

Preparing for a Job Interview



...in English!

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Mock Interview in English
to prepare for the
real thing!

Definition

A mock interview is a simulation of a job interview used to coach job applicants for an actual employment interview.

Purpose

1. Predict interview questions
2. Prepare information to include in the answer
3. Practice answers to communicate effectively in English by exploring grammar patterns and structures, appropriate terminology and pronunciation
4. Polish up on interview etiquette

The 4Ps to Empowerment!

“Acts” of an Interview

Act I: The Entrance

Act II: The Performance

Act III: The Exit

Act I: The Entrance

The Art of Meeting and Greeting

I: Please, come in and take a seat.

C: Thank you, Sir/Madam.

I: Hello. What is your name?

C: Good morning, Mr/Mrs/Ms/Professor Smith.

My name is John Doe. (NB: first name first, last name last!) It's a pleasure/ Nice/Pleased to meet you.

I: How do you do?

C: How do you do. My name is....

I: Hello. Nice to meet you, too. Thank you for coming.

C: Thank you for having me.

I: How are you, today?

C: I'm very well, thank you. And you?

I: Fine, thanks. Would you like a cup of coffee or something to drink before we begin?

C: No, thank you all the same. I'm fine.

I: Ok, then. Let's get started.

Act II: The Performance

Core of the Interview

Question Categories

A. Persona (questions 1-4)

B. Qualifications, Work experience
and Career goals (5-9)

A. Questions about your persona

1. Questions about you
2. Question about your strengths
3. Questions about your weaknesses
4. Questions about hobbies/interests

1. Questions about you

Sample questions:

- Tell us something about yourself.
- How would you describe yourself?
- Can you talk to us about yourself?

Sample answer:

My name is Jane Doe. I come from Mexico, but I live/am currently living in Italy.

I have conferred a BSc in Geology and hold an MSc degree in Physics. I am currently working towards a PhD in Geophysics. (I graduated in Geology from the University of Bari, in 2010)

My qualifications also include knowledge of petrol research and 3 years' experience in geological surveying.

I am single/married//separated/ divorced. I have one/two/three.... children.

Useful Grammar:

- **Present Simple** to express permanent situations, habits, routines, facts
- **Present Continuous** to express temporary situations, actions in course
- **Present Perfect Simple/Continuous** to express:
 - general experiences in the past without detailing when and where
 - experiences which began in the past, but are still in course (unfinished actions)
- **Past Simple** to describe finished actions in the past at a given, specific, or implied moment and place.

2.Question about your strengths

Sample questions:

- What are/would you consider to be your greatest strengths?
- What would you say your strongest assets are?
- What are your most positive aspects?

Include 3-4 positive character traits:

adaptable	trustworthy
flexible	honest
hard-working	persistent
reliable	determined
friendly	tolerant
loyal	open-minded

Include 3-4 proficiency traits:

achiever initiator mediator quick-learner Leader efficient	expert detail-oriented team-player problem-solver competent multi-tasker
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Sample answers:

I would say I am an **honest, reliable, hard-working** person. I also possess a **positive outlook** towards my profession and life in general. People say I am **friendly** and **good at giving advice**.

I have very good **leadership qualities, as well as organizational and time management skills**, but my greatest strengths are my **flexibility and ability to effectively handle multiple projects and meet deadlines**.

Useful patterns:

- I am...
- I have/possess
- My greatest strengths are/include...
- I would (I'd) say I am....
- I would (I'd) define/describe/depict myself as....
- I consider myself to be....
- I think/believe I am...
- People say I am....

Useful Grammar:

- I am **honest**. (adjective)
- I am a good **listener**. (noun)
- I have/possess good **managerial skills**. (noun)
- I am good at **multitasking**. (-ing form noun)
- I know how/am able to **adapt** to new work situations. (verb)

Verbs:

- be, have, possess, manage, perform, be good at, can+ base verb, be able to, know how to...
- –ed/past participle form used as adjective:
I am **results-oriented/focused/organised**.
- -ing form used as adjective:
I am **easy-going and hard-working**.
- -ing form used as noun:
Developing new work strategies is one of my strongest abilities.

Nouns to define your traits:

I'm a good **multi-tasker**.

Adjectives to express traits:

Colleagues say I am **friendly** and **competent**.

Adverbs to modify degree:

- For gradables: very, quite, rather, really, exceptionally, particularly

I can work **exceptionally** well under pressure.

- For ungradables: really, absolutely

My managerial skills are **really** amazing.

3. Questions about your weaknesses

Sample questions:

- What are your greatest/strongest weaknesses?
- Which aspects or areas of yourself are you improving or would like to improve?

Sample answers:

I am always working on **improving my communications skills** to be a **more effective presenter**. I recently joined Toastmasters which I find very helpful.

Sometimes, I have **trouble delegating duties** to others. I've since **taken courses** in **time management** and **learned more effective delegation techniques**.

Useful Grammar

Linking words for contrasting:

- but, however, while, whereas, nevertheless

I am a little shy, but I am taking a recital course to improve my confidence.

4. Questions about hobbies/interests

Sample questions:

- What are your hobbies/interests?
- Do you practice any sports?
- What do you do your free/leisure time?
- Do you belong to any clubs or associations?
- Do you do any volunteer work?

Sample answer:

Well, I really enjoy **travelling** because it gives me an opportunity to appreciate new cultures. In the evenings, I unwind by **playing the piano**.

I am also keen on **speed-walking** and **playing volleyball** with friends.

I'm a **member** of the Rotary Club International where I put forth my professional aptitudes to serve others.

At weekends, I **volunteer** with the Autism Society where I spend time with children.

Useful Grammar:

Verbs to express:

- interests: like, love, enjoy, be fond of, be passionate about, be keen on, be interested in, be active in
- sports: practice/do/play
- musical instruments: play

Nouns to express activities:

- -ing form: swimming, cycling, cooking...

B. Questions about qualifications, work experience and career goals

5. Questions about the job you are applying for

6. Question about hiring you

7. Question about what you know about the company

8. Questions about current and past work experience

9. Questions about career goals

5. Questions about the job you are applying for

Sample questions:

- Why are you interested in working here?
- Why have you applied for this post?
- What do you expect from this job?

Sample answer:

It would be a privilege to work in a reputable company such as yours. When I read about the opening, I found that my skills and qualifications matched the requirements, and I could make use of the experience gained in the past 5 years. Furthermore, I believe your company will allow me to grow both professionally and as a person.

Useful Grammar:

Verbs:

- be interested/attracted (by), appeal

Linking words to give reason:

- because, as, since, for

6. Question about hiring you

Sample questions:

- Why should we hire you?
- Give us a good reason for taking you on.
- Why do you think you are the best person for this position?

Sample answers:

- I think I am a **great match** for this position. My degree in Maths coupled with 3 years of experience working in the field of computational analysis **helped me to improve** productivity by 30% . I believe I can **do the same** for your organization and **would be a great addition** to your team.
- As I am **a fresher**, I have theoretical knowledge, but I can **work hard** and **learn the practical aspects** quickly. Moreover, I **will make a great effort to fulfill my duties and responsibilities and contribute** to the good progress of the organization.

Useful Grammar:

Conditional form and sentences to express:

- the likelihood of your working for them
If I **am** hired, I I **can/could/will contribute** significantly to the progress of your company.
- the possibility of your working for them
If I **were** hired, I **would make** a great effort to learn quickly.

Linking forms to state opinions:

- I believe/think that I....
- In my opinion, ...
- According to me,.....
- In my experience,....
- I'd say that...
- I have no doubt that...
- I am sure/confident that...

7. Questions about what YOU know about the company

Sample questions:

- What do you know about our company?
- Are you familiar with our company's current projects and future prospects?

Sample answer:

I know it is one of the **fastest growing companies** in Europe and **has many branches** in different countries. The **work environment** is pleasant and **people feel** proud to be a part of the company.

I have read it **provides full support** to its employees on a professional front and offers many **career growing opportunities**. I know it is **currently working on a large-scale project** in Bahrain and that its **major competitor** is SA GeoSci.

Useful grammar:

Superlative and comparative forms for comparing/contrasting:

I know it is one of **the most successful** companies in Europe with **greater** appeal to young prospective employees **than** other similar firms.

8. Questions about current and past work experience

Sample questions (current employment):

- Who is your current employer?
- What are your duties and responsibilities?
- Why are you leaving your current job?

Sample answer:

I am currently employed at SA GeoSci and have been working for them for the last four years. I have received great training and education there. I have been entrusted with international job assignments and a 10 member team staff.

However, I feel that the time is right for me to transition the outstanding skills and experience I have obtained there to a different job market, and I am confident I can bring these same skills to your organisation.

Useful Grammar:

- Present Continuous to express current employment.
- Present Perfect Simple/Continuous to express past experience which has results in the present or is still in course.

Sample questions (past employment):

- Have you worked for a similar company before?
- Tell us something about your previous employer(s)?
- What were your duties and responsibilities?
- How long did you work for them?
- What major challenges did you face?
- Why did you leave your last job?
- What did you like and dislike about your former employment?

Sample answer:

I (have) worked for 3 years with the Saudi Arabia Gas Company where I am/was Surveying Director and am/was responsible for/in charge of conducting research on potential petrol reservoirs.

The average work-week consists(ed) of 38 hours, but I often put in extra hours to complete assignments and meet deadlines.

I enjoy(ed) this job quite a lot and my employer treats/ed staff with respect and always rewards/ed accomplishments.

However, I now feel it is time for me to move on and acquire further work experience in different fields (or: I was laid off/ made redundant because the company relocated/ downsized/ needed to cut costs.

Useful Grammar:

- Present Perfect to describe work experience which began in the past, but is still in course
- Past Simple to describe past work experience no longer in course (where/when you worked)
- Present Simple to describe work routines and current employment

9. Questions about career goals

Sample questions:

- Where do you see yourself five years from now/in five years' time?
- What are your career goals?
- How do plan to achieve your career goals?

Sample answer:

Within 5 years, I would like to become the very best geologist your company has on staff. I want to work towards becoming the expert that others rely on. Hopefully, this will allow me to take on greater responsibilities with the company if the opportunity arises. I am also working towards additional certifications in the field to enhance my career prospects.

Useful grammar:

- Conditional Form to express future aspirations:
I **would like to become** Surveying Director.
- Future Simple to express future aspirations:
I hope I **will hold** a high-ranking position in the company.
- Present Continuous to express what you are currently doing to achieve those goals:
I **am currently taking** extra field-related courses to enhance my professional credentials.

Patterns:

- In the future, I would like to...
- Hopefully, I will...
- I hope to...
- My dream is to...
- My aspirations are/include....

Act III: The Exit

Thanking and Taking Leave

A. Your questions about the job and company

B. Thanking and asking about next steps

A. Your questions about the job and company

Sample questions:

Interviewer:

- Do you have any questions for us?
- Is there anything you'd like to know about us?

Candidate (prepare 4/5 questions):

- How would you describe the company's management style?
- Is this a new position?
- What would my duties include?
- Is travel expected in this job position?
- What are the prospects for growth and advancement?

B. Thanking and asking about the next steps

1. At the end of the interview

- Thank the interviewers for their time.
- Ask about the next steps and when you can expect a response from them.

Sample answers:

I **would like to thank** you for having given me the opportunity to participate in this job interview and for making me feel at ease. **I have found the experience constructive** and very interesting.

When do you expect **you will notify selected candidates?**

If I am/were offered the job, **when will/would I start?**

Job Interview in English

“Tips and Tricks”



- use semi-formal/formal tone- no chatty, slang language—use conditional form
- keep the language positive- avoid negative talk and forms--- no I'm not/haven't/don't/didn't, never...
- videotape yourself and re-listen to your English exposition: if necessary, make corrections
- if you haven't understood a question, say:
 - Pardon? I beg your pardon?
 - Could you kindly repeat that please?
 - Would you mind repeating the question please?

- avoid humming and hawing by using fillers:

Well,...

Certainly,...

I mean/What I mean is...

That is (to say)...

As a matter of fact, ...

Actually, ...

To be honest, ...

Quite frankly, ...

In other words, ...

Post Interview

- analyse the answers you gave in the interview and improve any weak language areas
- create a personal syllabus in English
- (snail) mail a thank-you note

Remember manners and respect,
and
the magic words:

Please and Thank you!



WE WANT YOU!

Thank you for your
...patience!

