Interview Framework

1 Tell me about yourself.

Tip: Keep it structured: Introduction \rightarrow Experience \rightarrow Skills \rightarrow Current Situation \rightarrow Future Goals

Answer:

"I'm Praveen Kumar, a senior software engineer with expertise in PHP, hands-on experience in Node.js, and intermediate skills in Python. I have led teams as a Senior Project Lead, handling both development and project management. Currently, I'm looking for a role where I can contribute my PHP expertise while expanding my skills in backend technologies. My strengths include problem-solving, leadership, and efficient coding practices."

2 Why do you want to join HCL?



Tip: Show knowledge of the company & how you fit.

Answer:

"HCL is known for its strong technical expertise and innovation in IT services. I admire its focus on employee growth and cutting-edge projects. Given my experience in PHP and backend development, I see HCL as a great place to apply my skills and grow in a challenging environment."

3 What are your strengths?



Tip: Mention relevant strengths with examples.

Answer:

"I'm strong in backend development, problem-solving, and leading projects efficiently. For example, in my last role, I optimized a PHP-based system that reduced load time by 30%. I also enjoy mentoring junior developers and streamlining workflows."

<u>4</u>|What are your weaknesses?



Tip: Choose a minor weakness & show improvement.

Answer:

"I used to struggle with multitasking multiple projects, but I've improved by using better time management strategies and prioritization techniques."

5 Where do you see yourself in 5 years?



Tip: Show ambition & alignment with the company.

Answer:

"In five years, I see myself as a senior backend architect, leading high-impact projects and contributing to innovation in backend technologies. I also aim to deepen my expertise in cloud-based solutions and Al-driven automation."

1 Time Management Strategies

The Pomodoro Technique

- Work in 25-minute focused sessions, then take a 5-minute break.
- After four sessions, take a longer break (15–30 mins).
- Helps maintain productivity without burnout.

Time Blocking

- Allocate specific time slots for different tasks.
- Example: 9 AM-11 AM: Coding, 11 AM-12 PM: Meetings, 2 PM-4 PM: Debugging.
- Prevents distractions and keeps you focused.

The 2-Minute Rule

- If a task takes less than 2 minutes, do it immediately instead of postponing.
- Helps clear small tasks quickly.

Batch Processing

- Group similar tasks together (e.g., responding to emails at a fixed time).
- Reduces context switching and saves time.

Set Deadlines for Yourself

- Even if there's no external deadline, set personal deadlines to stay on track.
- Use a timer or calendar reminders.

2 Prioritization Techniques

Eisenhower Matrix (Urgent vs. Important)

Sort tasks into four categories:

- 1. **Urgent & Important** Do immediately
- 2. Important but Not Urgent Schedule it
- 3. **Urgent but Not Important** Delegate it
- 4. Neither Urgent nor Important Eliminate it

№ 80/20 Rule (Pareto Principle)

- Focus on 20% of tasks that yield 80% of the results.
- Example: If debugging takes up most of your time, improve logging to reduce future issues.

How You Can Apply This in Your Work

- 1. **Use Time Blocking** to set fixed hours for coding, meetings, and debugging.
- 2. **Prioritize using Eisenhower Matrix** to avoid unnecessary work.
- 3. Use the Pomodoro Technique to avoid burnout while coding.
- 4. Batch tasks like email responses & code reviews to minimize distractions.

1 HR Says: "Your expected CTC is too high compared to your current CTC."

Your Response:

"I understand that this is a significant jump, but my expectation is based on my skills, experience, and current market trends. Considering my expertise in PHP, Node.js, Python, and my leadership role, I believe this is a fair compensation."

Additional Argument:

"Many companies are offering competitive salaries for similar roles, and I want to ensure I am fairly compensated based on my value."

2 HR Says: "We have a budget constraint."

Your Response:

"I understand budget limitations, but I would like to know if there is flexibility. Given my expertise and the value I bring, I believe an investment in the right candidate will yield long-term benefits for the company."

Alternative Approach:

"If immediate budget constraints exist, can we discuss performance-based increments within the first 6-12 months?"

3 HR Says: "We offer good learning opportunities, so salary shouldn't be the main factor."

Your Response:

"I appreciate the learning opportunities, but I am also looking for a role that recognizes my skills and contributions financially. A competitive salary ensures mutual commitment and motivation to deliver high-quality work."

4 HR Says: "Your last drawn salary doesn't justify a 140% hike."

Your Response:

"Salaries should reflect skills and market value rather than just past pay. Given my technical expertise, project leadership, and experience, my expectation is in line with industry standards."

Additional Argument:

"My compensation should be based on the responsibilities I will take up in this new role, not just my previous salary."

5 HR Says: "Can you lower your expectation a bit?"

Your Response:

"I am open to discussion, but I want to ensure the offer aligns with my skills and market standards. Could you share the best package you can offer?"

Pro Tip:

If they still push for a lower number, **ask for additional benefits** like bonuses, stock options, remote work, or faster appraisals instead of reducing the salary expectation.

Final Negotiation Tip

If HR still offers less than ₹20 LPA, you can say:

"I appreciate the offer, but I have received/expect competitive offers from other companies. If there is room for reconsideration, I would love to be a part of your team."

This puts pressure on them without being aggressive.

If HR asks, "How do you update yourself about the latest technologies and frameworks?", you can give a structured answer like this:

"I stay updated through online courses, tech blogs, GitHub, developer forums, hands-on projects, and industry events. I also engage in discussions with peers to learn practical implementations of new technologies."

1 Greeting & Introduction

- 👋 "Good morning, [HR's Name]. It's great to connect with you. Hope you're doing well."
- If it's a video call, make sure to have a friendly smile and good posture.

2 Confirming the Purpose of the Call

"I understand this is the first-level discussion for the PHP role. I'm excited to learn more about the opportunity and also share my experience with you."

📌 This shows you're prepared and aligned with the agenda.

3 Letting HR Take the Lead

"How would you like to begin?"

rhis gives them control while keeping you engaged.



Alternative if HR Asks You to Introduce Yourself First:

"I'm Praveen Kumar, a senior software engineer with expertise in PHP, hands-on experience in Node.js, and intermediate skills in Python. I have led teams as a Senior Project Lead, handling both development and project management. Currently, I'm looking for a role where I can contribute my PHP expertise while expanding my skills in backend technologies. My strengths include problem-solving, leadership, and efficient coding practices."