid yes/no answers.
2. Don't worry about pausing before you answer — it shows you can think before answering.
3. Don't worry about admitting that you don't know something, but don't say it too often.
4. Be prepared for hypothetical job interview questions — take your time, and think before you speak.
5. Be prepared for unexpected interview questions.
6. Keep the conversation moving.
7. Speak up when answering job interview questions.

Typical Job Interview Questions

1. Tell Me About Yourself

Keep your answer to one or two minutes. Don't ramble. Use your resume summary as a starting point.

2. What Do You Know About Our Company?

Do your homework before the interview. Spend some time researching the company and prepare for interview questions on this topic. Find out as much as you can — products, size, revenue, reputation, image, people, skills, history, and philosophy (vision and mission). Be able to demonstrate an informed interest. Let the interviewer tell you about the company as well. Ask questions about the company.

3. Why Do You Want To Work For Us?

Don't talk about what you want, first talk about their needs. You would like to be part of a specific company project; you would like to solve a company problem; you can make a definite contribution to specific company goals.

4. What Could You Do For Us? What Can You Do For Us That Someone Else Can't Do?

Refer to past experiences that show you've had success in solving previous employer problems that may be similar to those of the prospective employer.

5. What Do You Find Most Attractive / Least Attractive About The Job Offered?

List three or more attractive factors and only one minor unattractive factor.

6. Why Should We Hire You?

Because of your knowledge, experience, abilities, and skills.

7. What Do You Look For In A Job?

An opportunity to use your skills, to perform, and be recognised.

8. Please Give Me Your Definition Of {The Position For Which You Are Being Interviewed}.

Keep it brief. Give a definition related to actions and results.

9. How Long Would It Take You To Make A Meaningful Contribution To Our Company?

Not long at all, you expect only a brief period of adjustment.

10.How Long Would You Stay With Us?

Focus on showing your employer you are in Canada for the long term. Tell them you intend to stay and build your career here.

Personality-Based Job Interview Questions

11.Do You Generally Speak To People Before They Speak To You?

Depends on the circumstances.

12.What Was The Last Book You Read? Movie You Saw? Sporting Event You Attended?

Talk about books, sports, or films to show that you have balance in your life. Job interview questions like this give a glimpse into your personality, so try to be positive.

13.What Is The Toughest Part Of A Job For You?

Be honest. Remember, not everyone can do everything.

14.Are You Creative?

Yes, give examples.

15.How Would You Describe Your Own Personality?

No matter which words you use, try to come across as balanced.

16.Are You A Leader?

Yes, and give examples.

17.What Are Your Future Goals?

Avoid “I would like the job you advertised”. Instead, give long-term goals.

18.What Are Your Strong Points?

Give at least three and relate them to the company and job you are interviewing for.

Career Goals — Job Interview Questions

19.If You Could Start Your Career Again, What Would You Do Differently?

Don't give the impression of being regretful.

20.What Career Options Do You Have At The Moment?

Relate these to the position and industry.

21.How Would You Describe The Essence Of Success? According To Your Definition Of Success, How Successful Have You Been So Far?

Think carefully about your answer to these interview questions and relate it to your career accomplishments.

Your Work Habits And Style

22.If I Spoke To Your Previous Manager, What Would He Or She Say Are Your Greatest Strengths And Weaknesses?

Emphasize skills — don't be overly negative about your weaknesses. It is always safer to identify a lack of a skill as an area of improvement rather than a shortcoming.

23.Can You Work Under Pressures, Deadlines, Etc.?

Yes, it's a way of life in business.

24.How Have You Changed The Nature Of Your Job?

Improved it, of course.

25.In Your Present Position, What Problems Have You Identified That Had Previously Been Overlooked?

Keep it brief, don't boast.

26.Don't You Feel You Might Be Better Off In A Different Size Company? Different Type Of Company?

Depends on the job. Elaborate slightly.

27.How Do You Resolve Conflict On A Project Team?

First you discuss the issues privately.

28.What Was The Most Difficult Decision You Ever Had To Make?

Try to relate your response to the prospective employment situation.

29.In Your Current Or Last Position, What Are Or Were Your Five Most Significant Achievements?

Refer to key achievements already identified on your resume.

30. How To Answer The ‘Your Biggest Weakness’ Interview Question

The interviewer won’t be impressed with classics like “I’m a perfectionist,” “I’m a slave to my job”, or “I’m a workaholic.”

You’re sitting face-to-face with the person you most want to impress — your prospective boss — and he or she is asking you, “What is your greatest weakness?” This is probably one of the most difficult and frequently asked job interview questions, so it’s smart to be well prepared with a good answer. Interviewers really don’t care what your weaknesses are. The interviewer simply wants to see how you handle the question and what your answer may indicate about you. They also want to see how well you’ve prepared for this question as you should know it is coming.

Be honest. Answer it honestly in a way that makes you look positive. Mention a genuine weakness, but not one that will disqualify you in the interview.

“My area for improvement is...”

Highlight a skill that you wish to improve upon and, more importantly, describe what you are proactively doing to enhance your skills in this area. Being able to say you are actively trying to change your weakness into a strength is a good

idea. For example, “The area I would like improve on is public speaking, and I have just enrolled in a toastmaster’s course.”

Highlighting An Area For Improvement Demonstrates You Are Self-Aware.

Describing what you are doing about that weakness demonstrates that you are proactive and seek to improve your talents.

Name weaknesses that have little to do with your prospective job. You can nominate a skill you may not actually need on the job, like languages, for example.

Avoid the blatant, overused ones. Examples include “My problem is I work too hard” or “Perfectionism” or “I am a workaholic incapable of taking lunch breaks.” With such weaknesses, who needs strengths? A few employers eat this stuff up, but most will roll their eyes and send you packing.

31.

Behavioural Job Interview Questions

Be sure to have examples dealing with conflict, stressful situations, achievements, initiative, teamwork and leadership. Some interviewers choose not to ask the “weakness” question directly but to couch it in terms of a past experience.

Behavioural job interview questions that draw out deficiencies are: “Tell about the biggest mistake you made in your career and what you learned from it”, or “Give an example of when you disagreed with your boss or co-worker and how you handled it.”

Choose your weakness before the interview. Limit your answer to one weakness and say what you did in order to overcome it. Overcoming a weakness is actually developing a strength.

Being able to discuss your weaknesses also indicates an ability to handle constructive criticism without becoming defensive. It shows a willingness to grow personally.

Other Common Interview Questions:

32. Why are you here?

33. If you had only one way to describe yourself, what would it be?

34. When have you failed?

35. What's the one accomplishment that you are most proud of? Why?

36. What qualities in your co-workers bother you most? What do you appreciate most?

37. How do you take advantage of your strengths? How do you compensate for your weaknesses?

38. If I were to ask your current boss what your greatest strength is, what would he or she tell me?

39. If I were to ask your current boss to tell me one thing you do that drives him crazy, what would he tell me?

40. What's one thing you would like to do better? What's your plan for improving?

41. What changes have you made in working with others to become more effective at work?

42. What do you think are the most important attributes of successful people? How do you rate yourself in those areas?

43. How do you make decisions?

44. If you were limited to just one person to get advice and help from, which person would you choose? Why?
45. Tell me about a work incident in which you were totally honest, despite a potential risk or downside.
46. What would you do if you made an important business decision and a co-worker challenged it?
47. Describe a crisis you faced at work. What was your role? How did you resolve it? What were the results?
48. Describe a time when you were asked to do something you weren't trained to do. How did you handle it?
49. Describe the boss who would get the very best work from you?
50. What will make you love coming to work here every day?
51. What would you do if management made a decision you didn't agree with?
52. What is there about this opportunity that most excites you?
53. What is your greatest fear about this opportunity?
54. If you get the job, how could you lose money for me?
55. Assume that you come to work here. One year from now you go home one Friday evening thinking that accepting this job was the best thing you ever did. What happened during the year for you to feel that way?
56. Is there any question that I haven't asked you that I should?
57. "Is there anything you would like to ask us?" Questions to ask the interviewer.

It is a good idea to have questions prepared for the end of the interview. It will show interest in the role and company. It is not advised to ask about the package or salary at this stage. You should focus more on the organisation and the role itself.

Question Examples May Include:

- What are the main objectives of the role?
- How does the company expect these objectives to be met?
- What obstacles are commonly encountered in reaching these objectives?
- What is the desired time frame for reaching these objectives?
- What is the career progression like with the job?
- May I contact you with further questions?
- What do you enjoy most about working for the company?
- What's the company culture like?
- What are the biggest challenges for this position?
- How would somebody like me contribute to the company?
- What type of educational background do you look for in your employees?
- What are the skills and attributes you value most in your employees?
- What types of training do you offer?
- What are the opportunities for advancement?
- What does X mean for the company?

Before The Interview

Having a neat and tidy resume will also go a long way to getting an interview for a job.

You should update your resume and cover letter so that it is relevant to each role you are applying for.

Remember, the most important things that should be front and centre are: your experience and your achievements.

When it comes to the interview itself: Prep, prep, and more prep is extremely important!

Being prepared for what an interviewer may ask is extremely important if you want to ace your job interview.

There are certain questions that you should be prepared to answer, that's why having a solid answer to any question is the best groundwork you can have for your interview.

When planning your answer, you should analyze the specifications and descriptions of the role and personalize each point.

Make 2-3 examples of each skill that you will bring to the role, whether you are a good people person or have experience in the relevant field.

During The Interview

They may ask you questions about yourself, often this is the first question you will be asked. It is a good ice-breaker and if answered smartly, can have a good impression on your interviewer from the get-go!

A good way of answering this would be describing where you are from, why you chose Canada, your work experience, and your educational experience. This is a very popular question that can put interviewees on the spot if they are not well prepared.

You should memorize some questions about the company and the role involved in the company so that you seem to have genuine intrigue about the position.

Smart ways of tackling this question can be describing where you were working, what you were doing, what was the issue, what you did to fix it, and the positives that this brought to your company.

After The Interview

Once your interview is finished, you should wait a few days until you follow up on it, if they haven't reached out to you already that is.

Haven't heard back after a week? No worries – you can always send a final follow-up email.

This can just be a reminder of your interest in the role and an update on the hiring process.

But remember, even if you don't hear back from the company, this is not a bad reflection on you! Many employers don't provide specific feedback to prospective workers due to the amount of applicants.

WISHING YOU SUCCESS IN YOUR RELOCATION DREAM