How to Prepare for a Job Interview

Student workbook: attempt every question before looking at the solutions manual.

O1	Research an employer and match your experience to the job.
O2	Answer common interview questions, including 'Tell me about yourself'.
O3	Use the STAR method to give clear, convincing examples.
O4	Handle body language, your own questions and the follow-up.

O1: Research an employer and match your experience to the job.

Q01 [Foundational · short answer]

Name four things you should find out about an organisation before an interview.

Q02 [Foundational · multiple choice]

Which document tells you most directly what the interview questions will be about? (a) the company logo (b) the job description (c) your school certificate (d) the office address

Q03 [Core · practical]

Explain what an evidence table is and why it is useful.

Q04 [Core · true/false]

True or false: employee review websites give objective facts about a company.

Q05 [Applied · application]

A role requires 'experience of working to deadlines'. You have never had a paid job. Suggest two sources of evidence.

Q06 [Applied · analysis]

Why might a director and a team leader want different things from the same interview?

Q07 [Advanced · application]

Choose a real job advertisement and build a complete evidence table with at least five requirements. Mark any gaps and say how you will address them.

O2: Answer common interview questions, including 'Tell me about yourself'.

Q08 [Foundational · short answer]

What three-part structure is recommended for 'Tell me about yourself'?

Q09 [Foundational · multiple choice]

About how long should 'Tell me about yourself' last? (a) 10 seconds (b) about a minute (c) 10 minutes (d) as long as possible

Q10 [Core · conceptual]

Why is 'I work too hard' a poor answer to 'What is your greatest weakness?'

Q11 [Core · true/false]

True or false: it is acceptable to criticise a previous employer if they really treated you badly.

Q12 [Applied · writing]

Write a 'Why do you want to work here?' answer for a hospital receptionist role.

Q13 [Applied · evaluation]

Evaluate this answer to 'What are your strengths?': 'I'm a people person.'

Q14 [Advanced · writing]

Write and time your own 'Tell me about yourself' answer for a job you want. Aim for about a minute, and end by linking to the role.

O3: Use the STAR method to give clear, convincing examples.

Q15 [Foundational · short answer]

What do the letters S, T, A and R stand for in the STAR method?

Q16 [Foundational · multiple choice]

Which part of a STAR answer should usually be the longest? (a) Situation (b) Task (c) Action (d) Result

Q17 [Core · conceptual]

Why should you say 'I' rather than 'we' when describing your actions?

Q18 [Core · classification]

Label each sentence S, T, A or R: (1) 'Our team's waiting time was 9 minutes.' (2) 'I was asked to cut it.' (3) 'I changed the order in which calls were routed.' (4) 'Waiting fell to 4 minutes.'

Q19 [Applied · evaluation]

This answer has a weak result: '...and in the end things went better.' Rewrite the result to make it convincing.

Q20 [Applied · writing]

Write a STAR answer to 'Tell me about a time you worked in a team under pressure.'

Q21 [Advanced · analysis]

A story ended badly: your project missed its deadline. How can you still use it in an interview?

O4: Handle body language, your own questions and the follow-up.

Q22 [Foundational · short answer]

Give two examples of positive body language in an interview.

Q23 [Foundational · true/false]

True or false: having no questions to ask at the end can look like a lack of interest.

Q24 [Core · short answer]

Suggest two good questions to ask an employer at the end of an interview.

Q25 [Core · multiple choice]

When should a thank-you message usually be sent? (a) within a day (b) after a month (c) only if you get the job (d) never

Q26 [Applied · writing]

Write a thank-you email of three or four sentences after an interview for a library assistant role, mentioning one specific point from the conversation.

Q27 [Applied · application]

During a video interview your connection fails. What should you do?

Q28 [Advanced · analysis]

A candidate gives excellent answers but avoids eye contact, speaks very fast and never pauses. What impression may this create, and what practice would help?

Assignment 1: full interview preparation pack (individual)

Choose a real job advertisement you could realistically apply for.

1. Write a one-page research summary of the organisation (O1).
2. Build an evidence table with at least six requirements (O1).
3. Write your 'Tell me about yourself' answer and answers to 'Why us?' and the weakness question (O2).
4. Write three STAR answers covering different requirements (O3).
5. List three questions you will ask, and draft your thank-you message (O4).

Assignment 2: recorded mock interview (pairs)

Take turns as interviewer and candidate. The interviewer asks five questions, including two behavioural questions. Record the candidate (with consent) and review the recording together.

1. Note the timing of each answer.
2. Identify one strength and one improvement in content and in body language.
3. Repeat one answer after feedback and compare.