

Job Interview Prep Guide

Framework: Research → Practice → Debrief

Use for: Preparing thoroughly for a job interview from initial research to post-interview follow-up

Time required: 3–5 hours of total prep (distributed over multiple days)

How to use this template

1. Complete the Role Research section first, before drafting any answers. Preparation that isn't grounded in the actual role tends to be generic and forgettable.
2. Write out "My Story" answers fully, even if you won't read from them. Writing forces clarity that thinking alone doesn't produce.
3. Build your questions bank from the job description and your company research — generic questions get generic answers and generic impressions.
4. Fill in the "During the Interview" section in real time or immediately after. Memory fades within hours.
5. Run the post-interview debrief within 24 hours. The self-assessment shapes what you do differently next time.

Part 1: Role Research

Role Header

Field	Details
Company	[Company name]
Role Title	[Exact title from the job posting]
Interview Date / Time	[Date and time]
Hiring Manager	[Name and title, if known]
Recruiter	[Name]
Interview Format	[Phone screen / Panel / Loop / Case / Technical]
Round Number	[1st / 2nd / Final]

Company Research

Complete before any interview round. Surface-level research is obvious to interviewers.

Topic	Notes
Business model — how does the company make money?	
Revenue, growth stage, and funding (if relevant)	
Recent news, funding rounds, or major product launches	
Key products and services	
Target customers and market	
Main competitors and market position	
Company values and stated culture	
What employees say (Glassdoor, LinkedIn, industry forums)	
Why this company is interesting to me specifically	

Why this company interests me (written out):

[Fill in — make this specific. Generic enthusiasm is transparent. The strongest answers connect something real about this company's mission, product, or stage to something genuine in your background or interests.]

Role Requirements Analysis

Take the job description and translate each requirement into evidence from your own experience.

Must-Have Requirement (from job description)	My Evidence for This (specific story or example)
[Requirement 1]	[Story — what you did, in what context, with what result]
[Requirement 2]	[Story or example]
[Requirement 3]	[Story or example]
[Requirement 4]	[Story or example]
[Requirement 5]	[Story or example]
[Requirement 6 — any gap: how you'll address it]	[Honest framing of learning curve + compensating strengths]

Part 2: My Story

"Tell Me About Yourself"

3–4 bullet points covering: where you've been, what you've built/done, what you're looking for, and why this role/company. Aim for 90 seconds.

- [Where you started / current role and what you own]
- [A highlight or thread from your career — the thing that defines your professional identity]
- [What you're looking for in your next move — connect it to this role]
- [Why this company and role specifically — one genuine sentence]

Why This Role

[Write out your full answer. Connect your actual background and interests to what this role offers. Be specific about what drew you to this position over other options. Recruiters can tell when this answer is generic. 3–5 sentences.]

Why This Company

[Write out your full answer. Reference something specific — the product, the mission, a recent development, the stage of the company. "Great culture and growth opportunity" is not an answer. 2–4 sentences.]

Biggest Professional Win

Use STAR format: Situation (context) → Task (what you were responsible for) → Action (what you specifically did) → Result (what happened, with numbers if possible).

Situation: [What was the context? What was at stake?]

Task: [What were you specifically responsible for?]

Action: [What did you do? What decisions did you make? What was your specific contribution?]

Result: [What happened? Quantify if possible. What did you learn?]

Biggest Professional Challenge

Interviewers remember honest answers. Avoid the reflexive "I work too hard" non-answer.

The challenge: [What happened? Be honest about the difficulty.]

How I handled it: [What did you actually do — including any mistakes?]

What I learned: [Specific and genuine takeaway that changed how you work.]

Where I Want to Go

2–3 year direction. Connect it to this role — it should be a logical next step, not a detour.

[Write 3–5 sentences on where you're headed professionally. What kind of problems do you want to be solving? What skills do you want to develop? How does this role move you closer to that?]

Part 3: Questions Bank

Prepared Answers by Question Category

Write your prepared answer or key bullet points for each question. You won't read from these — but having written them means you've thought them through.

Behavioral Questions

Question	My Prepared Answer / Key Points
Tell me about a time you had to influence without authority.	
Describe a situation where you failed. What happened and what did you learn?	
Tell me about a time you had to make a decision with incomplete information.	
Describe a conflict with a colleague or stakeholder. How did you handle it?	
Tell me about a time you had to prioritize competing demands.	

Role-Specific / Technical Questions

Question	My Prepared Answer / Key Points
[Anticipated technical or domain question based on the role]	
[Anticipated question about a key skill in the job description]	
[Anticipated question about your experience with a specific tool, method, or domain]	

Leadership and Collaboration

Question	My Prepared Answer / Key Points
How do you work with people who have a different working style than yours?	
How do you give feedback to a peer who is underperforming?	
Tell me about a time you had to lead through ambiguity.	

Motivation and Culture Fit

Question	My Prepared Answer / Key Points
What kind of work environment brings out your best?	
What motivates you in your work?	

Question	My Prepared Answer / Key Points
Why are you leaving your current role?	

Questions to Ask Them

Bring at least 6–8. You'll typically get time for 3–4. Strong questions signal preparation and genuine interest.

Question	What I'm Trying to Learn
What does success look like in this role in the first 90 days?	Whether expectations are clear and achievable
What are the biggest challenges the person in this role will face?	Honest signal about what's hard
How does the team make decisions? Who has input vs. who decides?	Decision-making culture and whether I'll have real agency
What does the feedback culture look like — how do people grow here?	Whether growth is supported or performative
What's the biggest open question facing the team right now?	How self-aware and candid the interviewer is
How has the team changed in the last 12 months?	Stability, growth, or turbulence signal
What do you wish you'd known before joining?	Real talk, if they're willing to give it
What would make someone unsuccessful in this role?	The honest version of what they need
How is this team perceived inside the company?	Organizational dynamics and political landscape
What's next for this product/team in the next year?	Whether there's real investment and direction

Part 4: During the Interview

Interview Notes

(Fill in during or immediately after — within 1 hour)

Interviewer name and role: [Name, Title]

Key things they emphasized or returned to:

[What seemed to matter most to this person? What did they keep coming back to?]

Questions they asked me:

Question They Asked	How I Answered	Could Have Been Better?
[Question]	[Brief summary of your answer]	[Yes / No — if yes, what would you say now?]
[Question]	[Summary]	[Yes / No]
[Question]	[Summary]	[Yes / No]
[Question]	[Summary]	[Yes / No]
[Question]	[Summary]	[Yes / No]

Red flags I noticed:

[Anything that gave you pause — about the role, the team, the company, or the interviewer's candor]

Green flags I noticed:

[Anything that made this more compelling — specific things that increased your interest]

Part 5: Post-Interview

Thank You Note Draft

(Send within 24 hours. Personalize with something specific from the conversation.)

Hi [Interviewer Name],

Thank you for taking the time to speak with me about the [Role Title] role at [Company]. I particularly enjoyed [reference something specific from the conversation — a topic you discussed, a challenge they described, a point of genuine connection].

[One sentence reinforcing your interest and fit — connect something specific from the conversation back to why you're excited about this role.]

Looking forward to the next steps.

Best,

[Your Name]

Follow-Up Timeline

When	Action
Day 1 (same day or next morning)	Send thank you note to each interviewer
Day 3–5	Follow up with recruiter if you haven't heard next steps
Day 7+	If still no response, send one more brief follow-up; then let it rest

Self-Assessment

(Be honest. This is for your improvement, not your comfort.)

Category	Rating (H/M/L)	Notes
Preparation depth		
Clarity of answers		
Confidence and presence		
Quality of questions I asked		
Authentic connection with interviewer		
Overall performance vs. expectations		

What went well:

[Be specific — not just "I felt good" but what you actually did well and why it landed]

What to improve:

[Be specific — name the moment, what you said, what you wish you'd said instead]

What to do differently next time:

[One or two concrete adjustments for your next interview]

Decision Criteria

Rate this opportunity against what actually matters to you.

Criterion	Rating (H/M/L)	Notes
Role fit — does this role match my skills and interests?		
Growth potential — will I develop here?		
Culture — do I want to spend time with these people?		
Compensation — does it meet my needs and reflect my value?		
Team quality — are these people I'll learn from?		
Company trajectory — is this a place I want to be in 2 years?		
Manager — does this person invest in their reports?		

Overall interest level after this interview: [Higher / Same / Lower — and why]

Thorough preparation is the highest-leverage interview activity. Covered in depth at biztechprimer.com.

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