


Username: Pralay Patoria **Book:** Coding Interviews: Questions, Analysis & Solutions. No part of any chapter or book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form by any means without the prior written permission for reprints and excerpts from the publisher of the book or chapter. Redistribution or other use that violates the fair use privilege under U.S. copyright laws (see 17 USC107) or that otherwise violates these Terms of Service is strictly prohibited. Violators will be prosecuted to the full extent of U.S. Federal and Massachusetts laws.

Communication and Learning Skills

Communications Skills

Good communication skills are essential for career success. Engineers have to communicate with developers, testers, and project managers during their daily work, so communication greatly impacts productivity. That is why interviewers like to evaluate candidates' communication skills, which include the following types:

- *Verbal Communication.* If a candidate is able to express his or her project experience and solutions to coding interview problems clearly, confidently, and concisely, he or she demonstrates effective spoken communication skills. Note that communication is not talkativeness with empty words. Candidates should be honest and sincere during interviews.
- *Nonverbal Communication.* Body language means a lot during communications. It is a good practice for a candidate to face his or her interviewer with open, attentive, upright posture and maintain good eye contact (look at the interviewer a lot, but don't stare all the time), smile, and nod from time to time.
- *Listening and asking questions actively.* When candidates are asked a question, they should reflect on the question and state in their own words what they understand the question to be. Sometimes interviewers do not provide enough information about their questions, and they wait for candidates to ask for more clarification. The process of asking for clarification and eliminating misunderstanding is a good indicator of a candidate's communication skills.

 **Tip** An interview is a bidirectional communication. Interviewers ask candidates questions and candidates can also ask interviewers questions. The ability to ask questions to get more information and eliminate misunderstanding is a demonstration of effective communication skills.

Learning Skills

Technology has been changing at a fast pace for decades. Software engineers have to have strong learning skills or they will not be able to keep up with technology progress. Outstanding engineers will only stay sharp if they have strong learning ability and aspirations to continuously learn about and evaluate new technologies. Therefore, interviewers in IT companies pay a lot of attention to candidates' learning abilities.

There are two strategies available for interviewers to examine candidates' learning skills. The first one is to ask candidates what books they have recently read or what they learned from their most recent project. If an engineer is eager to learn new things at all times, he or she has learning skills that might be an advantage over other candidates, that is, from the interviewer's perspective.

The other strategy is to ask questions about some new concepts and examine whether a candidate can absorb them in a short period of time. There are many new concepts about coding interview questions covered in this book, such as rotation of arrays, mirrored images of a binary trees, ugly numbers, and reversed pairs in an array. A candidate demonstrates his or her learning skills if he can master new concepts in a few minutes and then solve the problems.