



# Interview Guide 2

## Practice

Go into an interview with **5 to 7 stories** you want to share about yourself. Then make it your goal to share all of these stories before the interview ends. Some human resource managers even suggest that you should be able to tell a story about every point of experience listed on your resume.

### Your 5-7 Stories

When thinking about your 5 to 7 stories, consider picking something from these categories:

- Your most significant work experience
- A challenge you overcame
- An accomplishment of which you are proud
- An experience of being mentored or empowered
- Your most significant leadership experience
- Something that shows what you are like outside of work, i.e., what you do for fun
- An award you received or a commendation given by a supervisor, professor or mentor
- Your most satisfying academic experience: a class, being mentored by a professor, or a particular paper or project
- An experience that led to having an interest in this particular position

## Types of Questions:

### 1. Behavior-based Questions

A behavior-based interview is a common interview style. Hiring managers ask candidates to describe specific situations when they exercised particular skills (i.e. decision-making, teamwork) or responded to particular situations (i.e. a work-related challenge, difficult coworker).

**Have a story to share about each of these topics:**

- Communication or interpersonal skills
- High-quality service
- Teamwork
- Innovation
- Problem-solving
- Conflict management

**Examples of behavior-based interview questions:**

- Describe a situation in which your results were not up to your professor's or supervisor's expectations.
- Tell me about a time when you had to go above and beyond the call of duty in order to get a job done.
- Describe a situation when you experienced conflict with a supervisor, family member or peer. How did you handle that conflict?
- Talk about a time when you collaborated with a group to achieve a goal. What role did you play?
- Describe a situation in which you utilized strong communication skills to present or explain a concept.
- Describe a time when someone requested that you solve a problem.

## The SHARE Model

The SHARE Model is a good way to answer behavior-based interview questions:

- S** Describe a specific Situation.
- H** Identify Hindrances or challenges.
- A** Explain the Action that you took.
- R** Discuss the Results or outcomes.
- E** Evaluate or summarize what you learned.

## 2. Brainteaser Questions

Brainteaser questions are less common than they used to be, and today's interviewers rely more on behavior-based interview questions. Nevertheless, the occasional brainteaser may come up in an interview. For instance, Compass Center staff members remember past interview experiences when interviewers asked them: "How many basketballs will fit inside a Boeing 747?" and "Why is a manhole cover round?"

The trick is not to sweat these questions. Stay calm, and continue smiling. The interviewer is most likely interested in seeing how you handle a small challenge and learning whether you can think on your feet and bring your best problem-solving and critical-thinking skills to the task. Talk through your answer so the interviewer can see how your mind works, and just give it your best shot.

## 3. Case Studies or Technical Questions

**Case study interview questions** present applicants with a challenging scenario you must evaluate and solve. Case interviews test your analytical and communication skills within a realistic business context. Interviewers analyze the steps you take and how you think critically about the issue. There are many online resources available on case study interviews, so practice in advance.

**Technical interview questions** present applicants with a chance to show your industry-specific skills, like coding or engineering. Be prepared to solve a complex issue and show your work. You can find practice problems online.

## Practice is the Best Preparation

Practicing ahead of time is the best way to go into the interviewing feeling prepared and confident! Make one of the following appointments with a Compass Center staff member through Handshake:

- Mock interview
- A meeting to talk through your interview preparation

- Videotaped mock interview in which the staff member plays back the video and debriefs your responses and body language. This exercise can be helpful if you know you need to work on removing extra "Um's" from your speech, want to minimize nervous habits, or need practice with good eye contact or posture.

# Common Interview Questions

Although spending time thinking through your 5 to 7 stories is probably a better use of your time, it can still help to review common interview questions and consider how you might respond. **You should also anticipate industry-specific or position-specific questions.** Consult the Compass Center if you need help finding sample interview questions geared toward your desired role or field.

1. Please tell me about yourself.
2. Why are you interested in this position?
3. What are your long-range goals? Where do you see yourself in 5/10/15 years?
4. What do you know about our company?
5. Why would like to work for our company?
6. Why are you leaving your present position?
7. What has been your most rewarding accomplishment?
8. If you could do so, how would you plan your college career differently?
9. Tell me about a major problem you recently handled. Were you successful in resolving it?
10. How have you dealt with high-pressure situations?
11. What personal weakness has caused you the greatest difficulty in school or on the job?
12. Which college classes/subjects did you like best? Why?
13. Describe the type of professor who has created the most beneficial learning experience for you.
14. Do you think that your grades are an indication of your academic achievement?
15. Give an example of a time in which you had to be relatively quick in coming to a decision.
16. Give an example of a goal you set in the past and your success in achieving it.
17. When did you go above and beyond the call of duty in order to get a job done?
18. Sometimes it is easy to get in "over your head." Describe a time when you had to request help on a project or assignment.
19. Describe a situation in which your results were not up to your professor's or supervisor's expectations. What happened? What action did you take?
20. What are your strengths?
21. What are your weaknesses?
22. Tell of a time when you worked with a colleague who was not completing his or her share of the work. Who, if anyone, did you tell or talk to about it? Did the manager take any steps to correct your colleague? Did you agree or disagree with the manager's actions?
23. We can sometimes identify a small problem and fix it before it becomes a major problem. Give an example of how you have done this.
24. Recall a time when a supervisor was unavailable and a problem arose. What was the nature of the problem? How did you handle it?
25. Recall a time when you were assigned what you considered to be a complex project. Specifically, what steps did you take to prepare for and finish the project? Were you happy with the outcome? What one step would you have done differently if given the chance?
26. What kind of supervisor do you work best for?
27. How do you determine priorities in scheduling?
28. Tell of the most difficult customer service experience you have ever had. Be specific and describe your actions and the outcome.
29. Give an example of when you had to work with someone who was difficult to get along with. Why was this person difficult? How did you handle that person?
30. Tell about a difficult situation when you had to keep a positive attitude. How did you do it?
31. Tell about a time you had to handle multiple responsibilities and how you organized the work.
32. What is the biggest mistake you've made?
33. Describe a time when you put your needs aside to help a co-worker or classmate understand a task. How did you assist him or her? What was the result?
34. What was the last book you read? [or] What books are currently on your bedside table?
35. What are your salary expectations?
36. Why should we hire you?