Interview Preparation and Best Practices

# Hard skills:

### Primary skill overview

1. Important concepts
2. Where to find information (books, blogs, free courses etc)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Frameworks (frontend oriented) | <https://egghead.io/search> |
| Every programmer should know | <https://github.com/mtdvio/every-programmer-should-know> |
| System design | <https://github.com/donnemartin/system-design-primer> |

### SDLC

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Code review | <https://www.atlassian.com/agile/software-development/code-reviews> |
| Testing strategies | <https://www.atlassian.com/continuous-delivery/software-testing> |
| CI/CD | <https://www.atlassian.com/continuous-delivery/principles/continuous-integration-vs-delivery-vs-deployment> |

### 

### Coding task

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| How to practice | <https://leetcode.com/problemset/all/> |
| Learn data structures and algorithms | <https://www.coursera.org/specializations/data-structures-algorithms> |
| Examples | <https://leetcode.com/problems/valid-parentheses/>  <https://leetcode.com/problems/two-sum/>  <https://leetcode.com/problems/maximum-depth-of-binary-tree/> |
| Big-O | <https://www.bigocheatsheet.com/> |

# Soft skills :

1. “Relax and keep calm”
2. How to prepare for the interview - check your room, light, noise, be face-ready.
3. Be prepared for the stress and challenges. You can be tested - keep a positive attitude.
4. Show your involvement and ask the right questions
5. Introduction - *Tell me about yourself and your last project*
6. Research about the company/project
   1. *What do you know about our company/project?*
   2. *Why do you want to join this particular company/project?*
7. Practice Common Behavioral Interview Questions and the best answer strategy (see more examples below). Use STAR (Situation, Task, Action, Result). Quantify your impact.
   1. *Tell me about a time when you…*
   2. *Describe a situation when you…*
   3. *Give me an example of a time you*
   4. *Think about an instance in which you…*
   5. *Tell me how you approached a situation where…*
   6. *Explain a difficult project you recently worked on.*
   7. *Have you ever made a mistake? How did you handle it?*
   8. *Tell me about your achievements.*
8. US/Bay Area culture (+ Google culture) - *multicultural and tolerant society, do not afraid to speak up.*
9. Work on your English skills. If you need help, you can take additional lessons with our English teachers. Please reach out to you RM to request English language training or reach out directly to our English teacher Robbie ([Robbie\_Jones@epam.com](mailto:Robbie_Jones@epam.com)). He is based in San Jose where he teaches lessons, online lessons are also available.
10. Communication skills - *body language, empathy, etc.*

When on interview

Client interviews are Video conference calls each 30 to 60 minutes long with whiteboard exercise, coding in blank documents with no syntax highlight, showing the interviewer your thought process by talking through decisions and assumptions. In most occurrences a video chat and collaborative document allow you to take an interview from a comfortable place.

How To Succeed

Please connect to your interview 5-10 minutes prior to the start time.

Test your connection and video/sound quality

Our clients believe in collaboration and sharing ideas, when asked to provide a solution, first define and frame the problem as you see it.

* 1. *If you don't understand ­ ask for help or clarification. it’s OK to question your interviewer.*
  2. *If you need to assume something, verbally check if it’s a correct assumption.*
  3. *Our clients want to see if you can take a hard, big problem for which you don’t know an obvious solution, and break it down into manageable solvable parts for which you can provide in reasonable runtime and space bounds, so do you best.*
  4. *Describe how you want to tackle solving each part of the question.*
  5. *Always let your interviewer know what you are thinking as he/she will be as interested in your process of thought as your solution. Also, if you're stuck, they may provide hints if they know what you're doing.*

Finally, listen, don't miss a hint if your interviewer is trying to assist you!

**A typical scenario**

The Pitch / Resume Walk-Through

Technical Interview /coding

Closing Interview / questions

# Sample behavior questions

Below you will find sample behavior questions to evaluate the most common attributes during an interview.

### **Action-oriented / self-motivation**

1. Describe a situation when you did much more than it was expected from you to get the project done. Were your efforts recognized? By whom and how? How did that make you feel?

2. Tell me about a time when you took ownership of a project. Why did you do this? What was the result of you taking the challenge? What could have happened if you did not take ownership?

3. Think about an instance in which you came up with a project idea which was implemented primarily because of your efforts. What was it about? What was its outcome? What was your role?

4. Describe a time when you made a suggestion to improve something on the project that you were working on.

5. Give me an example of the project or initiative that you started on your own. It can be a non-business one. What prompted you to get started?

### **Ability to adapt**

6. Describe a situation in which you met a major obstacle in order to complete a project. How did you deal with it? What steps did you take?

7. Tell me about a time you had to work on several projects at once. How did you handle this?

8. Describe a situation on which you have experienced significant project change that you weren’t expecting. What was it? How did that impact you, and how did you adapt to this change? How did you remain productive through the project?

9. Describe a situation in which you had to adjust to changes over which you had no control. How did you do this?

### **Communication skills**

10. I’d be interested in hearing about a miscommunication you had with your supervisor. How did you solve it? What was the reason for that? How did you deal with that situation?

11. Tell me about an instance when you had to communicate a really bad piece of news to your supervisor or team members. How did you handle it? What was the outcome?

12. Give an example of a time when you didn’t agree with other programmer. Did you stand up for something that you believed was right?

13. Tell me about a time when you had to present complex programming problem to a person that doesn’t understand technical jargon. How did you ensure that the other person understood you?

14. Describe a situation in which you felt you had not communicated well enough. What did you do? How did you handle it?

15. Tell me about a situation that you had to speak up and be assertive in order to get a point across that was important for you.

### **Conflict management**

16. Tell me about a time when you had a disagreement with other programmer. How did you handle the situation? Were you able to reach a mutually beneficial resolution to that conflict? If not, why were you and your co-worker unable to reach a mutually beneficial resolution? If you knew then what you know now, what would you have done differently to either prevent the conflict, or to resolve it?

17. Tell me about a time when you had to work with a difficult person to accomplish a goal. What was the biggest challenge? How did you handle it?

18. Has there been a time on project when you disagreed with someone? What did you do about it?

19. Tell me about when you had to deal with conflict within your team. How was the conflict solved? How did you handle that? How would you deal with it now?

### **Creativity**

20. Give me an example of a time you had to take a creative and unusual approach to solve coding problem. How did this idea come to your mind? Why do you think it was unusual?

### **Decision making**

21. Give me an example of a time when you were faced with a complex project related matter and you could not decide on the best way to deal with. What did you do? How did you go about making the decision – lead me through your decision process? If you could make the decision once again, would you change anything

22. Think about an instance in which you made a decision at work that was unpopular. How did you handle it?

23. Give me an example of a project that completely failed. Why do you think it was a failure? Could there be anything done differently in order to turn it into success?

24. Describe a situation in which you worked diligently on a project and it did not produce the desired results. Why didn’t you get the desired results? What did you learn from the experience?

25. Think about a situation when you made a poor decision or did something that just didn’t turn out right. What happened?

### **Goal orientation**

26. Give an example of an important project goal you reached and how you achieved it.

27. Think about an instance in which you worked on and achieved multiple project goals.

28. Describe a circumstance when you were not able to achieve a project goal that was set by your supervisor. How did you handle this situation? What was the outcome?

29. Think about an instance in which you had to depend on others to help you achieve a project goal. How did you feel?

### **Influence/persuasion**

30. Tell me about a recent situation at work in which you were able to get management to accept one of your ideas.

31. Describe a situation in which you experienced difficulty in getting others to accept your ideas? What was your approach? How did this work? Were you able to successfully persuade someone to see things your way?

32. Have you ever had to “sell” an idea to your project team? How did you do it? Did they “buy” it?

### **Planning, priority setting, time management**

33. Tell me about a situation when you were responsible for project planning. Did everything go according to your plan? If not, then why and what kind of counteractions did you have to take?

### **Problem-solving skills**

34. Tell me about a situation when you made a mistake at work. What happened exactly and how did you deal with it? What steps did you take to improve the situation?

35. What is the biggest problem you have faced on projects so far and how did you solve it? What made the problem difficult to resolve? What was the result? Would you do anything differently now?

36. Give me an example of a time when you noticed a small problem before it turned into a major one. Did you take the initiative to correct it? What kind of preventive measure did you undertake?

37. Walk me through a difficult/complex problem/project you encountered. How did you decide what to do first? What information did you need? What obstacles did you face? Which ones were you able to overcome? Did you have to ask for help?

### **Teamwork**

38. Tell me about a time when you worked with someone who was not completing his or her share of the work. How did you handle the situation? Did you discuss your concern with your coworker? With your manager? If yes, how did your coworker respond to your concern? What was your manager’s response?

39. Describe a situation where you had to work in a team that didn’t get on very well. What happened? What did you do and what role did you take? How did the situation evolve?

40. Describe a team experience you found disappointing. What would you have done to prevent this?

41. Give me an example of working cooperatively as a team member to accomplish an important goal. What was the objective? To what extent did you interact with other project members?

42. Tell me about the most difficult situation you have had when leading a team. What happened and how did you handle it? Were you successful? What was the most important thing you did?

### **Working under pressure**

43. Describe a situation when you worked effectively under pressure. How did you feel when working under pressure? What was going on, and how did you get through it?

44. Tell me about a situation when you had problems working under pressure. How did you handle that situation? Did you decide to ask for support? How and when did you ask for help?

45. Give me a recent example of a stressful situation on the job. What happened? How did you handle it?

 [Contains Duplicate](https://leetcode.com/problems/contains-duplicate/)

 [Best Time to Buy and Sell Stock](https://leetcode.com/problems/best-time-to-buy-and-sell-stock/)

 [Valid Parentheses](https://leetcode.com/problems/valid-parentheses/)

 [Maximum Subarray](https://leetcode.com/problems/maximum-subarray/)

 [3Sum](https://leetcode.com/problems/3sum/)

 [Merge Intervals](https://leetcode.com/problems/merge-intervals/)

 [Detect Cycle in a Linked List](https://leetcode.com/problems/linked-list-cycle/)

 [Container With Most Water](https://leetcode.com/problems/container-with-most-water/)

 [Longest Substring Without Repeating Characters](https://leetcode.com/problems/longest-substring-without-repeating-characters/)

 [Validate Binary Search Tree](https://leetcode.com/problems/validate-binary-search-tree/)

 [Invert/Flip Binary Tree](https://leetcode.com/problems/invert-binary-tree/)

 [Non-overlapping Intervals](https://leetcode.com/problems/non-overlapping-intervals/)

 [Serialize and Deserialize Binary Tree](https://leetcode.com/problems/serialize-and-deserialize-binary-tree/)

 [Construct Binary Tree from Preorder and Inorder Traversal](https://leetcode.com/problems/construct-binary-tree-from-preorder-and-inorder-traversal/)

 [Top K Frequent Elements](https://leetcode.com/problems/top-k-frequent-elements/)

 [Course Schedule](https://leetcode.com/problems/course-schedule/)

 [Binary Tree Maximum Path Sum](https://leetcode.com/problems/binary-tree-maximum-path-sum/)

 [Add and Search Word](https://leetcode.com/problems/add-and-search-word-data-structure-design/)

 [Implement Trie (Prefix Tree)](https://leetcode.com/problems/implement-trie-prefix-tree/)

 [Kth Smallest Element in a BST](https://leetcode.com/problems/kth-smallest-element-in-a-bst/)

 [Lowest Common Ancestor of BST](https://leetcode.com/problems/lowest-common-ancestor-of-a-binary-search-tree/)

 [Merge K Sorted Lists](https://leetcode.com/problems/merge-k-sorted-lists/)

 [Climbing Stairs](https://leetcode.com/problems/climbing-stairs/)

 [Longest Increasing Subsequence](https://leetcode.com/problems/longest-increasing-subsequence/)