

**You have got your interview so now how do you get the job?**

**The key is:-**

**PREPARATION- Read the job description again, watch for key words and phrases, skills needed**

**PRACTISE- Practise numeracy and literacy tests if they are part of the process.**

**Do mock interviews on a site like** [**www.jobsite.co.uk/bemyinterviewer**](http://www.jobsite.co.uk/bemyinterviewer) **or** [**www.myworldofwork.co.uk**](http://www.myworldofwork.co.uk)

**MORE PREPARATION-Research the company, read their web site**

**MORE PRACTISE- Do more mock interviews, get a friend/family member to watch you and give useful feedback**

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## ****There are different types of interviews-one of the most common is the Competency Based Interview****

**Competency-based interviews** use questions which aim to find out **how** you have used specific skills in your previous experience and how you approach problems, tasks and challenges. They are also called behavioural or situational questions.

## ****Examples of competencies:****

One competency might be **achieving results and improving performance.**

An interviewer could use a couple of approaches.

* The first might be a very specific question with no follow-up such as: **describe an occasion when you achieved a goal; what steps did you take?**
* Secondly, an interviewer may begin with a more open question such as: **what has been your most significant achievement?**
* A good way to structure your answer is to use the well-known **STAR** model:
* Briefly describe the **Situation** or background to your example
* Explain the **Task** or activity
* Outline the **Action** you took
* Summarise the **Result**

## ****How to prepare for a Competency-based interview****

It’s really, really simple:

* list the competencies for the specific job
* know what is on your CV and that it relates to the job you have applied for **(NB:  if this becomes really hard or impossible, the chances are that the job may not suit you)**
* Write examples based on the CV/your experience of the things the employer has asked for .A bullet point can be taken into the interview on the interview sheet attached to this guide. Use the **STAR** headings above to help you
* practice your answers with a critical friend
* and…enjoy the interview because **you have prepared**

**Remember:** many people don’t do the above preferring instead to take a rushed, scatter gun approach, applying for anything and everything that comes along and are surprised that (a) they don’t get an interview and (b) if they do, they perform poorly and don’t get the job.

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## Common Interview Questions

Although there is no set format that every job interview will follow, there are some questions that you can almost guarantee will crop up. Here’s a list of the most common questions and a guide to the kind of answers your interviewer wants to hear.

* **Tell me about yourself -** This is usually the opening question and, as first impressions is key, one of the most important. Keep your answer to less than five minutes, beginning with an overview of your highest qualification then running through the jobs you’ve held so far in your career. You can follow the same structure of your CV, giving examples of achievements and the skills you’ve picked up along the way. Don’t go into too much detail – your interviewer will probably take notes and ask for you to expand on any areas where they’d like more information. If you’re interviewing for your first job since leaving education, focus on the areas of your studies you most enjoyed and how that has led to you wanting this particular role.
* **What are your strengths? -** Pick the three biggest attributes that you think will get you the job and give examples of how you have used these strengths in a work situation. They could be tangible skills, such as proficiency in a particular computer language, or intangible skills such as good man-management. If you’re not sure where to start, take a look at the job description. There is usually a section listing candidate requirements, which should give you an idea of what they are looking for.
* **What are your weaknesses? -** The dreaded question, which is best handled by picking something that you have made positive steps to redress. For example, if your IT ability is not at the level it could be, state it as a weakness but tell the interviewer about training courses or time spent outside work hours you have used to improve your skills. Your initiative could actually be perceived as strength. On no accounts say “I don’t have any weaknesses”, your interviewer won’t believe you, or “I have a tendency to work too hard”, which is seen as avoiding the question.
* **Why should we hire you?** / **What can you do for us that other candidates can't?** - What makes you special and where do your major strengths lie? You should be able to find out what they are looking for from the job description. “I have a unique combination of strong technical skills and the ability to build long-term customer relationships” is a good opening sentence, which can then lead onto a more specific example of something you have done so far in your career. State your biggest achievement and the benefit it made to the business, then finish with “Given the opportunity, I could bring this success to your company.”
* **What are your goals?** / **Where do you see yourself in five years time?** - It’s best to talk about both short-term and long-term goals. Talk about the kind of job you’d eventually like to do and the various steps you will need to get there, relating this in some way back to the position you’re interviewing for. Show the employer you have ambition, and that you have the determination to make the most of every job you have to get where you want to be.
* **Why do you want to work here?** - The interviewer is listening for an answer that indicates you’ve given this some thought. If you’ve prepared for the interview properly, you should have a good inside knowledge of the company’s values, mission statement, development plans and products. Use this information to describe how your goals and ambition matches their company ethos and how you would relish the opportunity to work for them. Never utter the phrase “I just need a job.”
* **What are three positive things your last boss would say about you? -** This is a great time to sell youself through someone else’s words. Try to include one thing that shows your ability to do the job, one thing that shows your commitment to the work, and one thing that shows you are a good person to have in a team. For example, “My boss has told me that I am the best designer he has ever had. He knows he can always rely on me, and he likes my sense of humour.”
* **What salary are you seeking?** - You can prepare for this by knowing the value of someone with your skills. Try not to give any specific numbers in the heat of the moment – it could put you in a poor position when negotiating later on. Your interviewer will understand if you don’t want to discuss this until you are offered the job. If they have provided a guideline salary with the job description, you could mention this and say it’s around the same area you’re looking for.
* **If you were an animal, which one would you want to be? -** Interviewers use this type of psychological question to see if you can think quickly. If you answer ‘a bunny’, you will make a soft, passive impression. If you answer ‘a lion’, you will be seen as aggressive. What type of personality will it take to get the job done?

**You should always have some questions for your interviewer to demonstrate your interest in the position. Prepare a minimum of three questions, some which will give you more information about the job, and some which delve deeper into the culture and goals of the company.**

##  Body Language

## Body language is 80% of what the interviewer notices and only 20% is what you actually say.

It begins even before you say your first word. They’ll be sizing you up as you walk across the room to shake hands. Be conscious of how you look and what you’re doing, and try not to overlook the verbal and non-verbal signals you’re sending out in the rush to parade your carefully prepared answers before them.

 **Pace yourself**

Speak deliberately more slowly than you would normally. There’s a trick here. You’ll be nervous as you go in, so you will naturally speak more quickly than normal. If you concentrate on pronouncing your words individually, you’ll actually be speaking at a normal speed.

Think of good speakers you’ve experienced throughout your education/employment. You’ll remember the ones who were more focused and engaging. That’s not to say they were the funniest or loudest or most entertaining. But they were almost certainly the most animated. Focus. You’re not here to entertain – so leave the jokes at the door – but you are here to look like you want the job. Concentrate on that and let your commitment and energy show through.

 **Non-verbal signals**

A firm but not crushing handshake is the one to go for. The wet fish technique is a guaranteed turn off. Also, try to ensure your hands are dry and warm – as natural as possible. If you tend to perspire under stress, try to run your hands under cold water before going in and if stress makes your skin cold, do the opposite.

Don’t slouch in your chair, whether in reception or the interview room. Slouching says “I don’t care” . Walk and sit up straight. If you’re worried about your posture, sit naturally in front of a mirror at home and see how you look.

Always look the questioner in the eye, but not in a way that could be misunderstood. Be confident, and don’t stare past your questioner or at the floor. Avoid glancing nervously around the room as this is the classic sign of someone with something to hide. If there is more than one interviewer, make sure you look at each of them when answering questions, and keep your eyes on their face.

To find out what to do with your hands, watch yourself in a mirror when you’re on a phone. You’ll use some of the same gestures when you’re talking. It’s fine to gesture with your hands, but don’t overdo it so you look like you’re directing traffic.

**Don’t fidget and don’t play around with your hair, pen, nails, chair, jiggle your knees, tap your leg or anything else. It drives people crazy and will distract them from what you’re saying. You can fiddle with a paper clip (discreetly!) as a stress reliever if it helps you.**

**Finally and most importantly:-**

**Switch Your Mobile Off before you go into the interview.**

**Useful Links**

[**http://www.interview-skills.co.uk/blog/top-10-competency-based-interview-questions-and-sample-answers/**](http://www.interview-skills.co.uk/blog/top-10-competency-based-interview-questions-and-sample-answers/)

[**https://www.assessmentday.co.uk/free/competancy-based-interview/CompetancyBasedInterview-Questions.pdf**](https://www.assessmentday.co.uk/free/competancy-based-interview/CompetancyBasedInterview-Questions.pdf)

[**https://www.assessmentday.co.uk/free/competancy-based-interview/CompetancyBasedinterview-Reccommendations.pdf**](https://www.assessmentday.co.uk/free/competancy-based-interview/CompetancyBasedinterview-Reccommendations.pdf)

[**https://www.reed.co.uk/career-advice/job-interview-questions-for-employers/**](https://www.reed.co.uk/career-advice/job-interview-questions-for-employers/)

[**https://www.themuse.com/advice/10-interview-questions-you-should-never-ask-and-5-you-always-should**](https://www.themuse.com/advice/10-interview-questions-you-should-never-ask-and-5-you-always-should)

