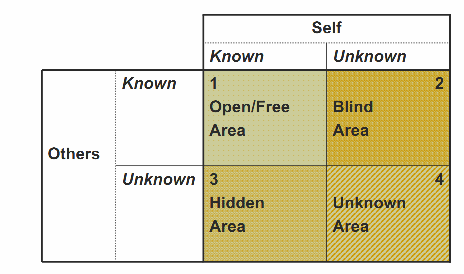
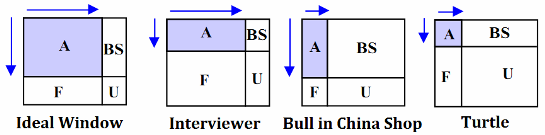
What is an Interview?

What is the purpose of an interview? When myriad of options are available, Why have organizations chosen interview as the most crucial stage of the selection process?  If it is "a simple question and answer session", the entire tedious interview process can be done away with a written test.  But this is not the actual case.  Interview is not a simple question and answer session.   
  
In Organizations, there are structured teams of  people constantly work towards achieving financial and other set goals.  These organizations are incorporated with the financial help of many individuals  investing in the corporation by buying shares and many institutionalized bodies like banks by giving loans. As there are thousands of stakes holders vested their interests in these bodies to function, It is necessary for these organizations to satisfy each stake holder.  For example, If a company does not make adequate profit, how can it repay the loans it has taken? Or How can they pay dividends to the share holders of the company?  
  
To accomplish these goals, a comapany has to recruit quality human force. Who is vested with this job? The HR people.  The onus is on the HR people of the company to find the right candidates from virtually hundreds of people applying for the position.  So an interview should be a highly organized process of finding the right candidate to work on like minded, goal oriented teams.                                                         
  
Compare the interview process with purchasing a laptop.  When you go for purchasing a laptop, do you consider all the important factors like price, configuration, color, after sale service? Infact, we take quotations from several shops and we inquire our friends who earlier purchased laptops from these shops then only we will make a purchase decision.  
  
Similarly, When organizations recruit people, they also do all this due diligence before they select any candidate for their teams.  Your written test scores speak some measurable metrics like aptitude, logical ability and verbal skills which are equally important but the important qualities like, your attitude, team working capabilities, leadership qualities, ability to handle pressure etc. may not be known unless an interview is being conducted.   
  
Having said that, Interview is an interpersonal situation where the interviewer try to understand your personality and how that fits for his organization.  To understand your personality, there are specific questions designed to serve this purpose.  Always remember, each and every question asked in an interview has a purpose. But most people think that interview is a random process.   
  
There are certain myths associated with interview process  
  
1.  Interviewers ask tough questions  
2.  If I don't answer a question my interview is over  
  
Interviewers always start with simple questions which can easily be answered by any person with adequate knowledge in his subjects. If the interviewee answers these questions correctly, the interviewer may proceed further to check the depth of the knowledge. In this process you may face one or two tough questions but your failing to answer these may not do any harm to your selection chances.  But if you fail to answer even simple and introductory questions the chances of rejection are more.  
  
If you don't know the answer for any question, the interviewer may choose another area to test your knowledge depth.  That is why, most of the interviewers ask your favorite subject or language before they start asking questions.   The aim of the interviewer is to check your personality.     
  
**Johari Window**  
  
This following diagram is called Johari Window after two american scientists Joseph Luft and Harry Ingham. This is a very important tool to improve interpersonal relationships.  As interview is an interpersonal situation, Let us see how this frames work helps us  
  
Here there are 4 boxes indicating 4 different situations every interpersonal situation may fall.  There are things which are known to us and interviewer.  This part is called arena and indicated by Box 1.  Most of the things you represent in your resume may fall in this category. Box 2 is called blind spot.  Blind spot is the area where interviewer may know about you but you may not aware of them.  Very interesting. is it not? How come interviewer comes to know about the things which you may not aware? Let us see later.There are some things which you know but the interviewer may not.  This is called Facade (Pronunciation: fasadh).  Facade is the front part of a building which may be decorative but behind it may not be attractive or old.     And the last part is unknown part. Both the parties least interested in it.



Tell me when the mutual dependence and trust is more between two parties?  It is when the arena part is large.  So it is our job to provide valuable insights to the interviewer so that he may judge your personality and have trust in your abilities.  
  
Now the interviewer try to judge our weaknesses which may reduce your work efficiency by asking typical questions.  But he may not provide any feedback how to cover your weaknesses.  A professional may be helpful in plugging those loopholes.   
  
So based on the above analysis, the job seekers may fall into 4 catogories.

[](http://1.bp.blogspot.com/-paYpw8-V3eE/UGNGnJXTG2I/AAAAAAAACHw/rjmDxoRYR5A/s1600/Zohari.png)

Ideal window: Where both parties have mutual trust  
Interviewer: Kept on asking about others but does not commit to where he stands  
Bull in china Shop: Kept on talking about abilities and what he thinks of about others  
Turtle: Don't speak much  
  
In the next lesson we learn how to answer most important interview questions.

### Tell me about yourself?

Why most of the interviews start with this question?  As we have learnt from our previous article, interview is not a question and answer session but an interpersonal situation where the interviewer tries to find the candidates suitability for the required position.  Here the interviewer expects you to interact with him freely towards maximising the arena. (To know more about arena read "What is an interview?").  
  
Feeling nervous for the first time in doing anything new is common.  Especially, if it is the most important situation like interview, it is obvious.  Also most people are attending an interview for the first time in their lives   Interviewer also understands this, and wants to make your nerves calm down before starting to explore your strengths and weaknesses.  With this backdrop, Which question is the best one to be asked so that you feel comfortable and relaxed? It is none other than "Tell me about yourself".   
  
So What we need to cover in this question? How many of you think that the following list of things should be included in your introduction  
1.  Name 2. college 3. Branch 4. Father name 5. Father's occupation 6. Mother's name 7. Mother's occupation 8. Your SSC marks and School name 9. Your Intermediate marks and college name 10. Hobbies and Interests 11. Your aspirations 12. Your co curricular activities  
  
Now think from the interviewer point of view.  He expects your introduction should act as a platform to discuss your abilities and interpersonal skills.  Look at the video below.



Very interesting video, is it not? If you take the girl as the interviewer, and the boy as the candidate, Unless you understand what are the interviewer requirements, what ever you do just in vain.   
  
Now we ask the right question. What the interviewer expects from a prospective candidate? We can get this by observing the job description of the position which you are applying.  
  
For most advertised jobs, the company clearly mentions what they are expecting from the people.  But in case of campus interviews this information is difficult to find. But we got a small excerpt from HP's ad for entry level software engineers.  Observe



Job - Engineering

Primary Location - India

Schedule - Full-time

Job Type - Graduate Job

Shift - Day Job

Job Description

|  |
| --- |
| **Systems/Software Engr I - Graduate Job-1002955**  Description  Entry Level Software Engineering Role :  Designs, develops, troubleshoots and debugs software programs for software enhancements and new products. Develop and validate software products in the domain of manageability, virtualization and cloud solution software. Develop high quality software using the Java language, J2EE frameworks (including EJB and Web container frameworks) and associated build and test tools  for meeting the needs of the products and solutions.  Utilizes professional concepts and theoretical knowledge acquired through specialized training, education or previous experience. Exercises independent judgment within defined parameters. Develops expertise and practical knowledge of applications within business environment. Acts as team member by providing information, analysis and recommendations in support of team efforts.  Job Description :  Codes and programs enhancements, updates, and changes for portions and subsystems of systems software, including managebaility software , utilities, databases and tools  Executes established test plans and protocols for assigned portions of code; identifies, logs, and debugs assigned issues.  Develops understanding of and relationship with internal and outsourced development partners on software systems design and development.  Participates as a member of project team of other software systems engineers and internal and outsourced development partners to develop reliable, cost effective and high quality solutions for low to moderately-complex products.  Qualifications  Education Qualification & Work Experience:  ·         BE/BTech from a Tier 1 Engineering institute  ·         Field of education - Computer Science, Information Science and Technology, Electronics Engineering etc.  ·         Strong academic record (minimum of 70% aggregate score)    Competency Requirements:  ·         Passion and deep technical competency in basic computer science and software engineering principles and processes.  ·         Strong problem solving skills  ·         Competent programming aptitude with excellent computation skills  ·         Self motivated to continuously upgrade one's knowledge, keep abreast of latest developments in the software engineering field and evaluate its application in the business area on a consistent basis.  Exceptional commitment to stay focused in one's pursuit towards excellence with demonstrated results of the same. |

You can see from the above job description, the company is expecting you to be good at java along with good academics.  These qualities will be tested in Technical Interview.  They also specified clear competency requirements.  Now this part comes under HR.  
  
So how to frame answer for this question?  Every employer wants to see some specific qualities in every job aspirant  
  
1.  A proven track record of your achievements be it academics or extracurricular activities.   
2.  Confidence and positive attitude  
3.  Good problem solving skills  
4.  Learning attitude  
5.  Ability to handle pressure  
6.  Team work  
7.  Leadership skills  
8.  Articulation  
9.  Integrity  
10.  Dedication towards to work  
  
So you have to include the elements which add more value to your introduction than including what you did in all you college years.  It doesn't make any impact.  Interviewer thinks like this.  If you performed well in your past academics, you perform well in your future job also. Along with your achievements, your extra curricular activities like participation  in paper presentations, elocution and essay writing competitions communicates your proactive nature as you are managing both your academics and other activities.  Once you will be given a job, not only do you complete the work given, but also take initiatives to learn new things and bring lot of value to your team.   
  
  
The above introduction fits good for studious students,  If you don't have good academics, the case will become tricky.  You will have to start preparing for interview atleast 5 to 6 months before you sit for your first interview.  You have to develop certain competencies which compensates your bad academics.  For example, you start learning C or JAVA and have become proficient, interviewer still prefers your profile.  So for the people who are not good at their acads, they are expected to be good at Arithmetic,  reasoning and English along with good command over one technical subject.  
  
Some companies exempt students who are toppers or who got good percentages in academics.  But always keep in your mind that you get aleast a few number of questions on arithmetic and puzzles in technical interview and HR interview.  So being good at acads does not exempt you to prepare for aptitude.  
  
One last thing, It really helps to take atleast 2 video mock interviews with detailed feedback from professionals.  It helps you a lot.  Because we commit lot of mistakes unknowingly. ( Read about blind spots in "What is an interview'?).

### Why TCS?

We understood that from our first article "What is an interview?", companies are on the constant look out for peoplel who are genuinely interested to work with the company but not just for money.  If you are applying for a company only because it makes you financially strong in the long run, the recruters have a serious doubt on their mind that tomorrow if you are offered a good package you leave the company.  So apart from the money and job security, what really makes you to apply for this position?

The website of the company you are applying helps you a lot. The following excerpt has been taken from *tcs.com*

**WHAT OUR EMPLOYEES SAY:**  
 “Working for TCS is more than a job. Call it an adventure, a thrilling roller coaster ride that combines work and personal life. Since joining 19 months ago, I’ve been able to experience diverse fields and environments, and had the opportunity to take the lead on a number of initiatives. Most importantly, I know that even more challenges await me in my futures roles within the company.” – Alina Buzgar, HR Generalist, Bangalore, India  
  
 “TCS has provided me the opportunity to see the global business environment we operate in with much greater clarity and understanding. It’s an honor to work for a company that balances its passionate drive to compete and win with values and principles committed to the greater good.” – Robert Kane, Director and General Manager of the Northeast Region, New York City, USA    
  
**A CAREER AT TCS OFFERS:**  
  
**Extraordinary opportunities for growth:** We offer positions that allow you to challenge the tried and true, and to collaborate across technologies and continents. New horizons, ongoing education: A wealth of diversity in culture, training, knowledge, and experience gives employees incredible opportunities to learn and expand their horizons.  
**Leading-edge innovation, 24/7:** Innovation isn’t just a buzz word at TCS; it’s one of the pillars on which our entire business operates.  
**A diverse, global peer community:** We are committed to bringing our best people to bear on client projects – regardless of where they may be located. This means that you get to work with people across continents and organizational functions. You can learn more about particular aspects of TCS by selecting from any of the following links.

**TCS Value proposition:**

The TCS employer brand positioning builds on our strengths and communicates TCS as an organization that offers its employees a complete Global IT Career by highlighting the three main value propositions:

* [Global exposure](http://www.careers.tcs.com/CareersDesign/Jsps/WorkingatTCSValue.jsp)
* [Freedom to work across domains](http://www.careers.tcs.com/CareersDesign/Jsps/WorkingatTCSValue.jsp)
* [Work life balance](http://www.careers.tcs.com/CareersDesign/Jsps/WorkingatTCSValue.jsp)

(Click on the above links to know more about the above things)

**Sample Answer:**  
  
Sir, I have seen from the website that TCS provides tremendous growth opportunities for its employees. I think this is the place where I just like to work as I always like to take inititation and try to utilize the opportunites provided to me.  Apart from that, It also gives me a chance to work with diverse work groups and to improve my cross functional experience.  In addition to that, I would like to improve on my education qualifications with the help from TCS ongoing education programs.  That is why, I would like to apply for TCS.

### What is your hobby?

One thing you should strongly keep in your mind is "hobby is not the thing which we do to time pass".  Hobby or interest is where we seek pleasure apart from our profession.  A person who follows a hobby seriously called af·fi·cio·na·do.

If a person is seriously following a hobby is expected to have more command on his hobby.  For example, Suppose you are a die hard fan of Mahesh babu or Akshay kumar.   
  
You are expected to answer a few questions  related to their profession or personal life like Date of birth, Spouse name, their first movie, most successful movie, upcoming movie etc.  These questions may not be answered easily by others who are not following these actors.

So Interviewers check how serious you are by asking a few questions on your hobby.  And you are expected to answer most of these questions.  If not, The interviewer believes that you perform things superficially and don't go into depths. Similarly, If you are given a job, you just perform things just for the job sake, but may not going to show any interest to learn more about it.   
  
So be careful with this question.   
  
If your hobby is book reading, read some serious books.  A few fictions may not suffice.  What books you have to read.  Books written by Dr.Abdul kalam (Wing of fire, Ignited minds), Mr.Nandan Nilekani (Imagining India), Robert covey (7 habits of highly effective people) etc.   
  
Then you can say that J.K.Rowling (Harry potter series), Dan Brown (Angels and Demons, The davinci code, the symbol), John Grisham (The confession, the associate etc.  29 books he has written)  
  
If your hobby is singing, ready to sing a few songs sung by your favorite singer!  
  
If your hobby is playing cricket, be abreast with latest happenings in the cricketing world.  Don't forget to learn about your favorite cricketer

### What are your short term / long term goals?

This question will be asked to check how clear you are about the new job. Also this question helps the interviewer to judge whether your goals are matching with the company requirements or not.  Please remember Goals here means Professional goals not personal goals.  I want to start a orphanage or old age home may be your personal goal and highly appreciable on a personal note but you have to check how your personal goal aligns with company expectations.  
  
A short term goal is a goal which needs to be achieved usually below one year. A long term goal is a goal which needs to be achieved in comparatively long time frames, say, 5 years.  
  
As you know, fixing a goal and sticking to it till achieveing is not so easy.  This demands meticulous planning and unparallelled dedication from you.  So fixing a goal and charting a path to achieve it requires a frame work.   
  
A goal must be SMART

[](http://2.bp.blogspot.com/-KV4qyhci9CY/UGWC4vWxNmI/AAAAAAAACIo/0SbXYCD8CU4/s1600/images.jpg)

S - Specific : What do I want to accomplish?, Why I need to accomplish? Who is involved? What are the requirements? etc questions helps you to be specific about your goal

M - Measurable: I want to become class topper is too vague.  But "I want to improve my aggregate by 1% in the next sem, and 2% in the next sem so that I can reach the top mark of the class" may be a measurable goal.

A - Attainable : We need to think positively but being realistic is important.  For example, I want to become a CEO of TCS is a good goal, but it takes lot of hardwork, dedication, intelligence etc to achieve that goal.

R - Relevant: As far as career goals are concerned, a personal goal may not be relevant here.  
  
T - Time bound : Clear time limits need to be fixed.  
  
So now we can attempt to answer this question based on the above frame work.  
From the TCS website, the career growth of various employees have been given [click here](http://www.careers.tcs.com/CareersDesign/Jsps/WorkingatTCSTestimonial.jsp)  
  
**Sample answer:** My short term goal is to quickly adapt to the job requirements, and to learn the work quickly.  I try to my level best to become a team lead from assistant system engineer in the next 2 years.   
  
My long term goal is to work in diverse industries to gain maximum exposure.  I am also looking forward to having global exposure and cross functional experiences to make myself professional.  I want to become a consultant for IT services in 10 years time frame.