



Preparing for and Mastering the Interview

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Introducing Our Coaches **(See Bios and Contact Information in Whova!)**



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Icebreaker Questions

To get participants thinking and sharing:

- What's the most memorable interview you've ever had (as the interviewer or Job Seeker)? Why?
- What emotions come to mind when you hear the word "interview"?
- What's one thing you wish you'd known before your first interview?



What's New in Interviewing: 2023-2025 Insights

- Structured interviews are more essential than ever—casual formats are being replaced by evidence-based methods (Phys.org, 2024).
- Employers are emphasizing inclusive language, standardized formats, and broader candidate reach (Harvard Business School, 2023).
- Job seekers are expected to demonstrate emotional intelligence, adaptability, and mission alignment (Indeed, 2025).
- Interviewers are encouraged to use scorecards or rubrics to minimize bias and ensure fair comparisons (ClearCompany, 2025).

Industry Shifts: Interviewing in Today's Workplace

- Greater use of structured behavioral and situational questions.
- Focus on values-based hiring—fit with mission and team culture matters.
- Increasing reliance on virtual interviews demands polished remote presence.
- Candidate experience is now a priority—clear communication, feedback, and respect.



Understanding the Purpose of Interviews

To build foundational awareness:

- Why do we conduct interviews in different settings (e.g., hiring, research, journalism)?
- What are the key goals of a successful interview?
- How does the purpose of an interview change the style of questions you ask?



Best Practices for Employers **Conducting Interviews**

- Use standardized questions for all candidates.
- Implement a scoring rubric (0–3 or similar) to evaluate responses fairly.
- Avoid leading or biased questions—focus on past behavior and skills.
- Train interviewers to reduce unconscious bias and evaluate consistently.





Interview Preparation

For practical discussion:

- What kind of preparation do you think is essential before conducting (or attending) an interview?
- How do you research a Job Seeker or company beforehand?
- What can go wrong if you don't prepare properly?



Interviewer: Asking Good Questions

To explore technique:

- What makes a question “good” or effective in an interview?
- How can you tell if a question is open-ended or closed-ended—and why does it matter?
- Can you think of a time when a question completely changed the direction of a conversation?



Interviewer: Handling Challenges

To build confidence and adaptability:

- What should you do if a question makes someone uncomfortable?
- How do you recover if you say something awkward or make a mistake?
- What's your strategy when someone gives very short or vague answers?





Interviewer: Using Follow-Up Questions

Use follow-up questions to encourage gathering additional information about something an applicant said in response to an interview question.

- To draw out additional experience, skill, or competency.
- Examples of appropriate follow-up questions (Handout #1).



Interviewer: Using Scoring Rubrics

Use a scoring rubric that is fairly administered to all. It should:

- Improve consistency and fairness.
- Support clearer, more defensible decisions.
- Provide definitions to guide raters in scoring.
- Enhance efficiency and focus.
- Examples of an Interview rubric (Handout #2).





Best Practices for Job Seekers: How to Stand Out

- Prepare using the STAR method—situation, task, action, results.
- Use specific, real examples.
- Research the agency's mission and services beforehand.
- Ask insightful questions that show engagement and initiative.
- Display confident body language and maintain professional tone.



The STAR Method

S

Explain the situation so that your interviewer understands the context of your example, they do not need to know every detail!

20%

T

Next, talk about the task, problem, or challenge that you took responsibility for completing, or the goal of your efforts.

10%

A

Describe the actions that you personally took to complete the task or reach the end goal. Highlight skills or character traits addressed in the question.

60%

R

Explain the positive outcomes or results of your actions or efforts. Here, it is important to highlight quantifiable results.

10%



Job Seeker: Use Specific Examples

Think about your opportunity to use your specific examples in advance:

- What specific projects have you participated in?
- What value have you contributed over your working career?
- What competencies do you excel in?
- Learn to tie your experiences to the intent of the question asked.





Job Seeker: Controlling Nervousness

Three effective in-the-moment techniques Job Seekers can use to control nervousness:

- Use intentional breathing to reset.
 - Use the “box breath” or other method to provide slow and deep breaths to lower adrenaline.
- Reframe nerves as energy.
 - Remind yourself, “This is excitement, not fear-I care about this opportunity.”
- Ground yourself with focus techniques.
 - Small actions to bring attention back to the present
 - Plant your feet, notice a detail in the room, lightly press fingers together

Job Seeker: Using Follow-Up Questions

Job Seeker follow-up questions should:

- Demonstrate Interest/Show genuine interest in the role and organization
- Clarify Expectations/What does success look like in the role
- Reveal Alignment/Highlight fit and alignment with values/culture

• Examples of appropriate follow-up questions (Handout #3)



Why We're Roleplaying Today

- Interviewing is a learned skill—for both interviewers and Job Seekers.
- Practice helps reduce nerves and increase clarity and professionalism.
- This session allows you to try, reflect, and refine in a safe environment.
- Coaches will guide, observe, and provide tips to strengthen your approach.

Have some fun with this!!



Roleplay Reflection

For after mock interviews or exercises:

- How did it feel to be the interviewer vs. the Job Seeker?
- What did you notice about your body language, tone, or pacing?
- What would you do differently in your next interview?





Self-Assessment & Growth



To end on reflection and action:

- What's one interviewing skill you'd like to improve?
- What strengths do you already bring to an interview situation?
- How will you apply what you've learned in real-life contexts?
- Reach out to one of the coaches and share a success story with us!
- Resource Sheet for Job Seekers and Interviewers (Handout #4)



Thank You for Attending & Growing Your Skills!

- Remember: every interview is a learning opportunity—practice makes progress.
- Build confidence by preparing and rehearsing often, even with peers or mentors.
- Carry your strengths forward and let them shine in your answers.
- Stay curious—ask thoughtful questions that show genuine interest in the role.
- Keep investing in yourself: reflection, feedback, and practice will set you apart.

