

Decoding the Front-end Interview Process

How To Have A Successful Front-end Developer Interview



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As a front-end developer, it's inevitable that you will encounter a front-end technical interview (or ten). Unfortunately the process for a front-end development interview can be a bit unclear, and will vary from company to company.

Having a solid understanding of the process will help you feel more

comfortable in your interviews. Interviewing is a skill that takes practice, but having insight into the process can calm your nerves.

So let's take a look at the front-end development interview process and learn some tips to have successful interviews.

the

PROCESS

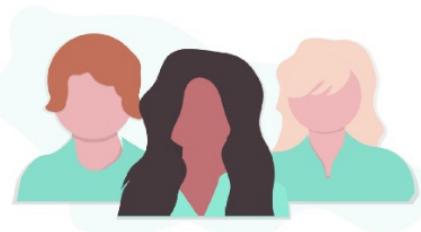
I've had many front-end job interviews. In fact, interviewing is a skill that most people take for-granted, and front-end development interviews are some of the most difficult interviews out there.

They require you to conceptually understand the languages you work with (HTML, CSS, JavaScript), code on-the-spot (eek), leverage sorting and searching algorithms from Computer Science (bubble sort, merge sort, binary search, etc.), and have understanding of many related technologies and areas such as HTTPS, REST, and Software Development Methodologies like Agile.

In my experience, while interviewing for jobs all over the United States, as well as Germany, this is the general interview process for most companies.

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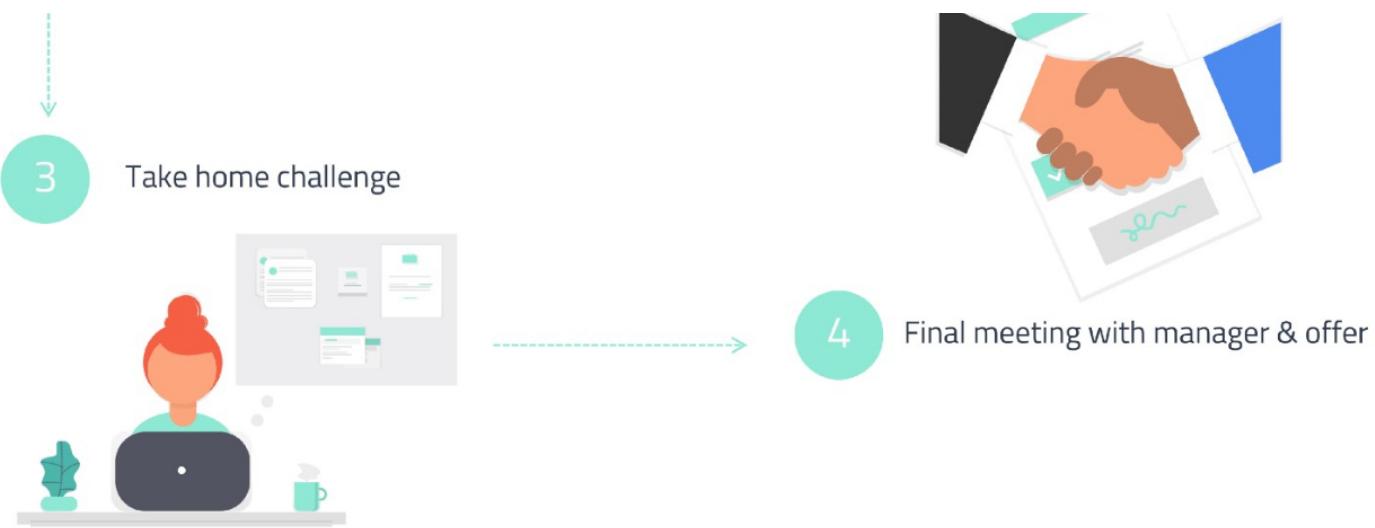
Cultural interview



2

Coding interview





So let's break down the different components of a front-end development interview.

cultural interview

The cultural interview is often candidate's first impression within a company, so don't take these interviews lightly. Although typically cultural interviews aren't as terrifying as coding interviews, interviewers can make or break your application.

Most likely this interview will be run by a recruiter. They may, or may not, have development experience, but they should be able to have an intelligent conversation about front-end technologies.

It's important to truly impress your recruiter because their opinion could have massive impact on your application. If you make it to the second or third round of interviews, and the company is "on-the-fence" about pushing you through, the recruiter might be your biggest advocate. So be sure to impress.

Typically cultural interviews start with "So tell me about yourself." It's imperative to have a well thought out response to this question.

For example, let's examine two responses:



Max

"Well I'm a front-end developer and I work mostly with React. I have a Computer Science degree from Siena College in Albany, and.. yeah... what else do you want to know?"



Paige

"I am a front-end developer currently working for LogMeIn in Karlsruhe, Germany. I found my passion in Computer Science and Business during my second semester of undergraduate at Siena College. I studied abroad at City University in London and got to experience computing from a different culture. After I graduated I accepted a job offer down in Austin, Texas at IBM where I got to work on fun projects like Quantum Computing. Three years later I packed up and moved to Germany and now work for LogMeIn programming primarily in JavaScript using React and Redux. In my spare time I like to read, blog, and play with my cats."

You can see that Max was clearly unprepared for this question and doesn't seem like the type of person who, when put on the spot, can eloquently handle the situation.

With Paige, however, she is much more well-spoken. Not only was she able to succinctly sum up her experience, but her responses elicited emotion and pride in regards to her previous roles. Plus, throwing in a line or two about her hobbies gives insight into the type of person she is.

Tips for the cultural interview:

- Have a short story prepared to illustrate who you are
- Have 1–2 stories which demonstrate your greatest achievement and a difficult problem you solved
- Be honest about your skillset. You don't want to be caught in an awkward position when asked about the details of Redux if you only threw that buzzword in to make it to the next round of interviews.
- Don't bash your current, or past, employers. When you say negative things about your previous companies, it shows a lack of respect. Future

employers need to know that you'll be loyal to them, even once your employment has come to an end.

- Have questions prepared for your interviewer which show insight into the company and role to which you applied. Towards the end of the interview, your interviewer should ask if you have any questions for them. Have two insightful questions. A good format would be: "I saw your company just did X... how will this impact Y?" This shows that you researched the company and keep up-to-date in the tech industry. You can also ask what the recruiter's favorite thing about working for the company is. You might be surprised!
- Take notes. You'll probably have a lot of interviews, and it's important to keep them all straight!
- Don't ask about minute specifics of salary or benefits. These details can be sorted out once you have an offer letter. But inquiring about the perks of a job too quickly can portray you as someone who's only there for the money.
- Be yourself. This interview is a two-way street. You want to make sure the company culture harmonizes with your personality. So don't put on an act; be yourself.

. . .

coding interview

Ahh the dreaded coding interview. Personally, this was always the most nerve-wracking part of the process.

I don't do well when I'm put on the spot. If you ask me to pseudo code merge sort, there's a good chance I'll stare at you as if you just spoke Pig Latin. However, ask me to build you a website and I'll kick-ass.

Lucky for you, there are a TON of online resources for "[Cracking the Coding Interview](#)." Yet, it's important not just to memorize the answers, but understand WHY the answers are correct.

I'm not going to give you a list of example coding questions you might receive; I'll link a few of my favorite resources down below for you to check out.

But let's quickly take a look at the top subject areas you should be familiar

...
1

This list is a living document, so if I missed anything feel free to leave a comment!

HTML & CSS

- Semantic HTML
- CSS Pre-Processors
- CSS Specificity
- Resetting & Normalizing CSS
- CSS Architecture (BEM)
- Floats
- Flexbox & CSS Grid
- SVGs
- Media Queries
- CSS Display Property
- CSS Position Property
- CSS Frameworks (Bootstrap)
- CSS Animations
- Pseudo Classes
- Sprites

Data Structures & Algorithms

- Linked Lists
- Hashtables
- Stacks
- Queues
- Trees
- Graphs
- Arrays
- Bubble Sort
- Merge Sort
- Binary Search
- Selection Sort
- Quick Sort
- Insertion Sort

JavaScript

- 'this'
- Prototypal Inheritance
- IIFE
- Closure
- Null vs. Undefined
- Loop vs. Map
- .call & .apply
- Hoisting
- Event Delegation
- Attributes vs. Properties
- Ternary Operators
- Promises vs. Callbacks
- Single Page Applications
- JS Frameworks
- Higher-Order Functions
- `==` vs. `===`
- Mutable vs. Immutable Objects
- Scope

Front-end Topics

- Performance
- Unit Testing
- E2E Testing
- Web Accessibility
- CORS
- SEO
- REST
- APIs
- HTTP/HTTPS
- GitHub
- Task Runners
- Browser APIs

I know it's a lot to master, however if you practice a little every day, you'll work your way there!

There are several websites which can help you prepare for your coding interviews. I'll list my favorites in the resources down below!

Tips For The Coding Interview:

- Think out loud. It's important for the interviewer to hear your thought process!
- If you're unclear about one of the directions, ask. Sometimes interviewers will even give you a hint.
- Fail fast and often. Always try your ideas, and when they don't work, learn from them and iterate.

- If you've received an interview question before, and know the solution, you should let your interviewer know. If you know the solution step-by-step the interviewer will be able to tell you looked up the answer (or previously figured it out). Honesty is always the best policy.
 - If you have a solution, try to improve the performance or run-time. Optimization is key.
 - If you don't know the answer, it's okay. I would often admit: "To be honest, I'm not sure, but if I had to make an educated guess..." I've seen candidates fully bullshit their way through a question, and pretend it's right as rain. In my opinion it's better to admit when you don't know, but give an educated guess.
- . . .

take home challenge

Some jobs may not require you to complete a take home challenge. But if they do, it's your chance to showcase your awesome development skills without the pressure of being watched.

The type of take home challenge may vary. You might get a simple "Create a to-do list application" prompt. This is a great challenge because it allows you to use a JS framework, if you so choose, but can also be done with vanilla JS. Plus, it's not too time consuming to complete.

You might get a link to a General Assembly challenge that you have to complete online. These are occasionally timed, but try not to let that freak you out.

Or, you may get asked to recreate a piece of the company's application.

Whatever the challenge is, do your best and write clean code. Here's the process I usually follow for take home challenges.

1

List out project requirements

2

Set up version control

3 Decide on a tech stack

4 Clean up your code

5 Deliver



Questions To Ask Yourself Before Submission:

- Did I meet all of the project requirements?
- Is my solution performant?
- Is my solution responsive/mobile friendly?
- Is my solution accessible?
- Is my solution appealing to look at?
- Is my code clean and efficient?
- Am I proud of this solution?

If the answer to any of these is no, you might want to go back and re-work a few things.

Tips For The Take Home Challenge:

- Don't spend more than a day on it. If you're spending several days on it, most likely you should go back and work on some of your technical skills.
- It's okay to pull yourself out of the candidate pool. I have had interviews in the past where I've had to email the recruiter and tell them that my skills weren't where they needed to be. This shows them a level of self-awareness. I have even had recruiters come back to me several times to see if I was still interested in an interview. It's okay to admit when you have areas to improve upon. Plus, you don't want to stress yourself out with a challenge that is too difficult, because when you get a job offer, chances are the job will stress you out just as much.
- Be clear about the project requirements. Do they want you to use a JS framework? Can you use a CSS framework to save time on style?
- If you need additional time, just ask. Recruiters know that you're busy, and

as such life can get in the way of an interview. So instead of half-assing your take home challenge, email the interviewer and let them know that this is extremely important to you, and you want to devote a proper amount of time to completing it. Most companies would prefer you spend a few more days on an assessment than sacrifice the quality.

final meeting & offer

If you've made it this far in the process, CONGRATULATIONS!!!



You are a badass, and this company knows it! Here are a few things to keep in mind if you receive an offer:

- Ask how long you can think about it. Most managers will give you around a week to give an answer.
- It's okay to say no. If you don't think this job will make you happy, then don't take it!
- You can ask for more money, if it's appropriate to the average salary for your job role and location.
- Ask if relocation assistance is available. If you're moving across the country (or world, like I did!), lack of financial assistance may be a dealbreaker.

final

THOUGHTS

You are a superstar and you will have to trudge through some painful interviews to find the job of your dreams!

“You'll have to kiss a lot of frogs before you find your prince.”

All great things in life take time. Do not get discouraged and do not give up. Remember that the industry leaders also had to go through this same process. Everyone has to start somewhere.



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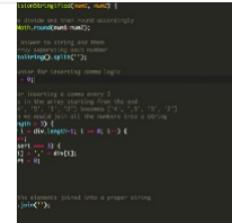
RESOURCES

Coding Practice

Coderbyte | The #1 Website for Coding Challenges

Coderbyte is a web application that helps you practice your programming skills, prepare for coding bootcamps, and...

coderbyte.com



HackerRank

Join over 2 million developers in solving code challenges on HackerRank, one of the best ways to prepare for...

www.hackerrank.com



Coding Interview Questions

h5bp/Front-end-Developer-Interview-Questions

Front-end-Developer-Interview-Questions - A list of helpful front-end related questions you can use to interview...

[github.com](https://github.com/h5bp/Front-end-Developer-Interview-Questions)



Front-End interview questions

Front-end Developer Handbook is a useful resource for understanding the entire scope of the front-end development...

frontendmasters.com



Clearing your Front End Job Interview—JavaScript

Unlike typical software engineer job interviews, front end job interviews have less emphasis on algorithms and have...

codeburst.io



Emma Wedekind is a Front-end Software Engineer at LogMeIn in Karlsruhe, Germany. She enjoys blogging, long walks on the beach and cats. Also pizza. Mmmm pizza.

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Interview

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3K claps



10



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Emma Wedekind

Software Engineer @
LogMeIn by day, cat Mom
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Responses



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