



Technical Interviews

Professional Development and Academic Skills



University of Dayton
UDayton Global



Objectives

- **Identify and understand the basic components and concepts of a technical interview**
- **Learn more about telling a story using the STAR method**
- **Explore the importance of Grit**



Photo from Microsoft Office



Technical-based Interviews

- Remember that there are two types of interview questions:
 1. Competency-based questions
 2. Technical-based questions
- Now, you're going to explore the basics of **technical-based questions**.
- You can find sample questions on the **Big Interview** site and on **LinkedIn**.



Photo from Microsoft Office



Technical-based Interviews

What do you think employers are looking for during an interview for a technical position?

- **Problem-solving**
- **Adaptability**
- **Creativity**
- **Engagement**
- **Coding ability**

Ask yourself why employers are looking for these skills.



Photo from Microsoft Office



Technical Interviews

Every company's tech interview process is different. Generally, the bigger the company, the more structured the interview process.

However, they share three basic aspects:

- 1. Several different stages in the process**
- 2. Several different types of interviews you will have**
- 3. Many different people who will interview you**

Also, they share three stages:

- 1. Test**
- 2. Phone interview**
- 3. On-site interview**

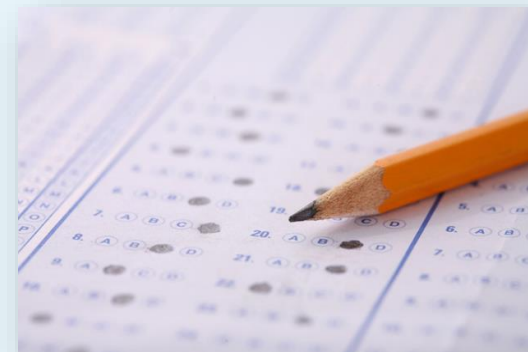


Photo from Microsoft Office



Interview Stages



1st Stage: Phone Interview. They want to interview you over the phone to see if you're enthusiastic and qualified. Instead of a phone interview, the company may request a video interview over Zoom, Microsoft Teams, or similar platform.



2nd Stage: Test. You aced the phone or video interview. Some companies will give you a preliminary coding challenge before deciding whether or not you should actually come in for an in-person interview. The test may be administered in real-time over the phone or online, or as a homework-type assignment.



3rd Stage: On-site interview. Congratulations! You aced the test. The final stage involves an in-person interview which may include coding challenges for you complete on a whiteboard in front of the interviewers. This stage may consist of several separate interviews and different technical challenges, lasting a full day.



Question Types

There are **three types** of technical interview questions:

1. Review a code
2. Implement an algorithm or solve a problem
3. Complete a technical take-home test

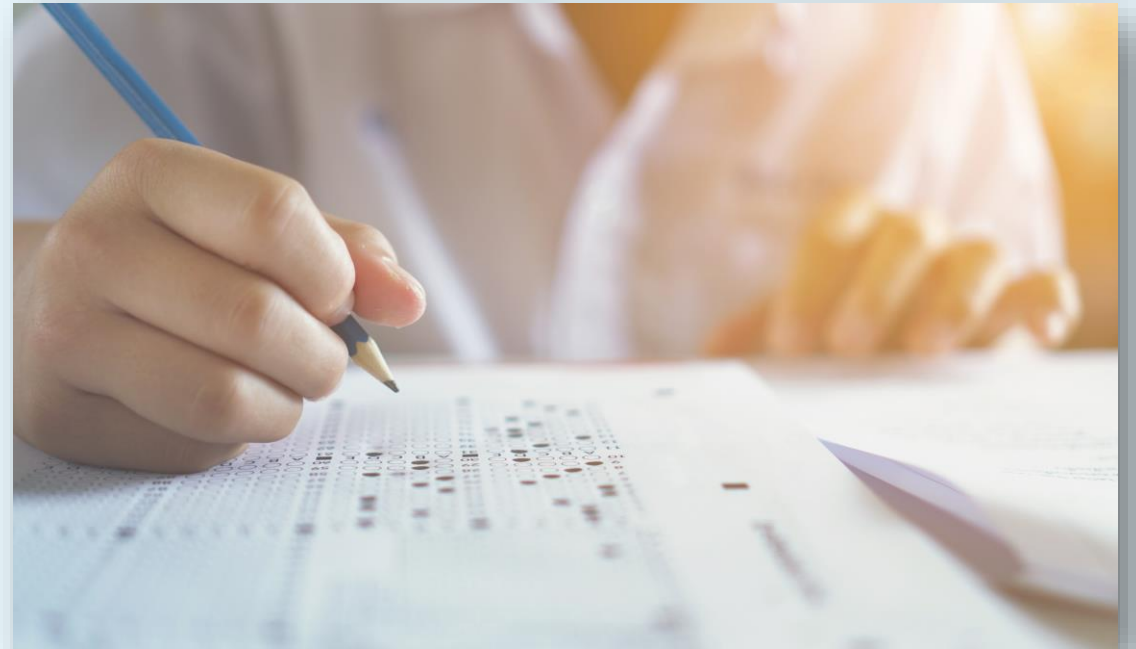


Photo from Microsoft Office



Various People You'll Meet

Who will you talk to during your on-site interview?

- **At a startup:** The engineering team members, a senior developer, or even the CTO. All interviewers typically have technical experience and may be your future bosses or coworkers.
- **At a larger company:** Recruiter, HR staff, or a member of the engineering team. Some interviewers might have little tech knowledge, and it might *not* be people you directly work with if hired.
- **You may even have multiple interviews with different people,** such as a whiteboarding interview with the tech team, a culture interview with HR, and an executive interview with the CTO.



Photo from Microsoft Office



Phone / Video Interviews

The phone interview often focuses less on hard tech skills and more on soft skills. These are some examples of **soft skills**:

- Enthusiasm
- Passion for tech and coding
- Positive attitude
- Teamwork
- Grit = not giving up when facing challenges
- Communication skills
- Understanding your audience
- Knowledge of the company



Photo by [Magnet.me](#) on

[Unsplash](#)

Phone / Video Interviews



Some common interview questions are these:

- “Tell me about yourself.”
- “Why do you want to work here?”



Photo from Microsoft Office

Answer the question with a story.

Remember: Show, don't tell!

1. Tell a story with **actions, senses, and feelings.**
2. Give **specific details** that help the audience **visualize your experience.**
3. **Share voices** of other people.



Use the STAR Method to Tell Your Story

Use the **STAR** method!
You tell a story in 4 parts:

S = Situation

T = Task

A = Action

R = Result

Tell your story in no longer than **1-3 minutes**.



Photo by [Julien Backhaus](#) on [Unsplash](#)



“BEST Answer to Behavioral Interview Questions: STAR Method”

- Before you take the **Technical Interviews and STAR Method Quiz**, watch the video “BEST Answer to Behavioral Interview Questions: STAR Method” because the quiz contains questions on the topic of this video.
- You can watch this YouTube video here:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZSSID5mp93o>





Use Grit in Your Story

- Grit is a **soft skill**.
- People with grit are **perseverant about achieving their goals, even in the face of adversity**.
- Grit can be hard to identify. Let's watch the video of **LinkedIn's Brendan Browne (4min)** talking about the role of passion, what grit means in different situations, and more.
- You can watch this video on YouTube here: <https://youtu.be/xrB2uOMW7G8>





Tell Me about Yourself: **Weak Answer**

Imagine the interviewer begins by saying, **“Tell me about yourself.”**

“I started programming about two years ago with some personal projects. I eventually got a job at a small tech company in my hometown, and I’ve been working there about a year and a half. I like my job, but I’m looking for a new challenge, which I think your company could provide.”

Is the answer strong enough? Why or why not?

Source of this lesson’s examples: https://www.interviewcake.com/behavioral-questions-programming-interview-story-telling?utm_source=ltcwm&utm_medium=blog



Tell Me about Yourself: **Strong Answer**

Tell me about yourself.

“I got started programming because I wondered if it was possible to build a social network for cats. That didn’t take off, but the prototype helped me get a job at a small tech company in my hometown. Last month, I read an awesome article on Hacker News about the social network your company is building. The scaling challenges you face seem like they’ll help me grow faster and stronger than my current role will.”

Memorable topic

Grit example

Specific

Expresses enthusiasm



Why do You Want to Work Here?: Weak Answer

Imagine another common question: “**Why do you want to work here?**”

“I’m really interested in technical blogging and open source. So, I like that your company has some open-source work and contributes back to the community.”

How can you make this answer stronger?



Why do You Want to Work Here?: Strong Answer

- Expresses values.
- Genuine, not fake.
- Specific story from life.
- Fits the specific company.
- *Shows* instead of just *telling*.

Why do you want to work here?

“A couple years ago, when I was still new to programming, I was working on this tricky bug. I found a post on a company blog where an engineer explained how her team solved the issue. She included a code snippet she’d open-sourced. I appreciated that she took the time to write about her team’s experience and share their solution. It helped me! That’s how I first started getting into open source. I hope to work with more engineers like that—who write about their work and try to help others in the community. So, I was excited to see all the stuff your team shares on your blog and on the company’s Github profile.”



Quiz Time!

- Now that you've learned the rules to technical interviews, you can complete the **Technical Interviews and STAR Method Quiz** on Isidore.
- Make sure you watched the video **"BEST Answer to Behavioral Interview Questions: STAR Method"** before you answer the quiz.



Photo from Microsoft Office