Technical Interview Pro-Tips

from Gayle Laakman's Cracking the Coding Interview

February 19, 2014

1 General Advice: Five Steps

1. Ask your interview questions to resolve ambiguity

2. Design an algorithm

3. Write pseudo-code first, but make sure your interviewer knows you will write real code later

4. Write your code, not too slow and not too fast

5. Test your code and carefully fix any mistakes

2 How to Build an Algorithm: Five Approaches

1. Write out specific examples of the problem, and see if you can figure out a general rule.

2. Consider what problems the algorithm is similar to, and figure out if you can modify the solution to develop an algorithm for this problem.

3. Change a constraint to simplify the problem. Then try to solve it. Once you have a solution for the simplified problem, try to generalize it to the original problem.

4. Solve the algorithm first for a base case (e.g, just one element). Then try to solve it for elements one and two, and then for two and three, and then generalize.

5. Simply run through a list of data structures and try to apply each one (hacky, but this actually works).