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## Crafting your “Tell Me About Yourself”

Although interviews can be unpredictable, there is a high probability that the first question you receive is the icebreaker question: *can you tell me about yourself?*

A strong answer to *Tell me about yourself* covers these 4 interview topics in 1-1.5 minutes:

- Who you are (one-liner introduction)
- Why you chose to be a \_\_\_\_\_
- What you’re doing now
- How you will add value to this company (align values + add value)

Note: this answer should *always* be tailored to a specific position/team/company.

### Let’s Practice: Tell Me About Yourself

Who is asking you the question, “*can you tell me about yourself?*”

COMPANY	JOB DESCRIPTION (paste below)

Write out your answer for *tell me about yourself* using the following structure:

STRUCTURE	ANSWER (1.5min total)	TIMING BREAKDOWN
<b>Who you are.</b> <a href="#">Review Section 1</a> <i>(First Impressions Matter)</i>		~10sec
<b>Why you chose to be a _____.</b> <a href="#">Review Section 2</a> <i>(The Art of Storytelling)</i>		~10-20sec
<b>What you’re doing now.</b> <a href="#">Review Section 3</a> <i>(How You Add Value, Part I - Past Contributions)</i>		~20-30sec
<b>How you will add value to this company (align values + add value)</b> <a href="#">Review Sections 3 &amp; 4</a> <i>(How You Add Value, Part II - Past Contributions)</i>		~20-30sec

# 01 First Impressions Matter

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To make impactful *and* positive first impressions, it is important to prepare and practice the content you will be sharing -- starting with your introduction.

## Crafting Your One-Liner Introduction

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A successful one-liner introduction is a brief introductory statement that provides the following info:

- What type of engineering work you do (*i.e. full stack, front end, mobile, manager, etc.*)
- What is a driver behind *why* you do the work you do (*i.e. a personal drive for automating manual tasks, improving human/customer/engineer productivity, solving challenging puzzles, providing access to education, creating community, innovation in a specific area, etc.*)

### One-Liner Template

Hi, my name is \_\_\_\_\_. I am a \_\_\_\_\_ and I love \_\_\_\_\_. I am excited to focus on \_\_\_\_\_.

*Example: Hi, my name is Beatrice. I am a web developer and I love telling the story of a company through my web design. I am excited to create clean and engaging web experiences to help businesses launch their web presence.*

Additionally, we have templates *generally* used by individuals who have changed career focuses and want the opportunity to share or address a past focus.

### Alternative One-Liner Template #1

Hi, my name is \_\_\_\_\_. I am a \_\_\_\_\_ with a background in \_\_\_\_\_. I love \_\_\_\_\_ and I am excited to focus on \_\_\_\_\_.

*Example: Hi, my name is Kelly. I am a software engineer with a background in program management. I love data science and am excited to focus on analyzing job search data to help software engineers secure jobs faster.*

### Alternative One-Liner Template #2

Hi, my name is \_\_\_\_\_. I am a \_\_\_\_\_ turned \_\_\_\_\_. I love \_\_\_\_\_ and I am excited to focus on \_\_\_\_\_.

*Example: Hi, my name is David. I am a middle school science teacher turned software engineer. I love creating productivity in people's lives through automating manual tasks. I am excited to combine my background in education with my work as a developer to bring access to technology to underserved communities.*

**Choose one of the above templates and share your one-liner introduction here:**

## 02 The Art of Storytelling

When interviewing, you will be asked questions that are best explained with specific stories about your past experiences. To practice storytelling and to further understand what drives you to do the work that you do, we'd like you to share your story about *why* you chose your current profession (this profession should match the position you are seeking).

Make sure to be specific: [\*stories are up to 22 times more memorable than facts alone.\*](#)

Consider these two statements that could be used as part of your story:

**General Statement:** "I've always enjoyed computers; I grew up playing games on my parent's computer."

**Specific Statement:** "Ever since my 8th birthday when my parents gave me Marble Madness to play on our Apple IIGS, I was hooked on computers."

In the box below, write your story (~20sec to 2min) about why you became a \_\_\_\_\_ (software engineer, mobile developer, front-end engineer, etc.).

**Answer Check:** To understand if you created a story with enough detail, complete an investigation. See if you can answer these questions about your story. If you find gaps, add more details into your story.

<b>Who</b> was involved?	
<b>What</b> happened?	
<b>Where</b> did it take place?	
<b>When</b> did it take place?	
<b>Why</b> did it happen?	
<b>How</b> did it happen?	

## 03 How You Add Value (Part 1) - *Your Past Contributions*

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When answering interview questions, *specific experiences* showcase your competencies and help interviewers understand how you will add value to their company. Let's take a deep dive into a couple projects you want to be sure to talk about in your interviews.

- Your most recent project
- Your favorite project (if your favorite is your most recent, choose your next favorite project)

### The Investigation

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By identifying project details, you create a library of talking points for a variety of interview questions.

#### Your Most Recent Project

Enter your answers in bullet point form.

##### THE SETUP

What was the project?	
Why did you do the project?	
When did you do the project?	
Who did you work with on this project?	
Where did you do this project?	

##### THE ACTION

What steps did you take to complete this project?	
Why did you make the different choices you made?	
What challenges did you overcome during this project?	

##### THE RESULT

What was the <i>positive</i> outcome of this project?	
What <i>quantifiable</i> results did you obtain from this project?	

## Your Favorite Project

Enter your answers in bullet point form.

### THE SETUP

What was the project?	
Why did you do the project?	
When did you do the project?	
Who did you work with on this project?	
Where did you do this project?	

### THE ACTION

What steps did you take to complete this project?	
Why did you make the different choices you made?	
What challenges did you overcome during this project?	

### THE RESULT

What was the <i>positive</i> outcome of this project?	
What <i>quantifiable</i> results did you obtain from this project?	

NOTE: Any project/bullet point listed on your resume is fair game for an interviewer to ask about. We encourage you to extend this practice with all projects on your resume to be as prepared as possible for your interviews.

## 04 How You Add Value (Part 2) - *Aligning Values*

In an interview, we want to showcase what we will be like as an *employee*. To be able to showcase *more* than just qualifications, it is important to understand *why* we do the things we do. Our values are fundamental drivers for our actions.

### Step 1: Identify Your Values

Review this list and **bold** all the values that are core to you. If there are additional values you hold that are not found on this list, feel free to add them.

Accountability	Devoutness	Hard Work	Security
Accuracy	Diligence	Health	Self-actualization
Achievement	Discipline	Helping Society	Self-control
Adventure	Discretion	Honesty	Selflessness
Altruism	Diversity	Honor	Self-reliance
Ambition	Effectiveness	Humility	Sensitivity
Assertiveness	Efficiency	Independence	Serenity
Balance	Elegance	Inner Harmony	Service
Being the best	Empathy	Inquisitiveness	Simplicity
Belonging	Enjoyment	Intelligence	Soundness
Boldness	Enthusiasm	Intuition	Speed
Calmness	Equality	Joy	Spontaneity
Commitment	Excellence	Justice	Stability
Clear-minded	Excitement	Leadership	Strategic
Commitment	Expertise	Legacy	Strength
Community	Exploration	Love	Structure
Compassion	Fairness	Loyalty	Success
Competition	Faith	Making A Difference	Support
Consistency	Family	Mastery	Teamwork
Contentment	Fidelity	Order	Thoughtfulness
Contribution	Fitness	Originality	Timeliness
Control	Fluency	Perfection	Tolerance
Cooperation	Focus	Personal Development	Traditionalism
Correctness	Freedom	Positivity	Trustworthiness
Courtesy	Fun	Practicality	Truth-seeking
Creativity	Generosity	Professionalism	Understanding
Curiosity	Goodness	Quality-Oriented	Uniqueness
Decisiveness	Grace	Reliability	Unity
Democratic	Gratitude	Resourcefulness	Usefulness
Dependability	Growth	Results-Oriented	Vision
Determination	Happiness	Rigor	Vitality

## Step 2: Group and Label Your Values

Now, take the identified values and create groups of similar values.

GROUP 1	GROUP 2	GROUP 3	GROUP 4	GROUP 5

Lastly, **Bold** one word within each grouping above that best represents the label for the entire group. Do not overthink this process. There are no right or wrong answers.

## Step 3: Discover the Values of Your Top 5 Companies

Take a moment to brainstorm 5 companies and write down the company purpose and core values.

COMPANY NAME	PURPOSE	CORE VALUES

Now reflect on the values of these companies and see where there is alignment with your own values.

**Bold** any values that align with your own.

NOTE: your values do not have to match word for word, but can be similar concepts. These values will become a recurring theme in your answers during an interview.