



COMPLIMENTARY INTERVIEW GUIDE & PREP TEMPLATE

INDEX

Introduction	2
Research	3
Know Your Story	4
Behavioural Questions	5
Common Questions	6
Questions To Ask Them	7
Logistics	8
Dress Code	9
During The Interview	10
After The Interview	11
Common Mistakes	12
Interview Prep Checklist	13

INTRODUCTION

This complimentary interview guide & prep template is a short, step-by-step guide to help you prepare for your upcoming interview. It is not meant to cover every possible interview situation. Rather, it covers the things that matter most.

Before we begin, there is one important detail you must understand.

An interview is a two-way conversation. Both sides are assessing each other.

The purpose of an interview is to assess three things, on both sides:

- **Technical fit.** Can you do the job, and does the role match your skills and experience?
- **Cultural fit.** Will you work well with this team, and will this team work well with you?
- **Long-term alignment.** Do your career goals and the company's direction line up, so this works for years, not months?

The employer is deciding whether you are the right person for the role. You are deciding whether this is the right role, team, and company for you. Go in prepared to do both.

BE PROFESSIONAL, AND BE YOURSELF

Take the pressure off yourself. Be professional, but be genuine. Do not try to be someone you are not.

If you get hired as someone you are not, you will have to keep being that person every day, in a role that may not be right for you. That is a hard way to work, and it rarely ends well for you or the employer.

Represent yourself authentically. If they hire you, you want them to be hiring the real you.

Legal Disclaimer: This complimentary interview guide & prep template does not make any promises or guarantee any specific result.

RESEARCH

Preparation is the biggest thing you control. Plan to spend at least an hour researching before your interview.

THE COMPANY

- Read their website: what they do, who their customers are, and where they operate.
- Read their recent news, press releases, and LinkedIn posts.
- Understand their size, history, and any recent growth or changes.
- Note their mission and values, and think about where yours line up.

THE ROLE

- Reread the job description line by line.
- For each requirement, think of an example from your experience that shows you can do it.
- Note anything you are unsure about, and ask your recruiter before the interview.

THE PEOPLE

- Ask your recruiter who you will be meeting, and their job titles.
- Look them up on LinkedIn. Note their background and how long they have been with the company.

YOUR RECRUITER

Your recruiter at Martin Recruitment knows the client, the role, and often the hiring manager. Ask us anything.

KNOW YOUR STORY

Before you can talk about the job, you need to be able to talk clearly about yourself. Expect to be asked about anything on your resume.

KNOW YOUR RESUME

- Reread the resume that was submitted for you.
- Be ready to walk through every role, including why you moved on, and speak to your:
 - Duties
 - Responsibilities
 - Projects
 - Accomplishments
- Know your dates, and be ready to back up every number and claim.

TELL ME ABOUT YOURSELF

This is often the first question. Prepare your answer and practise it out loud.

- **Present:** your current role and what you are good at.
- **Past:** the experience that got you here.
- **Future:** why this role is the right next step.
- **Personal:** one short personal detail, such as a hobby or an interest.

Keep it mostly professional. One personal detail is enough to help them get to know you.

YOUR REASONS FOR LEAVING

Reasons for leaving matter. Employers want to understand why you are leaving your current role, and why you left each role before it.

- Be prepared to speak about your reasons for leaving each role in detail.
- Be prepared to explain why this position is a better fit than your current role, or the previous roles you left.

BEHAVIOURAL QUESTIONS

Behavioural questions ask how you handled real situations in the past. They often start with “Tell me about a time when.” The best way to answer them is with the STAR method.

Situation	Set the scene. Where were you, and what was going on?
Task	What were you responsible for?
Action	What did you do? Focus on your own actions, not the team's.
Result	What happened because of it? Use numbers where you can.

HOW TO PREPARE

- Prepare 5 to 6 stories, such as a challenge, a conflict, a mistake, a time you led, and a tight deadline.
- Give real detail. One sentence for each part is not enough.
- Say “I”, not “we”, when describing what you did.

Example Question: Tell me about a time you had to meet a tight deadline.

Situation: I was an Intermediate Accountant at a construction company with about \$40 million in annual revenue. Two weeks before our fiscal year-end, our Controller resigned unexpectedly. The external auditors were scheduled to start fieldwork three weeks after year-end, and nothing had been prepared for them yet.

Task: Our CFO asked me to take ownership of the year-end audit file, on top of my regular month-end duties. I had supported an audit before, but I had never led one. The file had to be ready on the first day of fieldwork.

Action: I started by reviewing last year's audit file and the auditors' request list, and built a checklist of about 60 items, each with an owner and a due date. In the first week, I met with the audit senior to confirm their priorities and agree on a schedule. I handed two of my month-end reconciliations to our junior accountant and trained her on them, so I could block two hours every morning for the audit file. When I saw that the work-in-progress schedules for our three largest projects needed input from the project managers, I booked time with each of them that week, rather than waiting until the end.

Result: The file was ready two days before fieldwork started. The audit closed on schedule with no adjustments. The CFO asked me to lead the year-end file again the following year, and the checklist I built is still used today.

COMMON QUESTIONS

You will not know every question in advance, but most interviews include some version of these. Prepare an answer for each one, and practise them out loud.

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. Why are you interested in this role?
3. Why do you want to work for our company?
4. Why are you looking to leave your current role?
5. What are your greatest strengths?
6. What is an area you are working to improve?
7. Tell me about your biggest professional accomplishment.
8. Tell me about a time you made a mistake. How did you handle it?
9. Where do you see yourself in five years?
10. Why should we hire you?

KNOW YOUR WEAKNESSES

No one is perfect, and anyone who pretends to be is lying. Do not be ashamed of having a weakness. Every interviewer has them too.

Your answer needs two parts:

- **The weakness.** Something real.
- **What you are doing about it.** What you are doing to improve on it, or what you have already done.

You do not have to sugarcoat it or spin it into a positive. When people try, it is obvious, and it comes across as disingenuous. “I am too detail-oriented” is not a real answer. Give something real, and follow it up with what you are doing to improve.

QUESTIONS TO ASK THEM

The interview is a two-way conversation. This is your chance to find out whether the role, the team, and the company are right for you. Bring your own questions about what matters most to you. The topics below are only ideas you may want to consider, and the questions under each are just examples.

TECHNICAL FIT

- What does success look like in this role after the first 90 days?
- What are the biggest challenges facing the person in this role?

CULTURAL FIT

- How would you describe the team and how it works together?
- What do the best people on your team have in common?

ABOUT YOUR INTERVIEWERS

- Why did you decide to work here?
- Why have you been here as long as you have? What made you want to stay?
- What is the best part of working here?
- What is the hardest part of working here?

LONG-TERM ALIGNMENT

- Where is the company headed over the next few years?
- How have other people grown from this role?

AVOID

- Questions a quick look at their website would answer.
- Questions about salary, vacation, or benefits. Leave those to your recruiter.

LOGISTICS

Small details make a big first impression. Confirm these with your recruiter before the day of your interview: the date and time, the format, the address and parking, who to ask for, the names of your interviewers, and how long it will last.

PHONE AND VIDEO INTERVIEWS

- Test your camera, microphone, and internet connection a couple of hours before.
- Use a quiet, well-lit room with a plain background and no clutter behind you.
- Put your camera at eye level, and look at it when you speak.
- Log in 10 minutes early, and dress exactly as you would in person.
- Keep a glass of water beside you during the interview.

IN-PERSON INTERVIEWS

- Plan your route and parking the day before.
- Arrive 20 minutes early. If you get there sooner, wait nearby.
- Account for bad weather, traffic, construction, trains, and other delays.
- Bring a pen, a notebook, and your questions.
- Be polite to everyone you meet, including reception.

RUNNING LATE

If something comes up, call your recruiter right away.

DRESS CODE

WHAT TO WEAR

If you are interviewing, you should be the most professionally dressed person in the room. If you are unsure what that looks like for this employer, ask your recruiter.

WHAT NOT TO WEAR

- Athletic clothes
- T-shirts or tank tops
- Hats
- Jeans
- Ripped or torn clothing
- Dirty, stained, or wrinkled clothing
- Flip-flops

This applies to video interviews too. Dress exactly as you would in person.

DURING THE INTERVIEW

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

- A firm handshake and eye contact.
- Write down the name of each person interviewing you in your notebook.
- Thank them for their time.
- Put your phone away, on silent.
- Do not chew gum.
- Do not bring a coffee or tea for yourself unless you are bringing one for each person interviewing you.

ANSWERING QUESTIONS

- Listen to the full question before you answer. It is okay to take a moment to think.
- Be specific. Use real examples and numbers.
- It is okay to check with the interviewer whether your answer got to the root of what they were trying to find out.
- If you do not know something, say so honestly.
- Be yourself. They are assessing cultural fit, and so are you.

PANEL INTERVIEWS

Learn each person's name and role. When you answer, make eye contact with everyone, not just the person who asked.

CLOSING THE INTERVIEW

- Ask your remaining questions.
- Ask about next steps and timing.
- If you are interested, say so clearly.
- Thank each interviewer by name.

AFTER THE INTERVIEW

CALL YOUR RECRUITER

Call your recruiter as soon as the interview ends. Share how it went, the questions you were asked, what you liked, any concerns, and your level of interest. Your honest feedback helps us represent you and move the process forward.

SEND YOUR THANK-YOU NOTE TO YOUR RECRUITER

Within 24 hours, email a thank-you note to your recruiter, not directly to the interviewer. Thank each interviewer by name, mention something specific from the conversation, and confirm your interest in the role. Make it as detailed as possible.

KEEP US INFORMED

- Tell your recruiter about any other interviews, offers, or changes in your situation. No surprises.
- Respond quickly when we reach out.
- Be patient. Hiring decisions can take time, and we will keep you updated.

COMMON MISTAKES

These are the mistakes we see most often. Any one of them can cost you the opportunity.

1. **Not researching the company.** It shows, and it signals a lack of interest.
2. **Showing up late.** Plan your route, account for delays, and arrive 20 minutes early.
3. **Not being ready to explain your reasons for leaving.** Be prepared to speak about them in detail, for every role.
4. **Not answering the question.** Going off on a tangent instead of answering what was asked.
5. **Giving vague answers.** Use real examples and numbers.
6. **Not asking any questions.** It signals a lack of interest, and you miss your chance to assess them.
7. **Treating it as one-sided.** You are assessing them too.
8. **Bringing up salary, vacation, or benefits.** Leave compensation to your recruiter.
9. **Checking your phone.** Put it away before you walk in.
10. **Not calling your recruiter afterward.** We need your feedback to move things forward.

INTERVIEW PREP CHECKLIST

BEFORE THE INTERVIEW

- ☐ Researched the company, the role, and the people I am meeting.
- ☐ Reread the job description and my resume.
- ☐ Prepared my “tell me about yourself” answer.
- ☐ Thought through my reasons for leaving each role, and why this position is a better fit.
- ☐ Prepared 5 to 6 STAR stories.
- ☐ Prepared my own questions about what matters most to me.
- ☐ Confirmed the date, time, format, location, and interviewers with my recruiter.
- ☐ Planned my route and parking (in person).
- ☐ Picked my outfit.

ON THE DAY

- ☐ In person: arrived 20 minutes early.
- ☐ Video: tested my camera, microphone, and internet a couple of hours before, and logged in 10 minutes early with a glass of water beside me.
- ☐ Brought a pen, a notebook, and my questions.
- ☐ Put my phone away, on silent.

AFTER THE INTERVIEW

- ☐ Called my recruiter with my feedback.
- ☐ Sent my thank-you note to my recruiter within 24 hours.
- ☐ Told my recruiter about any other interviews or offers.