

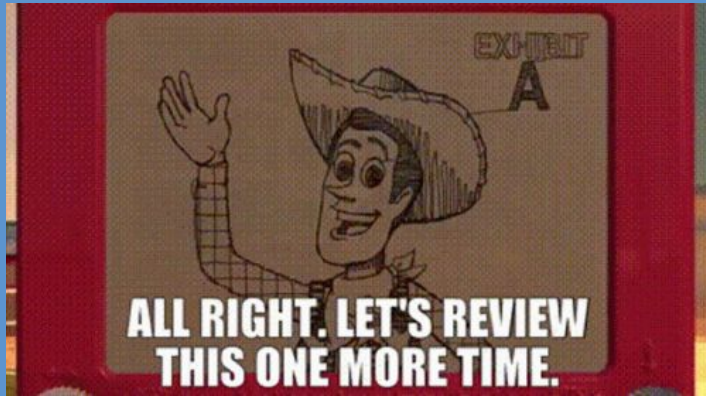


Liftoff Class 7

Interview Prep Part 2



Recap



1. Common Types of Interviews
2. How to Prep for an Interview
3. Interview Attire
4. Researching the Company



Today's Agenda



1. General Interview Behavior
2. Answering Questions
3. Asking Questions
4. Example Questions
5. Practice



General Interview Behavior



The Interview: Getting Started



- Be yourself
- Shake hands: Use a firm and confident handshake
- Remember that the interview starts prior to the first question being asked

Body Language



- Maintain comfortable eye contact
- An occasional smile shows that you are enjoying the conversation
- Sit up straight with your shoulders back and feet planted on the ground
- Avoid looking too relaxed
- If you fidget, try keeping your hands folded or be discreet with your fidget



Focus

- Focus on the question asked and answer it directly
- It is okay to ask the interviewer
 - To repeat the question
 - If you can repeat the question back to them
 - If you have answered their question
- Make sure your answers have a beginning, middle, and end that includes a tangible and positive result

Credibility

Never misrepresent anything about yourself:

- Do not indicate you are experienced using a language or skill if you are not
- Instead, demonstrate a willingness to learn
- Avoid hedging language (sort of, something like, etc.)



Answering Questions



Answer with the STAR Method

The **STAR method** should be used to answer any kind of questions where you need to tell a story or provide a real-life example of how you handled a situation. Use this as frequently as possible.

- Tell me about a time when...
- What do you do when...
- Have you ever...
- Give me an example of...
- Describe a situation...



S

Situation



Set the scene and give the necessary details

T

Task



Describe your role

A

Action



Explain exactly what steps you took to address it

R

Result



Share what outcomes your actions achieved

**Tell me about a time
you overcame a
difficult obstacle.**



S

Situation

As a cashier, the lines were very long and customers were losing patience

T

Task

Had been working for 2 hours, and there was a rush because it was a busy time of year; needed to de-escalate and get customers through quickly

A

Action

Called for back-up cashiers, shortened script for customer service, offered a promotional coupon

R

Result

2 staff members assisted, decreased lines to no-wait-times in 15 minutes, increased customer satisfaction; would apply this thinking in any high-pressure environment

**Tell me about a
conflict you
experienced.**



S

Situation

As a restaurant server, a customer ordered food ahead of time, but when they arrived and checked their food it was incorrect

T

Task

The customer was upset and raised their voice. They were on a time crunch and wanted the problem solved immediately.

A

Action

Thanked them for their patience and offered a free soft drink before bringing the bag back to the kitchen. One of the items had been swapped, so worked with the kitchen staff to quickly rectify.

R

Result

The customer was impressed with the quick turnaround. Following the incident, discovered that the phrasing for the order was confusing, so changed to prevent repeat problems.

What Not to Say



Instead of:

Overly personal information:

“I’m really into knitting”

“My husband and I...

“I grew up in Maryland Heights”

Try:

Focus on position fit, career goals, and how you will excel at the job.

“I organize meetups for a knitting group. Through this I’ve learned a lot about coordinating schedules and creating a welcoming environment.”

Avoid marital status, address, etc. to limit bias and stay focused on the interview question topics.



Instead Of:

Negativity about other people or workplaces

“We were working on the project and they were doing it wrong.”

“I’m leaving my job because my boss is unsupportive.”

“I want a job in tech because being a ____ means working with a lot of difficult people.”

Try:

Be neutral or positive wherever possible.

“We had a difference in approach while working on a project.”

“I am seeking more mentorship and growth opportunities in my next role.”

“I am interested in a role in technology because of the opportunity to build practical skills in a collaborative environment.”



Instead of:

Lack of experience

Try

"While most of my experience is in customer service, my manager in my last position asked me to act as a retention specialist. I assisted customers with critical problems so they would not close their account and I was able to engage high level problem solving. I am excited to apply this professional experience to debugging and engaging in technical problem solving."



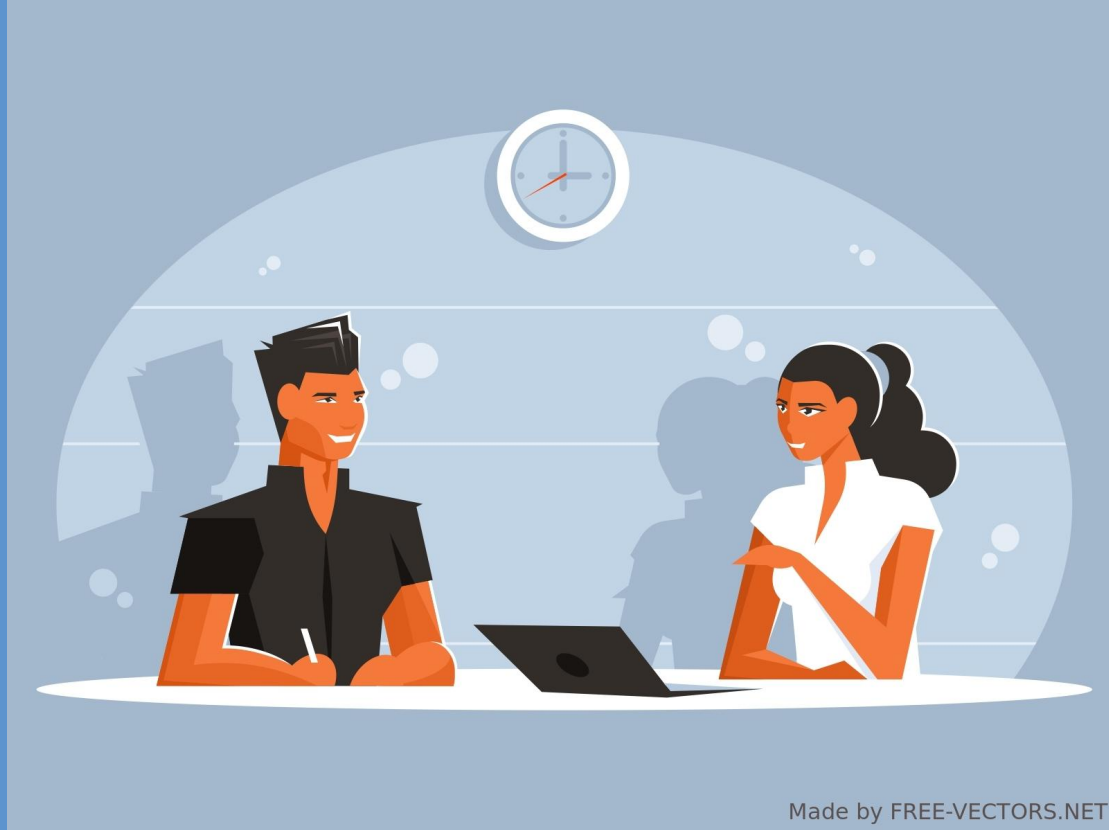
“I don’t know.”

Saying “I don’t know” is okay, just don’t stop there!

Stay positive:

- Repeat the question to make sure you heard it correctly.
- Ask the interviewer to rephrase the question.
- Ask for what you need: a pen and paper, a glass of water, or a minute to think.
- Respond with “That is a great question. I am not sure, *but*, if faced with this in the job, these are the steps I would take to find an answer.”
- Respond with “I haven’t encountered this exactly before, is it related to ____?”
(This may help contextualize enough for you to give a fuller answer.)

Interview Questions



Behavioral Questions

- Tell me about yourself
- Tell me about a time you had a conflict with a coworker
- What is your greatest weakness?
- What is a challenge you've faced and how did you overcome it?
- How have your previous experiences prepared you for a career in tech?

What is your greatest weakness?



- Consider a trait, skill, or knowledge gap that has caused you difficulty professionally
- Have an example ready of how you have overcome it
- Talk about how you are continuing to address this
- Answers to avoid
 - Care too much
 - Overwork myself
 - I have many
 - I am very new to tech

What is a challenge you faced and how did you overcome it?

- Pick a scenario within the last few years
- Be sure it is a challenge you personally overcame without reporting it up
- Practice the response so you give enough but not too much context
- Highlight using multiple strategies if possible
- Keep it professional/use a class example

Technical Questions

- Tell me about your project
- What problem are you trying to solve?
- What is the most interesting or unique thing about your project?
- Why did you use this tech stack to build your project?
- When you faced a blocker during development, what steps did you take to overcome it?
- What would you build next within your project?
- What is the difference between Get and Post in HTTP?
- How have you used a relational database before?
- What is the purpose of the constructor method in Javascript and how have you used it?
- Please explain the difference between a while loop and a for loop.

Tell me about your project.

- Give a brief synopsis of what the project does
- State the technologies used (tech stack)
- Briefly highlight the features you built
- Talk about what you would like to add next
- Be sure to talk about your teammates in a positive light

Why did you use this tech stack to build your project?

- Talk about why each component was the best choice for this project
- Avoid “because we learned it in class”
 - Stating that you focused on using technology common to all group members is ok as a starting point
 - If you choose this, talk about the tight timeline, and how you prioritized things
 - Still share why this specific set was the right choice

**Please explain
the difference
between a
while loop
and a for loop.**

- Explain a while loop
- Explain a for loop
- Highlight the difference
- Talk about how you would use them when building a project for different purposes

Questions to Ask



“Do you have any questions?”



At the end of the interview, this is your chance to express your interest and motivation.

The questions you ask reveal your concerns, values, and priorities.

No questions indicate:

1. Low engagement
2. Lack of focus or drive
3. Fear of looking unintelligent
4. The belief that you already know all there is to know
5. You are in a rush

Why You Should Ask Questions

1. Demonstrate your interest
2. Show that you think critically and make informed decisions
3. Learn more about the role
4. Learn more about the workplace culture
5. Get a sense of what the priorities are
6. You are interviewing them too!



Questions That Will Make You Stand Out

- What new challenges/opportunities is your company facing over the next year? How do these challenges/opportunities influence this role?
- What three things would you improve at this company?
- What does success look like in this position?
- What do you enjoy about your job? What would you change if you could?
- (Ask a question specific to an initiative the department is running or a responsibility of the role you are applying for)

Be prepared to ask at least three questions and have more ready in case there is time.

Questions to Determine Value Alignment

- What about company culture has empowered you to do your best work?
- What specific initiatives has the company launched to improve diversity and inclusion?
- What common attributes have you found among people who join and are successful, versus those who are not?
- In what ways have you seen entry-level professionals at this organization be a catalyst for a new initiative or process?
- What growth has this organization had in the last X years? (dependent on audience)

Practicing for Your Interview

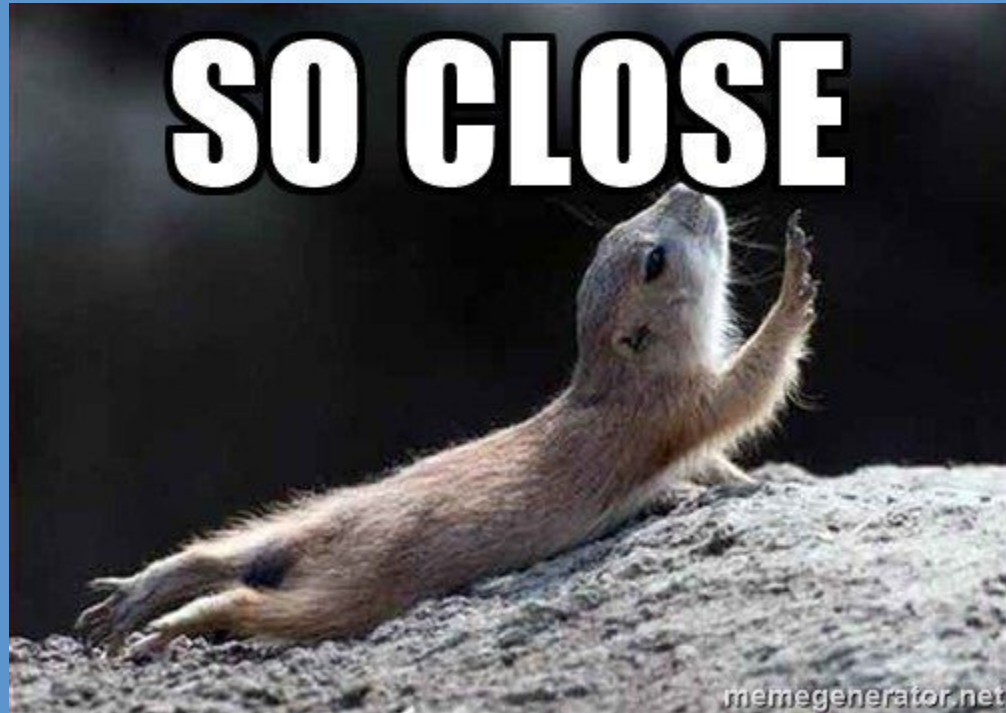


Practicing for Your Interview

1. Record yourself and/or look in the mirror as you practice
2. Jot down notes for how to answer common interview questions
3. Get an interview buddy to ask you questions
4. Be confident when answering
5. Do not undersell yourself



Closing Info



Interview Day

- No traditional lecture, but still log in to zoom at 5:30 for an info session with Lexi
- Interviews will start at 6, 6:30, 7:15, 7:45
- We will post groups of names prior to start times
- You'll join the zoom link and we will place you in a breakout with a volunteer interviewer



Interview Day

- You will get brief immediate feedback
- You will not receive your score until January
- If you score less than a 3, you will try again on Interview Day 2
- If you score less than a 4 and are aiming for the apprenticeship program, you may try again on Interview Day 2
 - We will prioritize scheduling folks who score less than a 3 based on volunteer availability
 - Additional retry opportunities will be available on a case-by-case basis throughout January
- Finalized Scores
 - For graduation: February 1
 - For apprenticeship pool: March 5



In-Class Activity

- Pair up with someone in your TA group
- Conduct mini-interviews with questions off the interview guide
- Provide feedback before swapping
- No submission needed



Reminder!

Project Checkpoint is 12/18

Interview Day is 12/21



launch  _code

Questions?

- Post general questions in Slack channel, tagging me, Colin, and Lexi
- Tag me in a post in your group channels with your video chat prior to 7pm if your group wants me to jump in to your chat for a minute