

Technical Interview Workshop

CSC x UW Blueprint
Bilal Akhtar and Gautam Gupta



About us



Gautam Gupta

- CS 4A (previously SE)
- Worked at small and mid-sized co's
- 3x Toronto, 1x NYC, 1x Valley
- Photo taken by Bilal



Bilal Akhtar

- SE 4A
- Worked at companies big and small
- 3x Toronto, 1x NYC, 1x Valley
- Photo taken by Gautam



What we're gonna talk about

What a technical interview looks like - format, question style, etc

Common gotchas / mistakes

How to prepare and practice

Some interactive examples!

Interview example!



What were the mistakes?



What were the mistakes?

Intro was too short

No clarifying questions

Being too quiet - not talking out loud - started coding directly

Tunnel vision - not picking up on hints to improve solution

Not asking any questions



How does a technical interview look like?

A short behavioural / icebreaker - “talk about yourself” (5 min)

Technical questions (1-2, rarely 3) (30-35 min)

Medium - whiteboard, your laptop, coderpad, etc

Questions for them (5 min)



“Talk about yourself / your experience”

Your program and term

Past co-ops if any - one sentence for each

If none, maybe talk about a project

What you're interested in



The technical question(s)

Usually heavy on algorithms or data structures

Often start easy and build up - if you think of an obvious solution, do it!

Think out loud - don't stay silent

Remain concise, avoid boilerplate and don't waste time on a question



How do I practice?

Best resources: Leetcode, Cracking the Coding Interview

Take advantage of overlap with coursework! Your algorithms and data structures courses will come in handy

When to stop practicing? When you feel confident, or you feel like you've hit a point of diminished returns



What if I'm a first/second year?

If you get a question about a data structure you don't know - don't panic! Tell the interviewer about it

Pick up hints from interviewer

Learn (some) things on your own: linked lists, binary search trees, depth first search, breadth first search, hash tables, priority queues, time/space complexity



“Do you have any questions for me?”

Teams and sizes

Technical Stack

Examples of past intern projects / what you'll work on

Culture—“What is work-life balance like?” “What does the company value most from their employees?”

Salary? Location?

Interview example!



What went well?

Questions