

Interview Skills Quick Reference

Essential strategies for interview success

THE STAR METHOD

Use this framework to structure answers to behavioral questions:

S → T → A → R

Situation - Set the scene (When? Where? Who was involved?)

Task - Your responsibility (What needed to be done?)

Action - What YOU did (Specific steps, not "we")

Result - The outcome (Use numbers when possible)

Example Question: "Tell me about a time you showed leadership."

S: "Our club president resigned mid-semester."

T: "I volunteered to lead the group as interim president."

A: "I reorganized committees, delegated tasks, and planned a campus event."

R: "Membership grew 40% and our event earned campus recognition."

Before the Interview

- ✓ Research company mission, products, and culture
- ✓ Review the job description thoroughly
- ✓ Prepare 5-7 STAR stories
- ✓ Plan questions to ask the interviewer
- ✓ Print copies of your resume
- ✓ Plan your outfit and test technology
- ✓ Map the route or test video platform
- ✓ Get a good night's sleep

Day of Interview

- ✓ Arrive 10-15 minutes early
- ✓ Bring resume, notepad, and pen
- ✓ Turn off your phone
- ✓ Practice deep breathing
- ✓ Use positive self-talk
- ✓ Greet everyone professionally
- ✓ Remember interviewer names
- ✓ Bring water (if in-person)

COMMON INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Background Questions:

- "Tell me about yourself" (2-minute professional summary)
- "What are your strengths and weaknesses?"
- "Why should we hire you?"

Behavioral Questions:

- "Describe a time you worked under pressure"
- "Tell me about a conflict you resolved"
- "Give an example of leadership"

Career Questions:

- "Where do you see yourself in 5 years?"
- "Why do you want to work here?"
- "Why are you leaving your current job?"

Body Language DO's

- Firm handshake
- Natural eye contact
- Sit up straight, lean slightly forward
- Nod to show engagement
- Smile genuinely
- Keep hands visible and still
- Mirror interviewer's energy

Body Language DON'Ts

- Crossed arms
- Fidgeting or tapping
- Looking at phone/watch
- Slouching
- Avoiding eye contact
- Excessive hand gestures
- Playing with hair/jewelry

QUESTIONS TO ASK THE INTERVIEWER

About the Role:

- "What does success look like in the first 90 days?"
- "What are the biggest challenges in this role?"
- "How is performance measured?"

About the Team:

- "Who would I work with most closely?"
- "What's the management style?"
- "How does the team collaborate?"

Avoid asking about: Salary/benefits (wait for them to raise it), basic info on their website, vacation time, or personal questions about the interviewer.

AFTER THE INTERVIEW

Within 24 Hours:

- Send personalized thank-you email to each interviewer
- Reference specific conversation points
- Reiterate your interest and fit for the role
- Address any questions you didn't answer fully

If No Response After Expected Timeline:

- Send polite follow-up email
- Express continued interest
- Ask about next steps
- Keep tone positive and professional

Sample Thank-You Email Opening:

"Dear [Name], Thank you for taking the time to meet with me today about the [Position] role. I enjoyed learning about [specific topic discussed] and am even more excited about the opportunity to contribute to [specific project or goal]."

INTERVIEW FORMATS

Virtual Interviews:

- Test technology beforehand
- Choose quiet, well-lit space
- Look at camera, not screen
- Professional background
- Dress fully professional

Panel Interviews:

- Address questioner, include others
- Note each person's name/role
- Send individual thank-yous
- Bring enough resume copies
- Engage with all panelists

Key Takeaway: Interview success comes from preparation. Research thoroughly, practice your STAR stories out loud, prepare thoughtful questions, and follow up professionally. Each interview—regardless of outcome—is practice for the next opportunity.