

INTERNSHIP
ARCHITECTS

Every great future
begins with a blueprint.

INTERNSHIP ARCHITECTS

Student Blueprint:

INTERVIEW QUESTION ANSWERING

Interview



INTERVIEWS QUESTIONS

Will all the questions be challenging?

How is it decided who they hire?

What can I do to stand out?

Interview



INTERVIEWS Q & A

Q: Will all the questions be challenging?

A: That really depends on the interviewer and the company. Not all will be challenging, some may seem informal. Some companies have very strict guidelines so every applicant is asked the same questions. Often it depends on the interviewer, some will be more conversational, some will be more Q and A. Regardless, if you approach your interview with your own agenda and talking points you will be successful.

Interview

INTERVIEWS Q & A

Q: How is it decided who they hire?

A: As mentioned previously, it's about who they feel is the best fit. What gaps does their team have and what candidate can fill those gaps. It is usually quite subjective. It comes down to who did they connect with the best.

Interview



INTERVIEWS Q & A

Q: What can I do to stand out?

A: You stand out by being your authentic, unique self. Take the reflection and research you did and both tell and show them what you have to offer. Have your talking points and drive those points home. An interview is basically a marketing campaign; stay true to your product (yourself), don't stray from your message.

Interview



INTERVIEW PREPARATION

How do you prepare?

- ~~Reflection~~
- ~~Research~~
- Understanding interview questions and answers
- Practice

Interview



INTERVIEW ANSWERS

“Show up” for your interview.

- Be prepared
- Speak confidently and articulately
- Come across in a professional manner
- Have 2-3 talking points and stay on message of these points
- Demonstrate those points
- Relate to the position
- Listen actively

Interview



Do's

- Be honest, positive, authentic, genuine, confident
- Give thorough, specific answers
- Get your talking points across
- Highlight your competency strengths (2-3)
- Give examples, to "prove" your abilities
- Be articulate
- Be positive

Don'ts

- Be unprofessional
- Be arrogant, cocky, boastful...
- Use filler words
- Start answers with "I think", "I feel" or "I believe"
- List too many traits
- Overgeneralize
- Have answers that are too brief or too long
- Be negative

Interview



CONFIDENT, ARTICULATE ANSWERS

“Why are you interested in this job?”

Good, Average, Not Good

- *“Umh, yeah, I think I would be good at this job, because, umhh, I like to be around people. Yeah, like, I’m not real good at talking to people, but umh my mom said I should umh apply.”*

Why is this not good?: Uses filler words; starts with “I think”; doesn’t give a specific answer; unprofessional

Interview



CONFIDENT, ARTICULATE ANSWERS

“Why are you interested in this job?”

Good, Average, Not Good

- *“I think I could do this job because I am good at communication, time management, Excel, teamwork, leadership, social media, getting tasks completed, and much more.”*

Why is this average?: Starts with “I think”; gives a long list of skills (listener can’t remember anything), nothing specific

Interview



CONFIDENT, ARTICULATE ANSWERS

“Why are you interested in this position?”

Good, Average, Not Good

- *“I am interested in this position, because I’m excited to bring my problem solving (critical thinking) and collaboration (teamwork) skills to Coca Cola’s summer internship program. “*

Why is this good?: Well worded, gives two specific skills, names the company/position

NOTE THIS IS THE START OF THE ANSWER, NOT THE FULL ANSWER!

Interview

CONFIDENT, ARTICULATE ANSWERS

Strategies to Avoid Filler Words

Strategy #1

Be okay with silence. Most people use filler words when they are thinking, formulating thoughts or a response. It's similar to a reflex or a natural response. Train yourself to be okay with quiet when you are thinking.

Strategy #2

Pause, take a breath. If you sense you will use a filler word, pause. Don't say anything. Take a breath if you need to. Once you are confident that you will speak words, proceed.

Interview



CONFIDENT, ARTICULATE ANSWERS

Strategy #3

Repeat the question as the beginning of your answer. This will give you time to think, and it gives your answer a frame of reference.

Strategy #4

Say, "That's a good question, may I have a moment to think about it?". Then in your head, formulate your answer without talking. When you are ready to speak, make eye contact which indicates that you are ready. You can't do this too frequently, but it's a great strategy when you are stumped.

Interview



CONFIDENT, ARTICULATE ANSWERS

Strategy #5

This only works at the very beginning of your interview. **Have a prepared sentence that you will say.** That way regardless of the first question asked, you have practiced and can recite a statement. It can be something like, “I am very excited to be talking with you today.” or “Thank you for this opportunity, I’m excited to share more about what I can offer x company.”

Try using these strategies anytime, all the time!

Interview



CONFIDENT, ARTICULATE ANSWERS

Don’t start with “I think”, “I feel” or “I believe”.

- No need
- Lacks confidence
- Stating facts so you don’t need caveats
- It is not cocky to state things directly

Interview



CONFIDENT, ARTICULATE ANSWERS

Who would you hire?

1. “I think I could help you improve your interviewing skills some.”
2. “I’ll work with you and ask you possible interview questions to improve your interviewing skills.”
3. To improve your interviewing skills, I will first do a mock interview to determine what your interviewing patterns are. From there we will analyze your strong answers compared to your weaker answers.

Interview



CONFIDENT, ARTICULATE ANSWERS

Who would you hire?

3. “To improve your interviewing skills, I will first do a mock interview to determine what your interviewing patterns are. From there we will analyze your strong answers compared to your weaker answers.”

- Confident but not arrogant
- Strategic
- Gave a plan

Interview



INTERVIEW ANSWER

What makes good interview answers?

- You listen and fully address the question
- Your answer is SPECIFIC, do not overgeneralize
- You include relevant personal information, focusing on the talking points whenever possible
- You tell a story to demonstrate your skill ability
- You tie what you are saying to the position
- You articulate what you are saying confidently and professionally

You can mix this up, don't sound like a robot that every answer is in this exact pattern.

Interview



YOUR TALKING POINTS

Remember the entire interview is about you. What you know is in your control. Use:

- Your self reflection
- Your knowledge gained from researching the position, company and people

What you don’t know is exactly what questions they will ask you.

HOWEVER, regardless of the question if you have talking points you have content for answers.

Interview



YOUR TALKING POINTS

Why should we hire you?

Self Reflection:

- 2-3 specific talking points
  - Remember the 5 career readiness competencies are what employers are looking for so you can start there
- Specific, illustrative examples or stories that prove you have these abilities

Interview



YOUR TALKING POINTS

Why should we hire you?

Research

- Tie what you have to offer with what you know about the company and position

Interview



TALKING POINTS

It’s time for you to determine your own talking points. You are uniquely qualified for the positions you seek. How are you going to talk about your unique strengths, attributes, traits, competencies, skills, experiences, etc.?

Remember you’re answering “Why should we hire you?”

Interview



TALKING POINTS ACTIVITY

What are your talking points going to be be for these positions of interest to you?

Complete the Interview Talking Points Activity. Come up with three specific talking points and 2 SPECIFIC examples or stories to illustrate each talking point (more is fine but at least 2). Lastly, how could that skill be beneficial in the position of interest.

Refer back to other Internship Architects activities such as the: Competency Activity; Interview Preparation, Self Reflection Brainstorm Activity; Interview Preparation, Company Activity and your resume, cover letter and LinkedIn profile.

Interview



TALKING POINTS ACTIVITY

What are your talking points?

You need to embrace these points and “stay on message” throughout your interview. Think about how companies stick to their advertising messages. Like Nike, “Just do it” you too have to stick to your message.

Interview



INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Now you know what you will talk about during your answers, what will the questions be?

- Infuse your talking points into as many answers as possible.
- You can't anticipate all the questions that will be asked, but your talking points should be able to flex to answer many interview questions.
- Having those examples will also help when asked questions about, "tell me a time when".

What questions should you expect?

Interview



INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Understanding interview questions and answers

- 5 Most Common Questions
- Traditional/General Interview Questions
- Behavioral Interview Questions
- Situational/Problem-Solving/Case Interview Questions
- Job Specific Interview Questions
- Creative, Unusual Interview Questions

Interview



INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

5 Most Common Questions

1. Tell me (us) about yourself.
2. What are some of your strengths?
3. What are some of your weaknesses?
4. Why do you want this position?
5. What questions do you have for me (us)?

Interview



INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

5 Most Common Questions

- Have answers as these are expected questions
- Use your talking points, set your “agenda”
- Answer thoroughly, prove your answers
- Listen carefully to the question (did they say weakness or weaknesses)

Interview



INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Tell me (us) about yourself.

- Start with a prepared sentence so less likely to start with a filler word
- Use your elevator pitch
- Repeat your FULL name
    - If you have preferred name this is where you can share that name
- Basic autobiographical information
- Most important past experiences

Interview



INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Tell me (us) about yourself.

- List 2-3 competencies/talking points
    - Talking points should not be I have lots of experience in the field
- Focus on why you want this job
- You're not going into depth with this answer; you are outlining the things you will be talking about in more detail throughout the interview (similar to an introductory paragraph).

Interview



INTERVIEW QUESTION EXAMPLE

Tell me (us) about yourself.

"Thank you for the opportunity to talk with you today {prepared sentence}. I am Anita Job {full name}, I'm a senior with majors in Political Science and Marketing, a unique combination {autobiographical info}. I have worked as a campus tour guide and in sales at the Apple store {experiences}. These experiences are people-forward roles which improved my strong verbal communication skills {competency}. I also enjoy "behind the scenes" work where I can think creatively to come up with new solutions {competency}. My experiences and unique combination of majors has provided me with the tools to be effective working on political campaigns {tie to position}."

Interview



INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

What are some of your strengths?

- List 2-3, no more!
- Mentioned them in “tell me about yourself” now going into more depth
- Be specific
  - Not Good: Time management
  - Good: Ability to prioritize
- Give examples to prove your strengths
- Tie to the position

Interview

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

What are some of your strengths?

“As I just mentioned I have strong verbal communication skills. As a tour guide, I have learned to talk with confidence to a wide range of audiences. Some families are quiet, so I try to ask open-ended questions to know what to talk about, but also at times I don’t talk at all so they can process. Other families are very engaged and talkative, but I try to not get off topic with them. Additionally, I think creatively. As a tour guide, I’m creative in asking questions to both types of students and using that information to cater my tours. As a campaign worker, I’ll also ask questions, when engaging with constituents and adapt my manner based on the people and their answers.”

Interview



INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

What are some of your weaknesses?

- Give specific answers
  - Do NOT say, “I don’t have any”
- Don’t overgeneralize
  - Not Good: Time management
  - Good: Inability to say no
- Nothing too egregious to the position (ie a teacher candidate saying I don’t like children)
- Don’t use the “too much of a …”
- Focus on how you compensate, what you’ve learned, how you are improving
- End on a positive note

Interview



INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

What is a weakness of yours?

“A weakness of mine is not prioritizing. I find myself choosing to work on something that is of most interest to me and not what is due the soonest. I will get so engrossed in it that hours can quickly elapse before I realize it. Then I may be delayed in finishing other work. I don’t miss deadlines, but I am more rushed than I should be sometimes. Recently, I started creating a daily task schedule in priority order, and I am trying my best to follow that schedule. I also set alarms for every 75 minutes when I’m studying. To make myself take a short break and check that I am on task. This has really helped me get my economics classwork done even though it’s not my favorite.”

Interview



INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Why do you want this position?

- Be specific
- Show the research you've done
- Incorporate the self reflection you've done
- Be convincing
- Tie in your talking points and how related to the position
- Don't say, "I don't know anything about the job" or "Can you tell me what this job entails"

Interview



INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Why do you want this position?

“I know I could do great work as a campaign manager for X. For my senior research project, I researched how and when people make decisions on elections. The timeline has moved up due to early voting. Working on this campaign will enable me to be creative in creating messaging and strategically campaigning early in the season. Additionally, I like to get out of the office and interact with people, so the events and door to door is up my alley. This would be a dream job for me because I believe in X, and contributing to her getting elected would be professionally and personally rewarding.”

Interview



INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

What questions do you have for me (us)?

- You MUST ask questions, not asking questions makes it look like you aren't interested
- Have questions prepared ahead of time, and written down (you may refer to the list during the interview)
- Ask insightful questions about things that really are important or matter to you
- Demonstrate the research and reflection you have done
- Ask 2-4, not too many

Interview



INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

What questions do you have for me (us)?

- See the resource list for: Questions to Ask at an Interview
- **Always** ask about the timeline and next steps

Interview

INTERVIEW ANSWERS ACTIVITY

It’s time for you to outline your interview answers to these questions.

Please open the Interview Answers Activity. You will use this same activity throughout this lesson. Write out your answers (or an outline of your answers) to the 5 Most Common Interview Questions.

After the 5 most common, STOP. Review the next video for additional interview question information.

Interview



INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Traditional/General Interview Questions (sample questions)

- What do you know about this company?
- Why should we hire you?
- How has college prepared you for this position?
- What are your short and long term career goals?
- Tell me (us) about your previous work experience.
- What makes our company better or different than our competitors?
- Tell me (us) about your proudest accomplishment.

Interview



INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Traditional/General Interview Questions

- Many interview questions will be this type of question
- Not asking for stories, but stories can be added to your answers for demonstration purposes
- Can’t guess which ones will be asked

Interview



INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Traditional/General Interview Questions

Elements to your answer:

- Answer the question, but also answer the underlying/unspoken questions
- Use your talking points
    - Tell me (us) about your previous work experience.
        - As a wait staff I used my strong communication skills.....
- Answer thoroughly, prove your answers (share examples)
- Tie to the position when appropriate

Interview



INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Behavioral Interview Questions (samples)

- Tell me about a time when you came up with a unique, creative solution to a problem.
- Describe a time when you received feedback and how you incorporated that feedback into improving yourself.
- Tell me about a time when you made a mistake (at work) and what did you do about it.
- Give me an example of a time when you part of a successful team.
- Tell me about a time when you used technology to solve a problem or make tasks easier.
- Tell me about a when you fell short of a goal you set for yourself.
- Describe a time when you had to consider a different perspective than your own and how did that help you solve the problem.

Interview



INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Behavioral Interview Questions

- Tell me about a time when....
- Give me an example of a time when you...
- Describe a time when....

Elements to your Answer:

- STAR Answer format
- Tell a true story about a **particular** time, do not generalize, do make it up
- The important part of the answer is how you handled the situation, NOT the situation itself

Interview



INTERVIEW QUESTIONS
STAR Answer!

S-Situation

T-Task

A-Action

R-Result x 2

Part	Description	Length
S-Situation	Describe the situation or scene. Provide necessary specifics but not unnecessary details.	1-2 sentences
T-Task	What was your personal task. The role or responsibility you had.	1 sentence
A-Action	Explain what steps you took. Provide necessary specifics but not unnecessary details. Focus on what you did. This is where you're proving yourself.	3-6 sentences
R-Result (1)	Share the outcome of the situation.	1-2 sentences
Result (2)	State what you learned or gained from the situation.	2-3 sentences

Tell me about your proudest achievement.

Part	Description
S-Situation (1-2 sentences)	One of my proudest accomplishments was as a childcare provider making the separation time in the morning easier for this one child, Drew, and his parent who were both anxious about separation. The parent was, at first, hesitant to be leaving her child in someone else's care, and the child sensed this and acted out each day. They would then feed off each other and it became a very chaotic, dramatic scene each day.
T-Task (1 sentence)	My goal was to make that separation time less stressful for everyone: parent, child, other children, staff and myself.

Tell me about your proudest achievement.

Part	Description
A-Action (3-5 sentences)	First, I gathered information. I spoke with the parent to address her concerns after I had noted both of their behaviors for a few days. I also asked her for information about how she soothed her child when he was upset during other experiences. Throughout the day, I experimented to see what were some of his favorite activities. Second, I put together a plan. Knowing that distraction is a good remedy and figuring out that building blocks were his favorite activity. At pick up that day, I had the building blocks out and the parent saw how much he liked them. I explained to her the plan. I had to have her cooperation. Lastly, to put the plan in action. For the next few days, as soon as they arrived, I would say, “Drew put your stuff in your cubby, give mom a kiss and come right to the building block station”. Short and sweet goodbyes are always better. The mom agreed she would not hand, but quickly leave and watch from the office one-way mirror.

Tell me about your proudest achievement.

Part	Description
R-Result (1) (1-2 sentences)	After three days, there was no more crying at separation time, and at pick up he told his mom how much fun he had. She was clearly relieved.
Result (2) (2-3 sentences)	I learned that being confident in my understanding of overcoming separation anxiety, finding a high satisfaction activity and communicating clearly with the parent would alleviate the stress of the situation. This was the first of many times I had to confront this situation, but it was my proudest because we made significant improvements in less than a week.

Interview



INTERVIEW ANSWERS ACTIVITY

It’s time for you to outline your interview answers to behavioral interview questions.

Return to the Interview Answers Activity and write out your answers to two behavioral interview question using the STAR answer format.

Then stop, review the next portion of the video for additional interview question information.

Resumes



STOP: WORK ON OUTLINING ANSWERS TO

BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Interview



INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Situational/Problem-Solving/Case Interview Questions (samples)

These are going to be very specific to the position or field.

- Sell this product (a pen) to me.
- A customer is losing money, how will you determine the problem?
- How would you handle this situation (a relevant to the job situation is presented)....
- Here is a fake company's profile, what recommendations would you give to improve employee morale?
- Looking at this model, how could you increase its structural integrity?

Interview



INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Situational/Problem-Solving/Case Interview Questions

- Listen carefully to the question and directions
- Ask questions if you need clarification
- From your research hopefully you learned about the requirements of the position so that might help you anticipate the type of questions you could be asked
- No right or wrong answer, focus on how you got to that answer
- Use/demonstrate your career readiness competency ability
- Show your talking points

Interview



INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Job Specific Interview Questions (samples)

These are going to be very specific to the position or field.

- What stocks would you invest in today?
- Which software are you most familiar with?
- Explain the use of X...
- What journals, newspapers, apps do you read to stay informed about this field?

Interview



INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Job Specific Interview Questions

- Use what you learned in your research, especially talking with people in the field and ask about likely interview questions
- Listen carefully to the question and address it in your answer
- Don’t make things up, be honest but professional
- If you don’t have an answer, ask for a moment to think (Strategy #4)

Interview



INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Creative, Unusual Interview Questions (samples)

- Please describe yourself as part of a bicycle. What part of the bicycle best represents you?
- Please describe yourself as part of a salad. What part of the salad best represents you?
- If you could meet a famous person who would it be and why?
- You're tasked with taking a client to lunch, what restaurant would you choose and why?
- When you are purchasing a birthday present for a significant person in your life, what goes into your decision making process?
- If you could be an animal, what animal would you be and why?
- How many jelly beans would fit into this coffee mug?

Interview



INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Creative, Unusual Interview Questions

- These questions are to learn how you think
- There’s no wrong answer
- Think creatively
- Explain your answer, your logic (that is what they are looking for)
- Ask clarifying questions if necessary
- Reinforce your talking points whenever possible (the handlebars because I’m a leader)

Interview

INTERVIEW ANSWERS ACTIVITY

Return to the Interview Answers Activity. Work on answers to two Creative, Unusual Interview questions.

Remember to focus on your thought process in your answer.

Interview



INTERVIEW ANSWERS ACTIVITY

How did you do coming up with answers for the various types of interview questions?

You should not memorize answers. Outline and prepare ideas, but don't try to memorize them. You don't want to sound like a robot, and you don't know exactly what they are going to ask you about.

It's not easy; however, practicing will make it easier.

Interview



INTERVIEW PREPARATION

How do you prepare?

- ~~Reflection~~
- ~~Research~~
- ~~Understanding interview questions and answers~~
- Practice

Interview



INTERVIEW PRACTICE

How can you practice?

- Use the questions provided on these slides and come up with answers
- Use AI to prepare questions for you
- Ask someone to role play with you
- Use a mock interview platform (many colleges have)
- Record your answers and replay
- Do a mock interview with AI
- Do a mock interview consultation with Internship Architects

Interview



USING AI TO HELP WITH INTERVIEWS

Asking AI for interview help is another important way to include AI in your preparation.

AI can:

- Provide you with sample interview questions
- Give you information about what to include in your answer
- Improve answers you drafted

Interview



USING AI TO HELP WITH INTERVIEWS

Sample Prompts:

Ask AI to provide sample interview questions

- Please provide a list of 10 interview questions based on this job posting
- What are the most common questions to be asked in an interview for this field
- Please provide an entire interview based on this job description
- Provide me a list of 10 creative or unusual interview questions for this field

Interview



USING AI TO HELP WITH INTERVIEWS

Give you information about what to include in your answer

Sample Prompts:

- Write an answer to this interview <question> using the STAR format focusing on my experience as a <position> and my skills in <skills>
- Here is my resume (not your name and contact information) help me answer interview questions for this job description
- Provide sample interview answers for this <question> based on my resume (not your name and contact information)

Interview



USING AI TO HELP WITH INTERVIEWS

Improve answers you drafted

Sample Prompts:

- Write an answer to this interview <question> using the STAR format focusing on my experience as a <position> and my skills in <skills>
- Here is my answer to the interview <question>, make it more focused on my <skill>
- Help me put into the STAR answer format this story

Interview



INTERVIEW PREPARATION

How do you prepare?

- ~~Reflection~~
- ~~Research~~
- ~~Understanding interview questions and answers~~
- ~~Practice~~

ALWAYS PREPARE FOR INTERVIEWS. The candidate who demonstrates “Why should we hire you?” best is the one hired.

Interview

PRACTICE

Practice makes things easier/better so be sure to practice before an interview.

Book a mock interview consultation with Internship Architects. We'll simulate a virtual interview. Not only will we ask you relevant interview questions we'll give you feedback on how to improve your answers!

Interview

REFLECTION and LESSON COMPLETION

1. Complete the Reflection.
2. Take the quiz to complete this lesson and move on to the next lesson.

Thank you for using Internship Architects' blueprints.

Every great future
begins with a blueprint.