



Interviewing Resource Guide



SCHEDULE AN APPOINTMENT WITH A CREW CAREER COUNSELOR

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GETTING STARTED

PURPOSE OF INTERVIEWING

The purpose of a job interview is to serve both the **employer** and the **candidate**. Employers gather information to determine if you are the best fit for the position, while candidates provide details to secure the job and assess if the role is suitable for them.

STEPS BEFORE INTERVIEWING

It is crucial to **research** and **prepare** thoroughly before an interview. Here are some tips on what to research, where to find information, and how to practice effectively.

Research

Where To Research

- Company/Organization website
- Social media pages
- Career Platforms
 - **Glassdoor**- [Glassdoor.com](https://www.glassdoor.com)
 - **Fishbowl**- [Fishbowlapp.com](https://www.fishbowlapp.com)
 - **Handshake**- jeffersoncc.joinhandshake.com/login
 - **LinkedIn**- [Linkedin.com](https://www.linkedin.com)
 - **O*Net OnLine** - onetonline.org
 - **Business First**- bizjournals.com

What To Research

- Goals and Initiatives
- History
- Culture
- Mission and Values
- Competitors
- Interviews
- Key Personnel
- Current Events/News

Practice

- Practice answering questions that may be asked of you. Visit the CREW Career Center website to locate practice questions that align with your career industry.
 - **CREW Career Center Interviewing Information** - crew.cc/services/interviewing
- Practice addressing any gaps in your background.
- Review the [10 essential skills](#) and practice including them in your answers.
- Write down key examples from work and school experience.
- Prepare questions to ask the interviewers.
- Schedule an in-person or virtual appointment with a CREW Career counselor and participate in a mock interview.
 - **CREW Career Center Appointment Schedule** - crew.cc/schedule-appointment



INTERVIEWING FORMATS

JOB INTERVIEW CATEGORIES

Phone	Conducted via phone, no face-to-face interaction with your interviewer(s)
Virtual	Conducted via video or other web interface where you may or may not have face-to-face interaction with your interviewer(s)
In-Person	A face-to-face meeting at a physical location where candidates and interviewers interact directly.
One-On-One	A private interview involving just one interviewer and one candidate to focus on individual assessment.
Panel	An interview where multiple interviewers question a single candidate, often from different departments or perspectives.
Group Interview	An interview where multiple candidates are assessed together, often involving group activities or discussions.
Meal	A less formal interview conducted over a meal to observe the candidate's social and communication skills in a relaxed setting.
Presentation	An interview where the candidate is required to prepare and deliver a presentation on a given topic to showcase their knowledge and communication abilities.

CATERING YOUR PREPARATION

In-Person

- Bring extra copies of your resume.
- Place your resume and other documents in a padfolio.
- Know your interview's location and arrive to the interview 10-15 minutes early.
- Shut off your cellphone or make sure it is on silent
- Speak with a smile to convey confidence.

Virtual/Phone

- Have notes, your resume, and the position description open and in front of you.
- Make sure you are in a quiet environment and limit distractions.
- Ensure your virtual background is appropriate and not distracting.
- Test out the technology well before joining the interview.
- Speak with a smile to convey confidence.



COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS

The main part of a job interview consists of the **question-and-answer** portion. Typically, a job interview lasts between **20 to 45 minutes**, with most of the time dedicated to employers asking questions and candidates providing answers.

Employers may ask questions from various categories, each aiming to uncover specific information about you. It is crucial to understand the **underlying intent** behind each question to provide **meaningful and relevant responses**.

TRADITIONAL QUESTIONS

Allows the interviewer to get a better understanding of your **personality, background, and values**.

Examples:

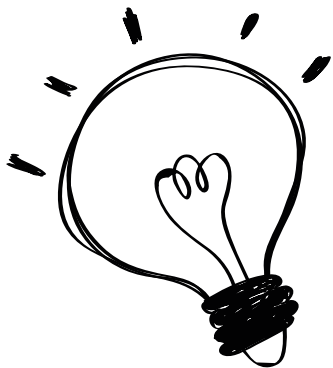
- Tell me about yourself.
- What are your strengths and weaknesses?
- Why are you the best candidate for this position?
- Why are you interested in working for this company/organization?

BEHAVIOR BASED QUESTIONS

Allows the interviewer to assess how you will react to situations in the future based on your **reactions** and **behaviors** to similar situations in the past.

Examples:

- Tell me about a time you failed.
- Describe a moment when you worked with a person whose background, values, and beliefs were different than yours.
- Give me an example of when you dealt with a difficult situation.



PRO TIP #1

Research the company thoroughly and practice your responses to common questions to confidently showcase your skills and fit for the role.

COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS

CASE QUESTIONS

Allows the interviewer to assess your **analytical skills** and approach to **problem-solving** in a real environment.

Examples:

- Your client, with a steady decline in sales, asked you to develop a proposal to make them more competitive in the marketplace. How do you do this?
- If you were shrunk down to the size of a nickel and were put in a blender, what would you do?

RED-FLAG QUESTIONS

To protect candidates from potential discrimination employers are **legally not allowed** to ask questions regarding the following:

- Age
- Country of origin/citizenship
- Disability
- Gender, Sex, and Sexual Orientation
- Material status, family status, and/or pregnancy
- Race and Ethnicity
- Religion/Spirituality.



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To ensure that you are qualified for the position they may **legally** ask you the following questions:

- Are you authorized to work in the U.S.? What languages do you speak (if relevant to the position)?
- Do you have any concerns about handling the long hours and extensive travel that this job entails?
- Are you at least 18 years of age?
- Are you able to perform this job with or without reasonable accommodation?
- Do you have any conditions that would keep you from performing this job?

NAVIGATING ANSWERS

While every interview is unique and there is **no single "right way"** to answer interview questions, there are strategies you can use to enhance your marketability.

You can highlight your **qualifications**, showcase your **strengths**, and **present yourself as the best fit for the position**.

Below are some tips to help you navigate your answers and authentically represent yourself.



INTRODUCING YOURSELF

Often the first question asked during an interview is **"Please tell me about yourself"**. Preparing an answer ahead of time will help you make a strong first impression.

Your prepared answer should be about two minutes in length, and we call this the **two-minute presentation**.

Include

- Background and your story
- College, major, and *relevant* interests/involvement
- Relevant skills/experience
- Why you are interested/passionate in the opportunity/field

Do not include

- Personal activities/ hobbies that are not relevant to the position or employer
- Confessions
 - e.g.- "I'm leaving my last position because I hate my boss!"
- Repeating of your resume

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Example:

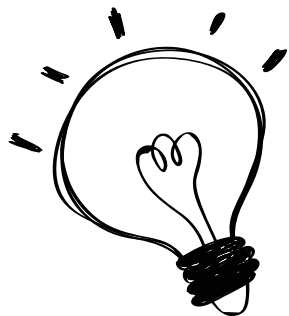
"Currently, I'm at Jefferson Community and Technical College working on my associate degree. I have always enjoyed helping people and this drives my desire to become a teacher. I have been volunteering at a local elementary school for two years and have learned so much about the education field through this experience. This experience, along with tutoring students on campus in math, is preparing me for my future career field."

PRO TIP #2

Listen actively and carefully to questions, ensuring you understand them before responding.



NAVIGATING ANSWERS



PRO TIP #3

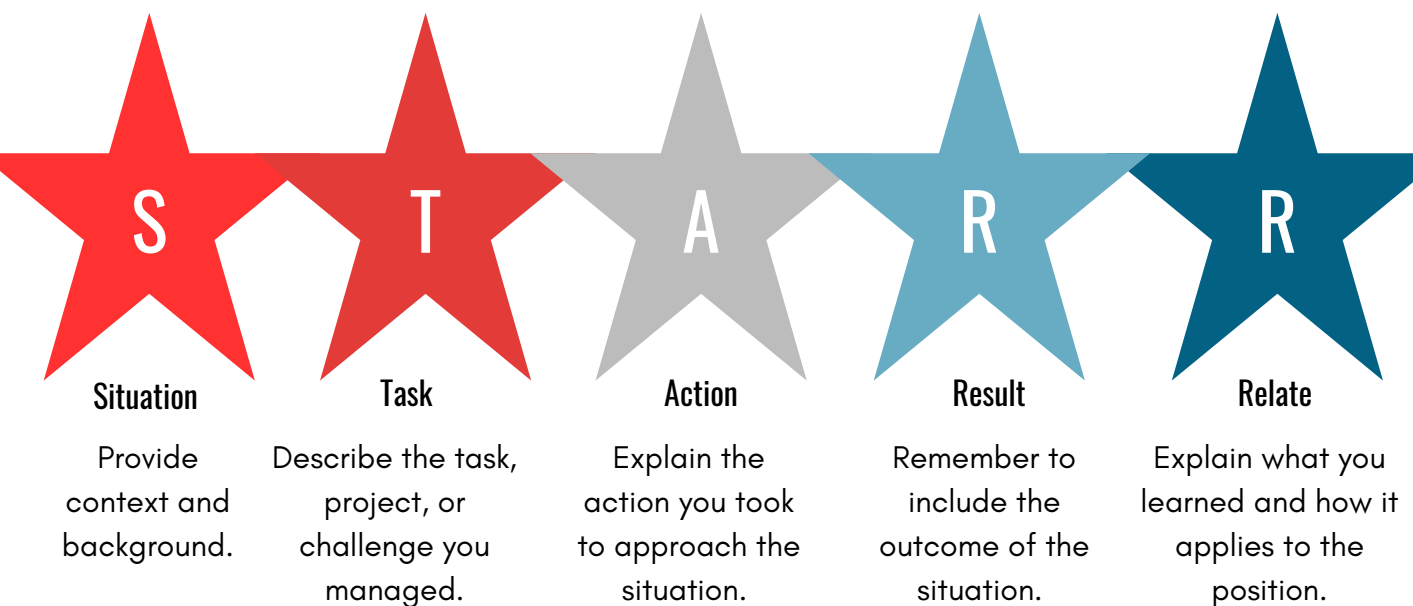
Use specific examples from your past experiences to illustrate your skills and accomplishments

PRO TIP #4

Think of your responses as story-telling. There is a beginning, middle, and end.

SITUATIONAL QUESTIONS ANSWERS

When answering behavioral interview questions, the best answers usually contain five important elements. Use the **STARR method** to format your answers.



Example:

"At my last job, an upset patient came in, frustrated about her medication and difficulty scheduling an appointment. I listened carefully, apologized, and assured her that her concerns were heard. Although I couldn't schedule her immediately, I reviewed the schedule and provided options for immediate medical attention if needed. By actively listening and addressing her concerns, we resolved the issue, teaching me the importance of active listening, a skill essential for this position."

NAVIGATING ANSWERS

AUTHENTIC REPRESENTATION

It is important to remember that an interview is a conversation.

It is also important to *bring your personality* into the interview and allow the employer to get a glimpse of who you are.

- Be honest and provide a true reflection of your skills, passions, and values when appropriate.
- Showing up to the interview authentically is important to see if you feel comfortable being yourself in that environment.
- Be authentic but also mindful of the environment.
- Trust your gut, if you pick up on body language or feel the environment is unsafe then make your exit.

DECODING QUESTIONS

What is the Employer Really Asking?

Having a good understanding of *what the interviewer is looking for based on the requirements of the position* will help you select the best example to speak about in your response.

When an employer asks a question, they are not just seeking relevant answers; they're also assessing your ability to *self-evaluate* and *highlight the skills you possess*.

Question

Skills the employers want you to address

Tell me about yourself?

Knowledge, Experience, Passion, Work Ethic

Tell me about a time when you took initiative?

Teamwork, Collaboration, Leadership, Creativity

Describe a time you met a deadline.

Organization, Time-Management, Problem-Solving

What is your greatest strength and weakness?

Honesty, Humility, Growth Mindset, Technical Skills



NAVIGATING ANSWERS

HANDLING TOUGH QUESTIONS

Sometimes interview questions can be **confusing** or seem **irrelevant** to the position. If this happens, consider the following strategies.

- **Redirect with Relevance**
 - "That's an interesting question. While it's not directly related to my current role, I believe my experience with [relevant skill or experience] is more pertinent."
- **Seek Clarification**
 - "Could you clarify how this question relates to the position? I want to ensure I'm providing information that's most useful for you."
- **Bridge to Key Points**
 - "While that hasn't been a focus in my past roles, I have extensive experience in [relevant area], which I think is crucial for this position."
- **Highlight Transferable skills**
 - "Although my experience with that specific area is limited, the skills I've developed in [related area] are highly transferable and will help me excel in this role."
- **Acknowledge and Pivot**
 - "That's a great question. My direct experience is more aligned with [relevant topic], which I believe is more critical for this role."

Example Question:

If you were shrunk down to the size of a nickel and were put in a blender, what would you do?

Example Answer:

That's such an interesting question, may I think about that for a moment?

If I were shrunk down to the size of a nickel and put in a blender, my primary goal would be to ensure my safety and find a way out. I would quickly assess the situation, looking for anything I could use to climb out or signal for help. I might try to wedge myself into a safe corner to avoid the blades if the blender were to turn on. This scenario is similar to handling emergencies in nursing: staying calm, assessing the situation, and taking quick, effective action to ensure the best outcome.

TIPS & TRICKS

NERVE CLAMING TECHNIQUES

An interview should be *conversational*, not interrogational, but sometimes your nerves can prevent you from navigating a two-way dialogue.

To help keep your mind clear and focused before and during an interview, try practicing the **S.T.O.P. Method**.



Stop to pause on your thoughts and what you're doing.

Take a few deep breaths.

Observe what's going on with your body, emotions, and mind.

Proceed with an intention to incorporate your observations and incorporate your observations into your actions.

COMMUNICATION TIPS

Verbal

- Try to avoid an excess of filler words like "um", "like", and "you know".
- Avoid talking in acronyms or industry-specific terms when speaking with large audiences.
- They may not be aware of industry jargon.
- Listen carefully to questions in their entirety and respond in a clear, concise, and logical order.
- Try to avoid skipping questions. Ask them to rephrase instead.
- Write down questions as the interviewer asks them, especially if they are multipart questions, to help you address each part thoroughly.

Non-Verbal

- Maintain steady eye contact throughout the interview if you can.
- Try and maintain a posture that shows you're interested and that you are listening.
- Smile authentically when you can and be aware of your body language and what message it's sending to the audience.
- Write down key examples, questions, and terms before the interview to ensure you remember the important points you want to address.
- Stay relatively still during the interview if you can
 - If you need to fidget, keep the fidget tool hidden and under the table.

INTERVIEW ATTIRE

GENERAL GUIDELINES

Interview attire can *vary across industries* and is subject to *personal comfort*.
With that in mind, consider the organization's dress code when choosing what to wear.



Tips

- Research to understand & reflect how formal the environment is.
- Dress more formally for the interview than if you have the job.
- It's better to be overdressed than underdressed.
- Choice of clothes, jewelry, makeup, and shoes should demonstrate you were intentional in preparing for the meeting and presented your "best self".
- No gum.
- No visual undergarments.
- Law, accounting, and business oftentimes will expect candidates to wear a business suit to an interview.

PRO TIP #5

Practice mindfulness and relaxation techniques beforehand to manage interview nerves and stay composed.

PRO TIP #6

Stay authentic and confident: show genuine interest in the role, maintain positive body language, and be honest about your strengths and areas for growth.

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS

At the end of the interview, it is customary for the interviewer to ask,
"What questions do you have for us?"

Be prepared with **3-5 questions** to ask the interviewer relating to the company/job position that allows you to see if the organization is the right fit for you.

This is also an opportunity to market yourself and let the company know what is important to you.

DO'S & DON'TS

DO ASK

Projects you will work on

- **Question:** This role really excites me from what I've read on the description and from our conversations. Can you further elaborate on some of the projects this position will be responsible for working on?

Professional development and training opportunities

- **Question:** I'm very committed to growing and want to learn as much as I can. Can you tell me about the professional development opportunities you offer to staff?

Next step in the selection process

- **Question:** Thank you so much for this opportunity to talk today. Can you tell me any next steps in the hiring process?

Company environment

- **Question:** Working on a collaborative team is very important to me. Can you describe the company culture and team environment?

DON'T ASK

This is typically not the time to discuss **logistics** of the position depending on the industry and that information can usually be found on the **job posting**.

The topics below can be addressed with a recruiter before the interview and/or after the **offer is made**.

Salary, Hours, & Benefits
Vacation Time

The topics below can be researched by looking up **online reviews** by going to *Glassdoor, Fishbowl, and LinkedIn*.

Controversial Topics
Company Criticisms
Personal Topics



AFTER THE INTERVIEW

THANK YOU NOTE

The "thank you" is written *after an interview* and *shows your appreciation* for the employer taking the time to speak with you. This can be via **email** or **hand-written**.

- You can remind the employer of your qualifications and refer to specific details from the interview.
- Make it concise and to-the-point.
- Thank you note should be written with no spelling or grammar issues .
- If you have poor handwriting and/or the employer is making a quick decision about the candidate, emailing your thank you note is advised.

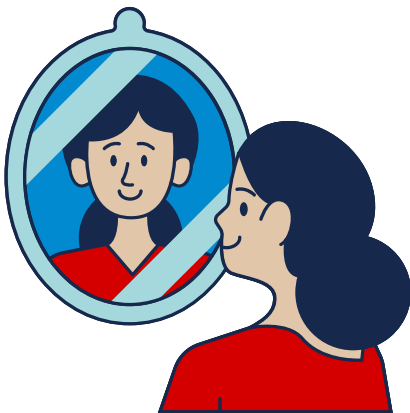
Example:

Dear Emilo Employer,
Thank you for meeting with me today to discuss the LPN position. After learning more about Norton Healthcare and the team, I am confident that my clinical experience, healthcare background, and passion for serving others make me an excellent fit for the role. I appreciate your time and consideration and look forward to hearing from you soon.
Thank you again!
Cat Candidate

SELF REFLECTION

You'll experience plenty of job interviews throughout your career.

In order to improve after each interview, it is important to *reflect on your experience*.



- What kind of questions were you asked?
- What do YOU think you did well? What areas do YOU think you need to improve?
- What feedback did the interviewer provide? How will you respond to this feedback?
- If you do not get specific feedback, you can ask, "What advice would you give me to improve how I communicate my candidacy in the future?" after they email with no offer.
- Think about the overall experience. Was this what you expected? If not, what was different?

