

Job Interview Preparation Exercises



Most companies ask very similar interview questions. By preparing your answers, you can minimize language barriers and direct the interview to focus on your strengths.

Exercise 1. Mental picture. Imagine yourself through the entire interview process: getting ready, driving, parking, walking into the interview room. Next, you introduce yourself to the panel. You repeat their names as you shake their hands. How will you respond to their greetings? Now, sit down. Will you give them a resume? You go through the interview, taking notes of the questions they ask you and their responses to your questions. You also write down their names. When it is over, you stand up, thank them, shake their hands. Picture yourself after the interview, sending out a thank-you note.

Draw three simple pictures of yourself before, during, and after the interview.

Three empty rounded rectangular boxes are arranged in two rows. The top row contains two boxes side-by-side, and the bottom row contains one larger box centered below them. These boxes are intended for the student to draw simple pictures of themselves at different stages of the interview process.

Exercise 2. Qualities. Prepare answers that demonstrate your record in these areas. Show through stories that include relevant details and measurable outcomes/ factors (managed team of 10, serviced 1.5 million customers, increased XYZ by 7%, etc.). Write out your answers. That way, you can check for grammatical mistakes. Then, memorize your corrected responses.

- a. innovation
- b. team work

- c. leadership
- d. taking initiative
- e. customer service
- f. enthusiasm for the work/ company

Exercise 3. Interpersonal skills. It's also important to show that you will be a good fit for the company and that you understand social and linguistic conventions for interpersonal relationships.

- a. **Timed talks:** Set a timer for 2 minutes. Choose any topic, and talk about it nonstop for two minutes. For example, talk about the tree outside the window. You can talk about its physical features, its annual cycle, climbing up the tree as a child, etc. Include the most important information in the first 90 seconds. Stop at two minutes.

This exercise is aimed to help those who give too-short answers develop their answers. It also helps those who may tend to talk too long. Get a sense of what two minutes feels like. Stop at two minutes, and give the interviewer a chance to ask questions. You can expand your answer if they don't follow up, but give them a chance to interject a question.

- b. **Small talk:** Read up on current events so you'll recognize references to sports, entertainment, weather, etc. How will you respond if someone asks you, "How about those Cowboys?" You can say you don't follow the sport, but then add something else to continue the conversation and add interest. For example, "I heard it was a great game. I couldn't watch it last night; I went to my son's concert at school." Now, the interviewer can ask you how old your son is, what kind of concert, etc.
- c. **Personality.** Sometimes companies will throw in a non work-related question to gauge your personality and your fit. Mentally prepare answers to these questions.
 - o What do you like to do for fun?
 - o What's your favorite thing to cook? (Be prepared to talk about food. It draws people together.)
 - o If you could be an animal/ vehicle/ fruit/ computer, what would you be?
- d. **Mirror, mirror.** Look in the mirror, stand straight, breathe, and smile. You have experience, skills, a great work ethic, a willingness to take risks and challenge yourself.

Remember you are interviewing the company as much as they are interviewing you for fit.