

I Love Technical Interviews

Jon D Jones

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How to Ace your Technical Interview - By Jon D Jones

When you are going to a technical interview you will need to be prepared even if you have been working in the technical field for many years.

One of the best ways to make sure you pass your technical interview is to refresh your memory. To refresh your memory you will want to pick up a technical book and begin studying again. This way you will be prepared for any type of questions they may ask you. You cannot get just get any book and begin preparing you will need to make sure you get the right book.

Another really good way to make sure you ace your technical interview is to practice and keep practicing. It will not matter if you are a seasoned technical wiz; you will still need to practice to make sure you are up to date with everything that you are doing. In the world of technology many things become out of date and so many things change, this is what you need to make sure you are up to date with knowing. All the new things that come out, you will have to practice because you will need to know how to do all the new things. So keep practicing so that you know what you are doing in the interview.

Even though you may need to refresh your memory and make sure you've caught up with all the new ways to do things, you will not want to overload your brain and do too much at one time. When you begin to study, you will want to make sure you take breaks between each problem so that your brain does not get overloaded with information and you begin to get frustrated and then forget the things you just learned.

Be prepared for anything that the interviewer may ask you. Even if you have not studied it you will need to be prepared to answer the questions to the best of your knowledge. Make sure you are prepared for anything that they may have you do or even ask you. If you can show the interviewer that you are prepared for anything this makes you look good to them.

Just go into the interview calm and with steady hands. Use your skills and knowledge to win them over and nail the job that you have always wanted.

What Employees Are Looking For

All businesses are aware of the importance of interviews in the hiring process. They work on making the most out of the interview opportunities that they come across. They plan the questions far in advance of any actual interview. The goal of any interview is to see if the one being interviewed would be a good match for the position that is open. Some of the technical questions are very clear and direct, while others may be probing type questions designed to reveal something deeper underneath the surface. An example of a straightforward question may be “why do you want to work for us and what positive things do you think you will bring to our company?” This is very direct but it also gives the interviewer some insight into just how interested this person is in getting this job.

Employers are aware that just because someone doesn’t interview well, does not mean they would not do a good job. On the other side of the coin, they realize that many people give great interviews only to turn out to be poor employees. That is what makes the interview process so crucial. It takes a good interviewer to be able to ‘read between the lines’ and to spot both strengths and weaknesses in the people they interview. Another good probing question is "tell me about a time when you were in a leadership position and had a good outcome.

What were you the proudest of in that instance? This question is a good one when hiring someone for filling a technical position. It will reveal the applicant’s ability to plainly express themselves in a way that other people can understand it. The interviewer will listen closely to determine if the individual is able to get their point across in a clear and precise manner. If not, then they might not have the necessary skills to work with others and interact with other departments. This is a skill that is much needed in today’s technological age.

They may ask “what type of a work environment do you like best? What kind of atmosphere do you work your best in?” Here the interviewer is probing for specifics. They want to understand if this person is going to make a good fit for their company. They want to find someone who can be both a team player and able to work alone if necessary. Flexibility is always a good thing in an employee. The interviewer also wants to know if the applicant is over-expecting or if they really have a grasp of what the job is all about. Are they adaptable? Are they willing to learn? These are the types of things that interviews are designed to bring to the forefront.

How to Prepare for a Technical Interview

Once you have applied for and landed an interview for a new job you may find yourself a little worried about the technical interview. There are many resources out there that deal with technical interview preparation but sometimes they can be convoluted and not really get to the point. That being said there are plenty of tips out there that are great to use for technical interview preparation.

One of the best ways to prepare for any interview is to write down a list of possible questions you may be asked and write down some answers and familiarize yourself with them. Similarly, the best way to prepare for a technical interview is to practice with questions. Familiarize your brain with possible coding and programming questions and terminology and exercise your brain with problem-solving questions. Ask yourself as many of these questions as you can and make notes of your strategies and answers so that you can read over them until your interview. Naturally, it is best to allow yourself as much time as possible and start warming up right away

Technical Interviews

Technical interviews can be difficult and daunting and also full of questions that can be tricky to answer and to answer in a way that will put you through to the next round of the hiring processes. Some mistakes that many often make during a technical interview is that they do not directly answer the question they have been asked but rather beat around the bush and take an indirect route to a “sort of” answer. This is something that you do not want to do, and a great tip for preparing is to put together a list of possible question and then come up with direct response. You want to be as direct as possible but also still personable. You also want to use appropriate language and not use slang. Also try to use strong language for the type of job that you are applying for. This shows that you know what you are talking about and are familiar with the work that you will be doing at the new job.

Another great tip for cracking the technical interview is that you not only want to be concise with your responses but you should also not be afraid to say that you do not know what they are asking you about. If you are asked a technical question and you do not know the answer say so. You can then explain that you may not know about that specific area but that you are willing to learn and are open to learning about new areas. This shows that you are willing to learn new things and many employers are interested in employees that are willing to learn. Also take your time to formulate a good answer. Often interviewees feel rushed to answer quickly and may not take the time to properly formulate an answer and may respond with an answer that does not make sense.

Preparing For Technical Interviews

Millions of people today will send out their work histories, apply for jobs via forms, and then get that coveted phone call. They’ll get a date and time to show up and get interviewed, and 99% of them will fail to land the job. The main reason why people fail to secure a job after an interview is simple, they don’t prepare. Even though many have been told to prepare, few people actually take the time to actually do so. If you want to stand out when you apply for a job and interview, make sure that you are in the 1% of people that land the job. Do so with a few tips that will help you prepare for even the most technical of jobs.

Practice Speaking Tech Vocabulary

Before you do anything, make absolutely sure that you are not going at it with bravado and hubris at your side. You need to humble yourself and understand that you are going to have to sell yourself and your skills to a company before landing a job. You have to impress whomever you're interviewing with, and therefore, you will need to consider spending some time speaking clearly, enunciating vocabulary, and brushing up on the basics that you have. Never walk into a job where you have the notion of "expertise", without any sort of preparation. Even if you're the greatest programmer in the world, go back and get in the habit of talking out loud, it will pay off.

Practice Explaining What You Know

Do not go forward with your knowledge and expect a computer to be in front of you. In many technical interviews, you're given a chalkboard or whiteboard, and you're going to have to think on your feet. If you're introverted, or just not keen on speaking in front of an audience, you will need to shake out of it. Practice by getting a piece of paper out, or a whiteboard for your home and explain what you know. Go online and find some practice questions, and have someone ask you what they are, and then draw explanations out on the fly. The more you learn how to communicate what you know, in a visual medium, the higher the chances are that you will impress the interviewer. Remember, you have to explain it to someone else, and they want to see whether or not you can think on your feet. Practice this, it will guarantee that you will not get passed up.

Go Back To The Basics

The biggest zinger that you're going to get in a highly technical interview is simple. No, really, the simplest of questions are going to trip you up and you're going to fall over yourself trying to rack your brain moving forward. With that in mind, go back and study some basics from when you first started learning programming. You may not have remembered the basics or perhaps you're knee deep in complex algorithmic elements, which is fine, but be ready for the simplest of questions.

At the end of the day, you can get the job or not. If you want to ensure you have a fighting chance, subscribe to this newsletter to learn what interviewers in tech are looking for.

Technical interviews today are far more complex than most people understand. Whether you're a seasoned professional in tech or you're fresh out of college and ready to get your dream job, you are going to run into a proverbial lion's den. Most people that jump into interviews for programming and other technical positions, fail to secure the gig. The reason why many fail is because they simply don't prepare for the interview. You may think that this is unorthodox, but it's

one of the biggest trip ups that most people fall through. If you want to get a call back, you're going to have to impress the interviewer with your communication, not your skill. Your skill set is good, but you have to be able to exhibit that you know how to communicate it on the fly. With that in mind, there are some tips to consider moving forward to nail the interview.

Code The Hard Way

The first thing that you will need to do is simple, practice coding in long form without an editor. Get a piece of paper, or pull out notepad on your computer and start to write out long code based on sample questions you may find online. This will be a good way to think on the fly and communicate to the interviewer that you know what you're doing, and aren't relying on editors and other auto-coding software. If you can exhibit that you have a good skillset and code structure, you will impress everyone in the room.

Do Your Homework

Never ask more information from any interviewer on the phone, or in an email. Make sure that you work out some due diligence, and understand all the ins and outs of the job you're applying for. If you don't know what you're applying for, you're going to end up losing out on the job. Some people say that there are no stupid questions, but interviewers see a lot of it, and it's wise to step back and look online as to what some of the dumbest questions have been made to interviewers in tech positions. Take your time, and study the company and how they work, what they do, and don't ask dumb questions.

Do What Others Do Not

Very few people go back to the basics of their programming. Most people don't practice interview questions, brain teasers, and a variety of other things. They go into an interview with bravado and they get knocked out of contention because they didn't take the time to simply practice. Go back to the basics, practice coding, and learn how to communicate what you do. If you can highlight your experience, and prepare properly moving forward, you will land the job, guaranteed. Failing becomes simple, if you overthink things and step into an interview without any preparation.

Technical interviews require preparation, and it's evidenced by those that land jobs that others don't. If you want a fighting chance, subscribe to this newsletter and get the right information to land your dream job.

Why You're Getting Job Interviews, Yet No Offers

There are a lot of people trying to get a job right now. Whether it's an individual who has been unemployed for some time, or it's someone that is looking for an opportunity to jump to a new position, millions of people are looking for jobs. Amidst the many devoted searchers, there are people who are not getting any offers. They get the interview, they make it to the second or even third round, and then nothing materializes. It's with that in mind that you should consider a few elements as to why this is happening. There are serious elements at play, and some may not even be intentional.

The Interview "Wow" Factor

What many hiring managers are looking for above qualifications is performance. How do you present yourself? No, not just your looks. You already look your best, but how do you present yourself in language, rhetoric, and inflection. Are you excited? Do you really want the position? Have you done due diligence about the position and the company? When you're in the interview, you have to showcase a certain confidence and enthusiasm for being there. This will illustrate that "wow" factor. When the rest of the interviewees come in nervous, and stumble over themselves, you'll be remembered for confidence.

Have A Plan For Action

Many people go into a job interview without the notion of getting into the position. Before you're asked any questions, make sure that you have a plan. Have ideas ready to roll off your tongue when asked what you would do. The interviewer may try to gauge whether or not you have any ideas as to how to improve the role, or the position. If that's the case, a steady, confident response will trump the standard, "I'm not sure" or "I'll have to think about that one". Anyone can walk into an interview, but only certain people can go in with a plan and execute. To become one of those people, you must plan ahead, and wow the interviewer. Test it out, and you'll see your luck change.

Common Interview Questions

Over the years I've interviewed over 100 candidates for roles. With the constant technology change it is impossible for any developer to know everything. A solid developers can learn whatever you want them to do quickly so it is pretty important that you concentrate on the main general questions. It will be impossible for you to learn every single question that might get thrown at you in a job interview.

A lot of interviewers are more interested in seeing how you think through problems. Half the items on this list are admittedly. NET trivia questions. If you know all the answers forward and backward you are a better developer than I am.

I've found that before interviews if I run through a sample of the main concepts it has always helped give me an edge.

Preparation

Obviously, it is impossible to know the answers to every question you might get asked, so chill.

Before any interview, go on their website, and read what they do, find one thing you like about their website and one thing you dislike. This should be more than enough. Whatever you don't, don't pretend that you've looked at a site when you haven't. If you get found out, you'll get an instant no. The key to technical interview is having solid soft skills, so good knowledge about design principles like OO, functional programming, TDD, dependency injection etc.. Having experience with more than one language and an all round general smartness.

**MAKE SURE THAT ALL OF YOUR BASES ARE COVERED
WITH THIS ESSENTIAL CHECKLIST**

Common Interview Questions

- What Development Tools Have You Used?
- What Languages Have You Programmed In?
- What Technical Certificates Have You Got?
- What Source Control Tools Have You Used?
- What Do You Do to Maintain Your Technical Certifications?
- How Did Your Education Help Prepare You for This Job?
- How Would You Rate Your Key Competencies for This Job?
- What Are Your Best Strengths?
- What Is Your Biggest Weakness?
- Give an Example of Where You Have Applied Your Technical Knowledge in a Practical Way?
- Have You Ever Worked Using TDD?
- What Do You Do to Ensure Quality in Your Deliverables?
- What Percentage of Your Time Do You Spend Unit Testing?
- Describe a Time When You Were Able to Improve upon the Design That Was Originally Suggested?
- How Much Reuse Do You Get out of the Code That You Develop, and How?
- When Is the Last Time You Downloaded a Utility from the Internet to Make Your Work More Productive, and What Was It?
- What Have You Done to Ensure Consistency Across Development and Production Environments?
- What Technical Websites Do You Follow?
- What Do You Do to Ensure You Provide Accurate Project Estimates?
- What Automated Build Tools or Processes Have You Used?
- What Experience Do You Have with Continuous Integration?

- Tell Me about the Project You Are Most Proud of, and What Your Contribution?
- How Would You Rate Your Key Competencies for This Job?
- How Much Reuse Do You Get out of the Code That You Develop?

Code Katas

The Bee Game

The objective of this exercise is to create a .Net application that performs the following tasks, using C#:

- A web page must be produced as the interface to play the game. Styling is neither expected nor necessary.
- A button must be present to kick off the process of hitting a random bee.
- All code must be submitted to work in a local environment. Hosted solutions will be rejected.
- The game must adhere to the following rules and constraints.

There are three types of bees in this game:

Queen Bee

- The Queen Bee has a lifespan of 100 Hit Points.
- When the Queen Bee is hit, 8 Hit Points are deducted from her lifespan.
- If/When the Queen Bee has run out of Hit Points, All remaining alive Bees automatically run out of hit points.
- There is only 1 Queen Bee.

Worker Bee

- Worker Bees have a lifespan of 75 Hit Points.
- When a Worker Bee is hit, 10 Hit Points are deducted from his lifespan.
- There are 5 Worker Bees.

Drone Bee

- Drone Bees have a lifespan of 50 Hit Points.
- When a Drone Bee is hit, 12 Hit Points are deducted from his lifespan.
- There are 8 Drone Bees

To play, there must be a button that enables a user to “hit” a random bee. The selection of a bee must be random. When the bees are all dead, the game must be able to reset itself with full life bees for another round. The application must run through a browser.

Eight Queens

The “eight queens” puzzle is a well-known puzzle, going back to 1848. The problem is to try to place eight queens on a chessboard so that none of them are attacking any of the others - remember that the queen can move as far as she likes vertically, horizontally or diagonally. You can’t place two queens in the same row, for example, so on a normal chessboard (8 by 8), you can’t put nine or more queens. Eight is the maximum.

The puzzle below shows an empty 4 by 4 chessboard, all in gray. The 4 by 4 board is easier than the 8 by 8, so it’s a good size to start with. Click on a square to place a queen, and the square will turn green. The squares that the queen is attacking will turn blue. See if you can place four queens on the 4 by 4 board! To remove a queen, click on it again.

Social Media Lookup Test

Write an application that:

- Takes in a person’s name
- Searches a social media network for that person
- Returns known details for that person

Feel free to connect to any social media site you want (eg. Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn), or even mock your own.

Your code should be written in such a way that the application could easily be changed to connect to another social media site or multiple sites, consolidating the responses.

This challenge should only take you a couple of hours. If you feel that any of your code could be improved but you have run out of time, please comment your code to say what you would have liked to have done.

Simple Challenge 1

Write a method that takes in the age of a person and displays it on screen, the output of the program should be ‘You are {age} years old.’

Simple Challenge 2

Write an interactive method that displays the asterisk pattern below: *****
**** ** *

Simple Challenge 3

Write a method that declares an integer variable, one float variable, and one string variable. The method should take in a Array of type objects with the following value 5, 4.3, "String" and associate the objects to the correct variables and then display them on screen.