



YOU'RE HIRED!

**THE COMPLETE JOB INTERVIEW
PREPARATION WORKBOOK**

PRACTICAL • INTERACTIVE • FOR ANY CAREER

READ THE JOB. READ THE ROOM.

Turn a vacancy into a map for your interview.

THE BIG IDEA

A job advert is not simply a description. It is a collection of clues about what the employer needs, what problems the new employee will solve and what evidence you should bring to the interview.

By the end of this unit, you can:

- separate responsibilities, requirements and preferences;
- identify repeated priorities and hidden expectations;
- connect each requirement to evidence from your own life;
- adapt the same strategy to almost any profession;
- prepare a focused answer instead of repeating your entire CV.

Quick diagnostic

1. When you read a vacancy, what do you usually notice first?
2. Which words make you think, “I could do this job”?
3. Which requirements make you hesitate?
4. Do you prepare examples before an interview, or hope they come to mind?

TRAINER EXTENSION Ask the learner to describe a recent vacancy without looking at it. Notice which details they remember—and which they ignore.

1. A vacancy has four layers

Strong candidates do not give the same answer at every interview. They read the vacancy closely and decide which parts of their experience matter most for this particular employer.

LAYER

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

WHAT IT TELLS YOU

Responsibilities	Daily tasks and recurring problems	What you will actually be expected to do
Requirements	Skills, experience, qualifications and availability	The minimum evidence the employer wants
Preferences	"Ideally", "an advantage", "nice to have"	Helpful qualities that may not be essential
Culture clues	Values, tone and repeated adjectives	How the organisation wants people to work

Exercise 1 — Sort the clues

Write R (responsibility), M (minimum requirement), P (preference) or C (culture clue).

- ___ Deal with customer enquiries by phone and email.
- ___ At least one year of relevant experience.
- ___ Knowledge of German would be an advantage.
- ___ We take ownership and help one another.
- ___ Maintain accurate stock records.
- ___ Available for rotating weekend shifts.
- ___ Experience with SAP is desirable.
- ___ We value people who are practical, safety-conscious and ready to help.

Core language

ENGLISH	POLISH	INTERVIEW USE
required / essential	wymagany / niezbędny	I meet this requirement because...
desirable / preferred	mile widziany	Although I have not..., I have...
responsible for	odpowiedzialny za	I was responsible for...
proven ability	udokumentowana umiejętność	One example that demonstrates this is...

2. Read three very different vacancies

The strategy is universal even when the jobs are not. Read all three adverts and underline the three most important requirements in each.

Vacancy A — Warehouse Team Member

NORTHGATE DISTRIBUTION

Pick and pack orders accurately; use handheld scanners; follow safety procedures; work efficiently during busy periods. We need reliability, attention to detail and availability for two shifts. Forklift experience is useful but not essential.

Vacancy B — Café Supervisor

HARBOUR CAFÉ

Lead a small team during busy service; solve customer problems; organise opening and closing duties; train new staff. We need at least two years of customer-facing experience, confident communication and a calm approach under pressure.

Vacancy C — Junior Office Administrator

VERDE ENGINEERING

Manage calendars and documents; prepare simple reports; communicate with suppliers; keep records accurate. We need good written English, confidence with office software and strong organisation. Previous office experience is welcome but not required.

Exercise 2 — What matters most?

QUESTION	A	B	C
Which skill appears most important?	_____	_____	_____
What problem will	_____	_____	_____

the employee
solve?

Which
requirement is
only desirable?

What evidence
could a beginner
use?

LEVEL UP Which vacancy reveals its priorities most clearly? Which one leaves important questions unanswered? Explain.

3. Repetition reveals priority

Employers may express the same priority several times using different words. In the café advert, “busy service”, “customer problems” and “calm under pressure” all point towards one need: emotional control in a fast-moving environment.

Exercise 3 — Find the hidden theme

Match each group of phrases to the underlying priority.

PHRASES FROM AN ADVERT	HIDDEN PRIORITY
accurate records • check details • avoid errors	A. Adaptability
changing priorities • learn quickly • varied tasks	B. Safety awareness
follow procedures • report hazards • protective equipment	C. Accuracy
work with sales • support colleagues • share information	D. Teamwork
take initiative • own the outcome • work independently	E. Ownership

Exercise 4 — Strong clue or empty phrase?

Tick the phrases that are specific enough to help you prepare evidence.
Rewrite each vague phrase as a question you could ask the employer.

- fast-paced environment
- competitive salary
- rotating shifts including weekends
- great communication skills
- prepare weekly production reports
- exciting opportunity
- lift packages weighing up to 15 kg
- support customers in English and Polish

Example: “Competitive salary” → What salary range has been budgeted for the position?

Polish-speaker alert

DO NOT TRANSLATE LITERALLY

“Wymagania” may contain both genuine requirements and preferences.
Notice modal language: must / need to / required are strong; ideally / preferred / an advantage are softer.

SELF-STUDY CHECK Can you explain why “nice to have” does not always mean “do not apply”?

4. Build the evidence bridge

An adjective is a claim. Evidence makes the claim believable. For every important requirement, prepare one short example showing what you did and what happened.

EMPLOYER NEEDS	WEAK CLAIM	EVIDENCE
Accuracy	I am detail-oriented.	I checked 60 orders per shift and corrected discrepancies before dispatch.
Customer care	I am good with people.	I listened to an unhappy customer, clarified the problem and arranged a replacement.

Learning	I learn quickly.	I learned a new booking system in one week and then helped a colleague use it.
Reliability	I am reliable.	During the summer rush, I covered two unexpected absences and still completed my own tasks.

Exercise 5 — Upgrade the claims

Add specific evidence. You may use employment, education, volunteering, practical work or responsibilities outside work.

5. I work well in a team. One example is...
6. I can handle pressure. In my previous experience...
7. I am organised. I demonstrated this when...
8. I am willing to learn. Recently, I...
9. I communicate clearly. For example...

Self-check: Does each answer name a situation, explain what you personally did and show a useful result?

No formal experience?

You can still provide evidence. Think about school projects, caring responsibilities, sports, community activities, selling online, helping in a family business, organising travel, learning software or solving a practical problem.

EVIDENCE FORMULA

Requirement → Situation → Your action → Useful result. Keep the complete example relevant and usually under 45 seconds.

5. Choose what not to say

Relevance is not the same as honesty. A truthful answer can still be weak if it contains details that do not help the interviewer evaluate you for this role.

Exercise 6 — Rank the answers

Question: “What makes you suitable for this warehouse position?” Rank the answers from 1 (strongest) to 3 (weakest). Then explain your decision.

ANSWER A

I have done many different things. I worked in a shop, then I moved house, and now I want something stable. I am quite strong and I think I would be good at it.

ANSWER B

The advert emphasises accuracy, reliability and safe working. In my current retail job, I receive deliveries, check quantities against documents and report discrepancies. That experience would transfer directly to this position.

ANSWER C

I have never worked in a warehouse, but I really need a job and the location is convenient. I am sure I could learn everything.

Why B works

- It names the employer's priorities.
- It provides directly relevant evidence.
- It explains transferability instead of apologising.
- It avoids unrelated biography and unsupported promises.

Exercise 7 — Cut, keep or connect?

Mark each detail C (cut), K (keep) or L (keep only if you connect it clearly to the job).

- a hobby that demonstrates patience
- every duty from a ten-year career
- a qualification required in the advert
- the reason you disliked your previous manager
- a measurable result
- family information unrelated to availability
- experience from another sector using the same skill

TRAINER EXTENSION Ask a follow-up after every general claim: “Can you give me a specific example?”

6. Your vacancy analysis

Use a real advert if possible. If you do not have one, choose one of the three vacancies earlier in this unit.

STEP	YOUR NOTES
1. Position and employer	_____ _____
2. Three essential requirements	1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ _____
3. Two preferences	1. _____ 2. _____ _____
4. Repeated priority	_____ _____
5. Problem the employee will solve	_____ _____
6. Culture clue	_____ _____
7. My strongest evidence	_____ _____
8. My evidence gap	_____ _____

Useful answer frame

BUILD YOUR RESPONSE

From the advert, I understand that you need someone who can _____. My experience in _____ has prepared me for this because _____. One example is _____. This would help me contribute by _____.

Core version

The advert says that _____ is important. I have experience of _____. For example, I _____. I believe this would help me in the role.

Level Up version

What stood out to me was the emphasis on _____. In my previous experience, I demonstrated this by _____, which resulted in _____. I would bring the same approach to this position.

LEVEL UP CHALLENGE Infer one risk the employer may be trying to reduce. Turn that risk into a likely competency question, then prepare evidence.
Example: repeated accuracy language → “Tell me about a time you prevented or corrected an error.”

7. Interview Gym

Round 1 — Thirty-second scan

With a trainer: receive an unfamiliar advert. Working alone: open a saved vacancy or choose a new advert without studying it first. Set a 30-second timer. Identify the main task, the three strongest requirements and one question you would ask.

Round 2 — Requirement roulette

Choose a requirement at random. Give one relevant example without using the empty adjectives good, hardworking, nice or responsible.

Round 3 — The follow-up

Answer: “Why are you suitable for this position?” The interviewer then chooses two follow-ups:

- What exactly was your responsibility?
- What was difficult about that situation?
- What did you personally do?
- What was the result?
- What would you do differently now?
- How would this experience help you here?

Feedback card

CHECK	YES	NOT YET
I focused on the vacancy, not my whole CV.	☐	☐
I gave specific evidence.	☐	☐
I used “I” to explain my contribution.	☐	☐
I connected my example to the new role.	☐	☐
My answer was clear and under 60 seconds.	☐	☐

Personal action step

BEFORE THE NEXT UNIT

Find one real vacancy. Highlight essential requirements in black and desirable requirements in pencil. Prepare evidence for the three most important needs.

8. Self-study review

A. Complete the sentences

10. A qualification that is “desirable” is helpful but not necessarily _____.
11. Repeated words often reveal the employer’s main _____.
12. A strong answer connects a requirement to specific _____.
13. “I am organised” is a claim; a real example is _____.
14. Transferable skills can come from work and also from _____.

B. Improve this answer

WEAK ANSWER

I think I am suitable because I am hardworking, friendly and a fast learner. I have done lots of different things and I really want this job.

Rewrite it for one of the vacancies in this unit. Include two priorities from the advert and one piece of evidence.

C. Record yourself

Record a 45–60 second response to: “Why are you suitable for this position?” Listen once for content and once for delivery.

- Content: Did I mention the employer’s needs and give evidence?
- Delivery: Did I sound clear, calm and natural?
- Next attempt: What one change will make the answer stronger?

Unit checkpoint

I can... ☐ identify essential and desirable criteria ☐ find hidden priorities ☐ choose relevant evidence ☐ build a vacancy-focused answer

Answer key and suggested answers

Exercise 1

1 R; 2 M; 3 P; 4 C; 5 R; 6 M; 7 P; 8 C.

Exercise 2 — Suggested answers

A: accuracy/reliability; moving orders safely and correctly; forklift experience; a beginner could use examples involving careful practical work, punctuality or following procedures. B: calm customer leadership; keeping service running and resolving problems; none is clearly optional; evidence could come from retail, events, volunteering or team activities. C: organisation/accuracy; keeping schedules, documents and supplier communication under control; previous office experience; a beginner could use school projects, software learning or organising records elsewhere.

Exercise 3

1 C; 2 A; 3 B; 4 D; 5 E.

Exercise 4 — Suggested judgement

Specific enough to guide preparation: rotating shifts including weekends; prepare weekly production reports; lift packages weighing up to 15 kg; support customers in English and Polish. Vague until clarified: fast-paced environment; competitive salary; great communication skills; exciting opportunity. Possible questions: How often are the busiest periods, and what creates the pressure? What salary range has been budgeted? Which communication tasks matter most in this role? What makes this opportunity different from similar positions?

Exercise 5 — Self-check and models

Answers vary. A strong answer includes a situation, your action and a useful result. Models: "I work well in a team. During a college project, I divided the research tasks, checked progress and helped us submit on time." "I am willing to learn. Recently, I taught myself the basic functions of a new booking system and used it to organise appointments." Your example does not need to come from paid employment, but it must be truthful and relevant.

Exercise 6

Recommended ranking: B (1), A (2), C (3). A contains potentially relevant details but does not connect them clearly. C focuses on the candidate's needs and convenience rather than the employer's requirements.

Exercise 7 — Suggested answers

Hobby demonstrating patience: L. Every duty from a ten-year career: C. Required qualification: K. Disliked manager: C. Measurable result: K. Unrelated family information: C. Cross-sector experience using the same skill: K. An L detail becomes useful only when you state clearly how it proves a requirement of the role.

Self-study review

A: 1 essential/required; 2 priority; 3 evidence/example; 4 evidence; 5 education, volunteering, responsibilities outside work or practical experience. B: answers vary, but must name job-specific priorities and support at least one with a concrete example.

REMEMBER: Do not memorise the model wording. Reuse the structure with your own evidence and the language of the vacancy.

My correction log

After checking your work, record the changes that will improve your next answer. A trainer can also use this space for brief feedback.

WHAT I SAID OR WROTE	A STRONGER VERSION
_____	_____
—	—
_____	_____
—	—
_____	_____
—	—
_____	_____
—	—

Carry forward to Unit 2

☐ one real vacancy ☐ three priority requirements ☐ one evidence example for each requirement ☐ one question to ask the employer

KNOW WHAT YOU BRING.

Turn everyday experience into credible interview evidence.

THE BIG IDEA

Your job title is not your full story. Employers need evidence of what you can do, how you work and what changed because of your contribution. Useful evidence can come from employment, education, volunteering and real responsibilities outside paid work.

By the end of this unit, you can:

- identify skills hidden inside ordinary tasks;
- use evidence from different areas of life without exaggerating;
- describe your personal contribution and a useful result;
- select examples that match different roles;
- build an evidence bank for future interview questions.

Quick diagnostic

1. Which three skills would you say you have?
2. What real example proves each one?
3. Do you usually describe the team's work or your own contribution?
4. Which experience do you tend to undervalue?

TRAINER EXTENSION Write down the learner's first three adjectives. Later, replace each adjective with evidence.

1. Experience is bigger than employment

Many candidates reject useful examples because they did not happen in a formal job. The source matters less than the behaviour it proves. The example must be truthful, specific and relevant.

SOURCE	WHAT IT MAY PROVE	EXAMPLE
Paid work	standards, professional skills, results	checked deliveries and reported discrepancies
Education or training	learning, planning, teamwork	coordinated a group presentation
Volunteering/community	initiative, reliability, service	organised donations for an event
Home responsibilities	planning, patience, problem-solving	managed appointments and a complex schedule
Projects/interests	technical skill, persistence, creativity	built a website or repaired equipment

Exercise 1 — Where could the evidence come from?

Write P paid work, E education, V volunteering/community, H home responsibility or J project/interest. More than one answer may be possible if you can justify it.

- ___ learned spreadsheet formulas to track monthly costs
- ___ calmed an upset person and found a practical solution
- ___ completed a six-week course while meeting other commitments
- ___ organised materials for twenty people
- ___ noticed an error before it caused a larger problem
- ___ practised a skill until able to teach it to someone else

SELF-STUDY CHECK Name the skill proved by each achievement. The source alone is not enough.

2. Look underneath the task

A task tells the interviewer what happened. A skill explains the capability behind it. One task may demonstrate several skills, but choose the one most relevant to the vacancy.

ORDINARY TASK	POSSIBLE SKILLS	STRONGER LANGUAGE
answered customer emails	writing • judgement • service	I clarified requests and gave accurate replies.

prepared a rota	planning • fairness • prioritisation	I balanced availability with staffing needs.
looked after stock	accuracy • organisation • ownership	I monitored levels and flagged shortages early.
helped a classmate	communication • patience • cooperation	I explained the process in smaller steps.

Exercise 2 — Translate duties into skills

Choose the strongest skill for each task, then rewrite the task to show the person’s contribution.

TASK	BEST-FIT SKILL	CONTRIBUTION
booked appointments	_____	I _____
cleaned equipment	_____	I _____
posted on social media	_____	I _____
helped during a busy shift	_____	I _____
updated a shared document	_____	I _____

LEVEL UP Rewrite “booked appointments” once to emphasise accuracy and once to emphasise customer care.

3. Build an evidence chain

A useful example has four connected parts. If one is missing, the interviewer may understand the story but still not know what it proves.

PART	QUESTION	USEFUL LANGUAGE
Need	Why did it matter?	The team needed... / The risk was...
Your action	What did you personally do?	I checked... / proposed... / reorganised...
Result	What improved or was prevented?	As a result... / This meant that...
Relevance	Why does it matter here?	This would help me... in this role.

EVIDENCE CHAIN

Need → Your action → Result → Relevance. Later units will develop full STAR answers for behavioural questions.

Exercise 3 — Evidence or empty claim?

Mark E evidence, C claim only or T team result without a clear personal contribution.

- ___ I am an excellent problem-solver.
- ___ We finished the project before the deadline.
- ___ I noticed two orders were labelled incorrectly, so I stopped dispatch and corrected them.
- ___ My colleagues say I communicate very well.
- ___ Our customer ratings improved that month.
- ___ I created a checklist that reduced missing information in our handovers.

Repair the weak answers

Choose one C and one T response. Add truthful context and the missing action or result.

4. Results are not only numbers

Numbers can make evidence precise, but not every useful result is numerical. Results can show quantity, time, quality, service, learning or prevention.

RESULT	ASK YOURSELF	EXAMPLE
Quantity	How much or how many?	processed 35 requests
Time	What became faster?	finished before the shift change
Quality	What became clearer or accurate?	created usable instructions
Service	Who was helped, and how?	resolved the issue without another complaint
Risk prevented	What problem was avoided?	identified a missing safety check
Learning	What could you do afterwards?	used the system independently

Exercise 4 — Make the result visible

Complete each ending with a realistic result. A number is optional.

1. I reorganised the files, which meant that...
2. I explained the procedure in simpler language. As a result...
3. I checked the information before sending it, so...
4. I asked for feedback and changed my approach. Afterwards...
5. I prepared a backup plan. When the original plan failed...

ACCURACY ALERT

Never manufacture impact. If you do not know an exact number, use careful language: approximately, more consistently, fewer errors, on time, without delay or independently.

5. Choose the right story

Your most impressive experience is not automatically your best answer. The strongest story proves the requirement clearly and lets you explain your own actions.

TARGET ROLE

Customer Support Adviser. Priorities: calm communication, accurate records and solving routine problems independently.

EXAMPLE	FIT	WHY?
A. Won a school sports competition	high / medium / low	_____
B. Resolved a delivery complaint and updated the record	high / medium / low	_____
C. Covered a colleague's shift at short notice	high / medium / low	_____
D. Learned photo-editing software for a personal project	high / medium / low	_____

Now change the target role to Junior Graphic Designer. Does your ranking change? Why?

The selection test

- Match: Does it prove a vacancy priority?
- Ownership: Can I explain what I personally did?
- Specificity: Is it a real moment, not a general habit?
- Outcome: Can I show a useful result or lesson?
- Clarity: Can I explain it in under 60 seconds?

TRAINER EXTENSION Do not force one story to answer everything. Help the learner build alternatives.

6. Mine one experience deeply

Answer these questions about one genuine event. Keep the facts the same; change only the angle.

PROMPT	YOUR NOTES
What needed to happen?	_____ —

What made it difficult?	_____
	—
What did you personally decide or do?	_____
	—
Who did you communicate with?	_____
	—
What skill or knowledge did you use?	_____
	—
What changed, improved or was avoided?	_____
	—
What did you learn?	_____
	—

Exercise 6 — Change the lens

Use the same event to answer two different questions. Select only the details that support each lens.

PROBLEM-SOLVING LENS	COMMUNICATION LENS
Key details: _____	Key details: _____
Result: _____	Result: _____

LEVEL UP CHALLENGE Explain how your decision changed as new information appeared. This demonstrates judgement, not only action.

7. Build your evidence bank

Prepare flexible, truthful examples. Record the facts and practise selecting the parts that answer the question.

COMPETENCY	MY EXAMPLE	RESULT / RELEVANCE
teamwork	_____	_____
communication	_____	_____
problem-solving	_____	_____

organisation	_____	_____
learning	_____	_____
reliability	_____	_____

When one example is not enough

Prepare alternatives when a story is old, confidential, too technical, mostly someone else’s work or weakly connected to the vacancy.

CONFIDENTIALITY
 Remove names, sensitive figures and private details. Keep your behaviour specific without revealing protected information.

Core answer frame

A useful example is when _____. I needed to _____, so I _____.
 As a result, _____. This is relevant because _____.

Level Up answer frame

The situation required me to balance _____ with _____. I decided to _____ because _____. This resulted in _____, and strengthened my ability to _____.

8. Use verbs that show contribution

Strong verbs make your role easier to understand. Choose a verb that matches what you genuinely did; a more impressive verb is not automatically more accurate.

PURPOSE	USEFUL VERBS	EXAMPLE
organise	planned • scheduled • coordinated • prioritised	I coordinated the handover between two shifts.
improve	simplified • revised • reduced • streamlined	I simplified the form so fewer details were missed.
solve	identified • investigated •	I investigated the

	resolved • prevented	mismatch before approving it.
communicate	clarified • explained • advised • negotiated	I clarified the deadline with the supplier.
support	assisted • trained • guided • covered	I guided a new colleague through the process.
create	designed • developed • prepared • introduced	I developed a checklist for repeat tasks.

Exercise 7 — Replace the weak verb

Replace did, made, helped or dealt with. Keep the meaning truthful and add one useful detail.

1. I did the weekly schedule. → I _____ the weekly schedule by...
2. I made a new filing system. → I _____ a filing system that...
3. I helped a new colleague. → I _____ a new colleague by...
4. I dealt with a complaint. → I _____ the complaint by...
5. I did something about repeated errors. → I _____ the cause and...

Do not overclaim

CHOOSE THE EXACT LEVEL

Assisted means you supported someone. Coordinated means you organised people or activities. Led means you had genuine direction or responsibility. Use “we” for the shared result and “I” for your own contribution.

POLISH-SPEAKER ALERT “Zajmowałem/am się” is often too general in English. Replace “I dealt with...” with the precise action: processed, monitored, resolved, maintained, prepared or supported.

9. Interview Gym

Round 1 — Evidence sprint

With a trainer: receive a competency at random. Working alone: cover the list and point to one without looking. You have 20 seconds to choose a truthful example and 60 seconds to explain it.

- accuracy
- customer care
- adaptability
- teamwork
- initiative
- learning from feedback

Round 2 — Change the vacancy

Use the same experience for two roles. Change the relevance sentence, not the facts: warehouse assistant, receptionist, café worker, junior analyst, care support worker or team leader.

Round 3 — The follow-up

- What did you personally do?
- How do you know it worked?
- What was hardest?
- What would you do differently?
- Why is it relevant here?

Feedback card

CHECK	YES	NOT YET
The example was truthful and specific.	☐	☐
My personal action was clear.	☐	☐
I gave a credible result.	☐	☐
I linked it to the target role.	☐	☐
I protected confidential details.	☐	☐

BEFORE THE NEXT UNIT

Add three examples to your evidence bank. Record each in 45–60 seconds, then reduce it to five preparation keywords.

10. Self-study review

A. Complete the principles

1. A skill becomes believable when supported by specific _____.
2. A result may show quantity, time, quality, service, learning or a risk _____.
3. Use “I” to make your personal _____ clear.
4. The best story is not always the most impressive; it is the most _____.
5. If exact figures are unknown, use careful language rather than _____.

B. Repair this answer

WEAK ANSWER

I am very organised. At my last job we had lots of work, but everything was completed and the customer was happy. We were a really good team.

Rewrite it so the candidate's action, result and relevance are clear. Do not invent facts; mark missing information [detail needed].

C. Evidence audit

Underline the need once, your action twice, the result once and the relevance sentence once. Revise any missing part.

Unit checkpoint

I can... ☐ identify transferable skills ☐ find evidence beyond paid work ☐
show my contribution ☐ describe credible results ☐ select a relevant story

Answer key and suggested answers

Exercise 1

Several answers are possible if justified. Likely: tracking costs H/J; calming someone P/V/H; completing a course E; organising materials P/E/V; preventing an error P/E/V/J; practising and teaching E/V/J. Also name the skill proved.

Exercise 2 — Models

Appointments: organisation/accuracy — I confirmed details and avoided clashes.
Equipment: safety/reliability — I followed the procedure and reported damage.
Social media: communication/planning — I prepared clear posts for the audience.
Busy shift: teamwork/prioritisation — I took urgent tasks and kept colleagues informed.
Shared document: accuracy/cooperation — I updated information so everyone used the current version.

Exercises 3–4

Exercise 3: 1 C; 2 T; 3 E; 4 C; 5 T; 6 E. Repairs must add truthful context and a personal action. Exercise 4 results vary; they must follow logically and remain credible.

Exercise 5

For Customer Support, B is strongest. C may prove reliability; D proves learning but is less central; A is weak unless specific behaviour makes it relevant. For Junior Graphic Designer, D becomes much stronger because it demonstrates relevant learning and software use.

Exercise 6

Both versions must use the same facts. Problem-solving emphasises obstacle, decision and solution; communication emphasises audience, explanation, listening or information shared.

Exercise 7 — Suggested verbs

Possible answers: planned/prepared the schedule; designed/introduced the filing system; trained/guided the colleague; resolved/investigated the complaint;

identified/investigated the cause. Other verbs are acceptable when they describe the action accurately and the added detail is logical.

Self-study review

A: 1 evidence/example; 2 prevented; 3 contribution/action; 4 relevant; 5 guessing. B requires missing facts because the original gives no personal action or observable outcome. Suggested structure: “The team needed [task completed]. I organised [specific part] by [action]. This helped [observable result]. The same planning skill would help me [relevance to target role].” Replace every bracket with truthful information.

REMEMBER: Build a bank of facts, not memorised speeches. Select the evidence that answers this employer’s question.

My correction log

WHAT I SAID OR WROTE	A STRONGER VERSION

Carry forward to Unit 3

☐ six evidence-bank examples ☐ a result for each ☐ five keywords per example ☐ one alternative story for an important skill

TELL ME ABOUT YOURSELF.

Open the interview with a clear, relevant professional story.

THE BIG IDEA

This question is not an invitation to tell your entire life story. It is your opportunity to guide the interviewer towards the experience, strengths and motivation that make sense for this particular role.

By the end of this unit, you can:

- understand what the interviewer is listening for;
- select relevant information instead of repeating your CV;
- build a focused Present–Past–Future introduction;
- adapt your answer to different jobs and experience levels;
- deliver a natural 45–75 second response.

Quick diagnostic

1. How would you answer this question today?
2. How long would your answer last?
3. Which part would be most relevant to the employer?
4. Would your answer change for a different vacancy?

TRAINER EXTENSION Record the learner's first attempt without correcting it. Compare it with the final attempt at the end of the unit.

1. What is the interviewer really asking?

"Tell me about yourself" often appears at the beginning. The interviewer usually knows your name and has your CV. They want a useful overview and an early indication of how you communicate.

THEY ARE LISTENING FOR	THE HIDDEN QUESTION	YOUR TASK
Relevance	Do you understand what this role needs?	Select experience connected to the vacancy.
Direction	Does your career story make sense?	Link your past, present and next step.
Evidence	Are your strengths credible?	Mention one or two concrete areas of experience.
Communication	Can you organise information clearly?	Use a simple structure and stop at the right point.
Motivation	Why this kind of work now?	End with an honest, role-focused reason.

Exercise 1 — Useful or unnecessary?

Mark U useful, M maybe useful if relevant or N normally unnecessary in an opening answer.

- ___ current professional focus
- ___ every job since leaving school
- ___ one strength supported by experience
- ___ age and marital status
- ___ reason this role is a logical next step
- ___ full home address
- ___ a relevant qualification or recent course
- ___ unrelated hobbies and childhood details

SELF-STUDY CHECK Would this detail help the employer understand your suitability or direction? If not, leave it out.

2. Use Present–Past–Future

This structure gives the answer direction without sounding mechanical. The proportions may change, but each part has a clear purpose.

PART	FOCUS	GUIDING QUESTION	USEFUL START
------	-------	------------------	--------------

Present	who you are professionally now	What is your current focus?	Currently, I... / My main area is...
Past	selected evidence and development	What prepared you for this?	Before that... / Over the last...
Future	why this role is the next step	Why are you here?	I am now looking to...

A 60-SECOND BALANCE

Present: about 15–20 seconds → Past: about 25–30 seconds → Future: about 10–15 seconds. This is a guide, not a stopwatch rule.

Exercise 2 — Put the answer in order

Number the sentences 1–5 to create a logical introduction.

- ___ I am now looking for a role where I can combine customer contact with greater responsibility.
- ___ Earlier, I worked in retail, where I learned to stay calm during busy periods.
- ___ I currently work in a small café and often coordinate the afternoon shift.
- ___ This supervisor position appeals to me because training and service are both important.
- ___ I also help new colleagues learn our ordering and closing procedures.

Why the ending matters

The final sentence should point towards the vacancy. Avoid ending with “That is all” or “I do not know what else to say.”

3. Select—do not recite

A CV is organised by time. A strong opening answer is organised by relevance. You may mention several years in one sentence and spend longer on one experience that matches the role.

Exercise 3 — Cut, compress or highlight?

Target role: Junior Office Administrator. Mark C cut, S summarise briefly or H highlight.

INFORMATION	C / S / H	REASON
managed calendars for a community group	___	_____
three unrelated summer jobs from ten years ago	___	_____
completed a recent spreadsheet course	___	_____
enjoys cooking at weekends	___	_____
updated accurate customer records in retail	___	_____
all duties from current job	___	_____

The relevance filter

- Does it match a stated or hidden priority?
- Does it explain my professional direction?
- Does it add evidence not already obvious?
- Can I say it briefly and clearly?

LEVEL UP Compress three less relevant roles into one sentence that emphasises a shared skill rather than job titles.

EXAMPLE

“Across several customer-facing roles, I developed a consistent approach to handling enquiries accurately and calmly.”

4. Build versions for different candidates

The structure is universal, but the content changes according to experience. Never apologise for your stage; show the evidence and direction you genuinely have.

CANDIDATE	EMPHASISE	AVOID
Entry-level	education, projects,	“I have no experience at

	practical responsibility, learning	all.”
Career changer	transferable skills, reason for change, recent preparation	criticising the old sector
Experienced	scope, specialism, selected achievement, next challenge	a long chronological history
Returning to work	relevant earlier experience, current readiness, refreshed skills	unnecessary private detail
Promotion/internal	current impact, wider contribution, readiness for scope	assuming the panel knows everything

Exercise 4 — Choose the strongest opening

A — ENTRY-LEVEL

I do not really have experience, but I am a quick learner and will try my best.

B — ENTRY-LEVEL

I recently completed a logistics course, where I learned stock-control basics and worked on a team planning task. I also help in a family business during busy periods, so I am used to following instructions and checking details.

Which opening is stronger? Underline the evidence. Add one Future sentence connecting it to a warehouse role.

Respectful self-advocacy

You can be honest about being new without presenting yourself as a risk. Replace apology language with preparation, transferable evidence and willingness to learn.

5. Make strengths sound credible

One or two strengths are enough in an opening answer. Connect them to an area of work or a brief example; save the full story for a follow-up question.

EMPTY CLAIM	CREDIBLE SHORT VERSION
I am very organised.	My current role involves coordinating bookings and keeping records accurate.
I am a people person.	Most of my experience is customer-facing, including resolving enquiries in person and by phone.
I learn quickly.	I recently learned a new stock system and was using it independently within two weeks.
I am a natural leader.	I regularly allocate tasks during the closing shift and support two newer colleagues.

Exercise 5 — Add the proof

Complete each sentence with truthful evidence. Keep the complete sentence under 20 seconds.

1. One strength I would bring is accuracy. In my experience, I...
2. I communicate clearly, particularly when...
3. I am comfortable learning new processes. Recently, I...
4. I stay calm under pressure. One situation that shows this is...

Avoid the adjective parade

WEAK PATTERN

“I am hardworking, motivated, friendly, organised, ambitious and a fast learner.” A list is easy to say and difficult to believe. Choose fewer strengths and show where they come from.

POLISH-SPEAKER ALERT “Jestem osobą komunikatywną” is often translated as “I am communicative”, but in an interview “I communicate clearly” or “I am confident dealing with people” usually sounds more natural.

6. Motivation without clichés

The Future part should connect your next step to the work itself. It can mention development, responsibility, sector interest, working style or contribution—but it should not sound copied from every interview.

GENERIC ENDING	MORE FOCUSED ENDING
I want a new challenge.	I am ready to take responsibility for a larger customer portfolio.
Your company is very successful.	The combination of technical products and customer contact fits my experience.
I want to develop myself.	I want to develop my reporting skills in a role where the information supports operational decisions.
I really need this job.	I am looking for stable shift-based work where accuracy and reliability matter.

Exercise 6 — Match the motivation

Match each candidate to the most convincing Future sentence.

CANDIDATE	FUTURE SENTENCE
1. Retail assistant applying for team leader	A. I want to apply my scheduling skills in a professional office environment.
2. Parent returning after a break; recently refreshed Excel	B. I am ready to support colleagues and take more responsibility during busy shifts.
3. Technician moving into technical sales	C. I want to combine product knowledge with explaining solutions to customers.
4. Volunteer coordinator applying for administration	D. I am ready to return to structured work and use my updated spreadsheet skills.

A truthful boundary

Salary, location and stability may matter. They do not need to be hidden, but your opening answer should first explain the professional fit. Practical conditions can be discussed at the appropriate stage.

7. Control length and detail

A focused answer usually lasts 45–75 seconds. Senior or complex careers may need slightly longer, but the interviewer should still be able to follow the thread.

VERSION	USE	INCLUDE
30 seconds	networking, screening call, very simple role	present focus + strongest match + next step
60 seconds	most interviews	Present–Past–Future + brief evidence
90 seconds	complex or senior background	same structure + one achievement or transition

Exercise 7 — Reduce without losing meaning

Cross out repetition and unnecessary detail. Rewrite the answer in no more than 65 words.

OVERLONG ANSWER

I started working when I was nineteen, and my first job was in a shop near my house. I worked there for two years and then moved to another shop. After that I worked in a café, which was also customer service. I have always liked people. Now I work at a hotel reception, where I answer questions, manage bookings and solve guest problems. I am applying because I saw your advertisement and thought it looked interesting.

Five-keyword preparation

Write only five prompts, for example: reception • bookings • complaints • calm • larger hotel. Speak from the prompts instead of memorising every word.

8. Sound natural—not memorised

Preparation should make you clearer, not robotic. Memorised answers often become too fast and can collapse when the interviewer interrupts.

Use signposts

- Currently, my main focus is...
- The experience most relevant here is...
- A strength I have developed is...
- What interests me about this position is...
- The next step I am looking for is...

Exercise 8 — Repair the delivery

PROBLEM	PRACTICAL FIX
speaking too fast	mark two pause points and breathe
answer sounds memorised	practise from five keywords in a different order
too many details	decide the one message the employer should remember
losing the structure	use Present–Past–Future headings while practising
weak ending	prepare one vacancy-specific Future sentence

Choose two delivery problems you sometimes experience. Record the answer twice using the suggested fixes.

If the interviewer interrupts

STAY FLEXIBLE

Stop, listen and answer the new question. An interruption often means the interviewer wants detail; it does not mean your answer was wrong.

LEVEL UP CHALLENGE Prepare two different openings for the same vacancy: one emphasising technical competence and one emphasising collaboration. Which better fits the advert's priorities?

9. Build your answer

STEP	YOUR NOTES
Present: current professional identity/focus	_____ _____
Past: two relevant areas of evidence	1. _____ 2. _____ _____
Strength supported by experience	_____ _____
Future: why this role/next step	_____ _____
Details to leave for follow-up	_____ _____
Five speaking keywords	___ _ _ _ _

Core answer frame

45–60 SECONDS

Currently, I _____. My experience includes _____, where I developed _____. One strength I would bring is _____, which I have used when _____. I am now looking for _____, and this role interests me because _____.

Level Up frame

My background combines _____ with _____. In my current/recent role, I focus on _____. Previously, I developed _____, particularly through _____. I am now ready to _____, which is why the emphasis on _____ in this position stood out to me.

Personal relevance test

- Could this answer be given at any interview? If yes, make the ending more specific.
- Does every sentence earn its place?
- Is the evidence truthful and proportionate?
- Does the interviewer know what to ask next?

10. Interview Gym

Round 1 — First attempt

With a trainer: answer without notes. Working alone: record yourself without reading a script. Stop at 75 seconds.

Round 2 — Change one variable

Repeat the answer after changing the target role, experience level or emphasis. Keep the facts truthful; change the selection and relevance.

Round 3 — Follow-up

- You mentioned _____. What exactly did you do?
- Why are you making this change now?
- Which part of your experience is most relevant here?
- What would you like to develop next?
- Can you give me an example of that strength?

Feedback card

CHECK	YES	NOT YET
The answer had a clear direction.	☐	☐
I selected relevant information.	☐	☐

My strengths had credible support.	☐	☐
The ending connected to the vacancy.	☐	☐
I sounded natural and stayed under 75 seconds.	☐	☐

BEFORE THE NEXT UNIT

Create 30-, 60- and 90-second versions. Keep the same core story, but change the amount of evidence—not the truth.

11. Self-study review

A. Complete the principles

1. The interviewer wants a relevant overview, not your entire _____.
2. Present–Past–Future gives the answer clear _____.
3. A strength becomes credible when supported by _____.
4. The final sentence should connect your direction to the _____.
5. Five keywords help you sound prepared without sounding _____.

B. Diagnose the answer

CANDIDATE ANSWER

My name is Alex and I am thirty-two. I was born in a small town and I have two brothers. I have worked in many places. I am hardworking, friendly and motivated. I left my last job because the manager was difficult. I would like this job because it is close to my home.

Identify four problems. Then rebuild the answer using [relevant experience], [evidence] and [role motivation] where facts are missing.

C. Final recording

Record a 45–75 second answer. Listen once for content and once for delivery. Compare it with your diagnostic attempt from page 1.

Unit checkpoint

I can... ☐ select relevant details ☐ use Present–Past–Future ☐ support strengths ☐ adapt for different candidates ☐ deliver a natural opening

Answer key and suggested answers

Exercise 1

Likely: current focus U; every job N; supported strength U; age/marital status N; logical next step U; home address N; relevant qualification U; unrelated hobbies/childhood N. M is acceptable only with a clear job connection.

Exercise 2

Recommended order: current café role; coordinating the shift and training new colleagues; earlier retail learning; desired next step; interest in the supervisor role. Write these numbers beside the sentences in their printed order: 4, 3, 1, 5, 2.

Exercises 3–4

Exercise 3: community calendars H; unrelated old jobs S or C; spreadsheet course H; cooking C; accurate retail records H; all current duties S. Exercise 4: B is stronger because it provides relevant evidence. A possible Future sentence: “I am now looking to apply those habits in a warehouse role where accuracy and safe procedures matter.”

Exercises 5–6

Exercise 5 answers vary; each completion needs truthful behaviour or context. Exercise 6: 1 B; 2 D; 3 C; 4 A.

Exercise 7 — Possible 52-word version

“I currently work in hotel reception, where I manage bookings, answer guest questions and resolve problems. Earlier customer-service roles in retail and hospitality helped me develop calm, practical communication. I am now looking to

bring that experience to a larger hotel where I can handle a wider range of guests and responsibilities.” Other focused versions are acceptable.

Exercise 8

This is a personal practice task. A successful second recording should show the selected fix: clearer pauses, less repetition, a more obvious structure or a stronger vacancy-specific ending.

Self-study review

A: 1 life story/CV; 2 direction/structure; 3 evidence; 4 vacancy/role; 5 memorised. B problems include private irrelevant information, unsupported adjectives, criticism of a former manager, no useful professional direction and convenience as the only motivation. Rebuild only with truthful details.

REMEMBER: Your opening answer is a signpost, not the whole journey. Give the interviewer a clear reason to ask the next question.

My correction log

WHAT I SAID	A STRONGER VERSION

STORIES THAT PROVE IT.

Use STAR to turn real experience into convincing answers.

THE BIG IDEA

Behavioural questions ask for evidence from a real event. STAR gives your answer a clear shape: Situation, Task, Action and Result. The structure supports the story—but the strength comes from relevant facts, personal action and an honest outcome.

By the end of this unit, you can:

- recognise behavioural and competency questions;
- choose a relevant example quickly;
- balance the four parts of STAR;
- make your personal contribution clear;
- describe results, setbacks and learning honestly.

Quick diagnostic

1. What do you do when an interviewer says “Tell me about a time...”?
2. Which part of a story do you usually spend longest on?
3. Do your examples make your personal actions clear?
4. Can a useful interview story include a mistake?

TRAINER EXTENSION Ask one behavioural question and time the first answer. Do not interrupt. Note where the story becomes unclear or overlong.

1. Recognise the question type

Behavioural questions ask what you actually did in a specific past situation. The interviewer uses your example to estimate how you may behave in a similar situation again.

QUESTION TYPE	COMMON SIGNAL	BEST RESPONSE
Behavioural	Tell me about a time... / Give an example...	one specific past event
Hypothetical	What would you do if...?	a reasoned future approach
Knowledge	How do you...? / What is...?	explanation, process or principle
Motivation	Why do you want...?	honest reasons linked to the role

Exercise 1 — Which questions need STAR?

Mark S specific STAR story, H hypothetical approach, K knowledge/process or M motivation.

- ___ Tell me about a time you dealt with conflicting priorities.
- ___ What would you do if a customer refused your solution?
- ___ How do you check your work for accuracy?
- ___ Give me an example of feedback you used.
- ___ Why are you interested in this sector?
- ___ Describe a situation where you had to learn quickly.
- ___ What does excellent customer service mean to you?

SELF-STUDY CHECK A behavioural question asks for one real event—not what you usually do or what you would do.

2. Understand the four parts

PART	PURPOSE	KEY QUESTION	TYPICAL LENGTH
S — Situation	brief context	Where and when? What was happening?	1–2 sentences
T — Task	goal, duty or challenge	What needed to happen?	1 sentence
A — Action	your decisions and behaviour	What did you personally do?	largest part

R — Result	outcome, evidence and learning	What changed? What did you learn?	1–3 sentences
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USEFUL BALANCE

Situation + Task: about 20–25% • Action: about 50–60% • Result: about 20–25%. The Action should usually be the longest section.

Exercise 2 — Label the STAR

MODEL ANSWER

[1] During a busy Saturday shift, two colleagues called in sick. [2] I needed to keep the service desk open while preventing the queue from becoming unsafe. [3] I informed the duty manager, separated quick enquiries from complex returns, asked an available colleague to monitor the line and updated waiting customers every few minutes. [4] The queue stayed controlled, all customers were served and the manager later adopted the same system for peak periods.

Write S, T, A or R beside sentences 1–4. Underline every action performed by the candidate.

Why Task is sometimes hidden

The task may be a formal responsibility, a problem to solve or a standard to protect. State it clearly so the interviewer understands why your actions mattered.

3. Choose one moment

Weak answers often describe a general habit: “I always help my team.” STAR needs a particular event with a beginning, actions and an outcome.

TOO GENERAL	SPECIFIC ENOUGH
I often manage difficult customers.	One customer received the wrong order during a busy lunch service.
We regularly had tight deadlines.	A supplier delay left us two hours to

I am good at training people.	prepare an urgent dispatch.
I solve technical problems.	I supported a new colleague who was struggling with the booking system.
	A machine stopped midway through a production run.

Exercise 3 — Zoom in

Turn each general topic into one specific moment. Add when, who or what made the event clear.

1. I work well in teams. → One time...
2. I handle pressure. → During...
3. I pay attention to detail. → When...
4. I learn from feedback. → After...
5. I take initiative. → On one occasion...

The story selection test

- Relevant: Does it prove the competency being tested?
- Recent enough: Can you remember the facts clearly?
- Personal: Did you take meaningful action?
- Complete: Is there an outcome or learning point?
- Safe to share: Can you protect confidential details?

LEVEL UP Choose two possible stories for the same competency. Explain why one is strategically stronger for the target vacancy.

4. Keep Situation and Task short

Context is necessary, but it should not crowd out your contribution. Include only details the interviewer needs to understand the challenge.

Exercise 4 — Cut the background

Cross out unnecessary detail. Rewrite the Situation and Task in no more than 35 words.

OVERLOADED OPENING

It was a Tuesday in November and our office was on the second floor of

a building we had moved into six months earlier. My manager, who had worked there for eight years, was away at a conference. We had a report due by 4 p.m., but two departments had sent different figures, so I needed to confirm the correct data before submission.

What context earns a place?

- the relevant setting or role;
- the problem, pressure or risk;
- your responsibility or goal;
- one constraint that explains your decision.

Avoid the cast list

NAME ROLES, NOT PEOPLE

Usually say “a customer”, “my supervisor” or “a colleague” rather than giving names. Introduce only people who affect the action.

POLISH-SPEAKER ALERT English answers often need the subject “I” repeated: “I checked..., I contacted..., and I updated...”. This is clearer than a long impersonal description.

5. Make Action the centre

The Action section demonstrates the competency. Explain your reasoning, sequence and communication—not merely the final decision.

WEAK ACTION	STRONGER ACTION
I dealt with it.	I checked the order record, compared it with the customer's receipt and contacted dispatch.
We decided to change the plan.	I summarised the options, asked the team for risks and proposed a revised sequence.

I helped my colleague.

I demonstrated the process, watched the colleague try it and gave specific feedback.

Everything was organised.

I divided the work into urgent and non-urgent tasks and assigned clear deadlines.

Exercise 5 — Build the Action chain

Complete each stage for one of your evidence-bank stories.

STAGE	YOUR ACTION
1. I first noticed/checked...	
2. I decided to... because...	
3. I communicated with... by...	
4. I adjusted/prevented...	

I versus we

Use “we” for the shared goal or result and “I” for your contribution. Do not claim the whole team’s achievement, but do not disappear from your own story.

BALANCED EXAMPLE

“We needed to complete the stock count before opening. I divided the aisles, created a checking sheet and reported two discrepancies to the supervisor. We finished on time with accurate totals.”

6. Give the Result real weight

The result shows whether your actions were useful. It may be a measurable outcome, a standard maintained, a problem prevented, feedback received or a lesson applied later.

RESULT TYPE	EXAMPLE
Measured	processing time fell from two days to one
Observed	the customer accepted the solution and did not escalate
Standard maintained	the shipment left on time with the required checks complete
Risk prevented	the incorrect file was stopped before external release
Learning transferred	I used the same checklist successfully on later projects

Exercise 6 — Result or vague ending?

Mark C clear result, V vague or L learning without an outcome. Improve every V or L ending.

- ___ Everything was fine in the end.
- ___ The replacement reached the customer the next morning.
- ___ I learned a lot from the experience.
- ___ The revised rota covered every shift without overtime.
- ___ My manager said I had handled the conversation calmly.
- ___ We carried on as normal.

When the result was mixed

STAY HONEST

A story can still be strong if the outcome was not perfect. Explain what improved, what remained difficult and what you changed afterwards. Do not turn a setback into an unrealistically perfect success.

7. Use STAR for mistakes and setbacks

Questions about mistakes, conflict or failure test ownership and learning. Choose a genuine example that is meaningful but not so serious that it makes you unsuitable for the role.

INCLUDE	AVOID
brief, neutral context	blaming colleagues or customers
your responsibility	claiming you have never made a mistake
the correction you made	hiding the consequence
what you changed afterwards	a lesson with no changed behaviour
evidence the learning lasted	sharing confidential or highly serious incidents

Exercise 7 — Repair the ownership

WEAK ANSWER

A colleague gave me the wrong information, so the booking was entered incorrectly. It was not really my fault, but I fixed it and now I double-check everything.

Rewrite it to show proportionate ownership. Include what the candidate should have checked, how the error was corrected and what specific safeguard was introduced.

A useful learning sentence

“Since then, I have _____, which has helped me _____.” This shows changed behaviour rather than a vague promise.

TRAINER EXTENSION Challenge defensive language gently: “What part of the process was within your control?”

8. Adapt one story—without forcing it

One event may demonstrate several competencies, but the emphasis must change. Keep the facts fixed and select the actions and result that answer the actual question.

SAME EVENT	TEAMWORK LENS	PROBLEM-SOLVING LENS
urgent dispatch after supplier delay	coordination, updates, shared priorities	options, constraints, revised sequence
new colleague learning a system	listening, support, feedback	diagnosing the difficulty, testing a solution
customer complaint	calm communication, agreement	root cause, practical remedy

Exercise 8 — Change the lens

Use one story twice. Complete the two emphasis plans.

QUESTION	ACTION TO EMPHASISE	RESULT TO EMPHASISE
Tell me about teamwork.	_____	_____
	_____	_____
Tell me about problem-solving.	_____	_____
	_____	_____

When to choose another story

- the connection needs a long explanation;
- the competency appears only in the background;
- your personal action was minor;
- another example is more recent or relevant.

LEVEL UP CHALLENGE Answer a follow-up that tests judgement: “What alternative did you reject, and why?”

9. Build your STAR bank

Prepare outlines rather than scripts. Five to eight flexible stories can cover many common competencies.

COMPETENCY	STORY TITLE	KEY RESULT
teamwork	_____	_____
	—	—
problem-solving	_____	_____
	—	—
pressure/priorities	_____	_____
	—	—
customer/service	_____	_____
	—	—
learning/adaptability	_____	_____
	—	—
mistake/feedback	_____	_____
	—	—

Full STAR planner

PART	NOTES
S — essential context	_____ _____
T — my responsibility/goal	_____ _____
A1 — first action and reason	_____ _____
A2 — communication/decision	_____ _____
A3 — adjustment or follow-through	_____ _____
R — outcome, evidence, learning	_____

Five-keyword version

Write five prompts: _____. Practise speaking from these prompts in a different wording each time.

10. Interview Gym

Round 1 — Two-minute build

With a trainer: receive a competency question. Working alone: choose one at random. You have two minutes to outline S, T, three Actions and R.

- Tell me about a time you solved a problem.
- Give an example of working under pressure.
- Describe a time you supported another person.
- Tell me about feedback that changed your work.
- Give an example of preventing an error.

Round 2 — Ninety-second answer

Answer without reading full sentences. Aim for 60–90 seconds. The Action must be longer than the Situation.

Round 3 — Follow-up pressure

- What was your exact responsibility?
- Why did you choose that approach?
- What did you do when the first step did not work?
- How did you measure the result?
- What would you do differently now?

Feedback card

CHECK	YES	NOT YET
I answered with one specific event.	☐	☐
Situation and Task were brief.	☐	☐

My personal actions were clear.	☐	☐
The Result was credible and specific.	☐	☐
The story proved the tested competency.	☐	☐

BEFORE THE NEXT UNIT

Prepare three STAR outlines: one success, one setback and one teamwork example. Reduce each to five keywords.

11. Self-study review

A. Complete the principles

1. STAR stands for Situation, Task, Action and _____.
2. The _____ section should usually be the longest.
3. A behavioural answer describes one specific past _____.
4. Use "I" to clarify your personal _____.
5. A setback answer should show ownership and changed _____.

B. Diagnose the answer

CANDIDATE ANSWER

We had a very difficult project and everyone worked extremely hard. There were lots of meetings and problems, but we communicated well. I am a natural team player, so I helped whenever necessary. Eventually we completed it and learned a lot.

Identify four missing elements. Rewrite the answer using [specific detail needed] where the original gives no facts.

C. Timing audit

Record one answer. Note the time spent on S+T, A and R. If Action is not the longest part, revise the balance.

Unit checkpoint

I can... ☐ recognise behavioural questions ☐ choose one event ☐ balance
STAR ☐ show personal action ☐ describe results and learning

Answer key and suggested answers

Exercise 1

1 S; 2 H; 3 K; 4 S; 5 M; 6 S; 7 K.

Exercise 2

1 Situation; 2 Task; 3 Action; 4 Result. Candidate actions: informed the manager; separated enquiry types; asked a colleague to monitor the line; updated customers.

Exercises 3–4

Exercise 3 answers vary but must identify one real moment. Exercise 4 possible 27-word version: "While my manager was away, two departments submitted conflicting figures for a report due at 4 p.m. I needed to confirm the correct data before submission."

Exercise 5

Answers vary. A complete Action chain should show an observation/check, a reasoned decision, communication and follow-through. It must describe the candidate's own actions.

Exercise 6

1 V; 2 C; 3 L; 4 C; 5 C; 6 V. Possible improvements: 1 "The issue was resolved without delaying the order." 3 "I learned to confirm ownership at the start, and used that step on later projects." 6 "The backup process kept the service running while the fault was repaired." Other logical, truthful outcomes are acceptable.

Exercise 7 — Suggested structure

"I entered a booking using information from a colleague, but I was responsible for verifying the details and did not complete the final check. I contacted the customer, corrected the booking and informed my supervisor. I then added a confirmation step before submission; since then, it has helped me catch incomplete information earlier."

Exercise 8

Answers vary. The teamwork version should emphasise coordination, listening or shared priorities; the problem-solving version should emphasise diagnosis, options, decisions and adjustments. Facts must remain unchanged.

Self-study review

A: 1 Result; 2 Action; 3 event/situation; 4 contribution/action; 5 behaviour. B lacks a specific situation, clear task, personal actions and observable result. Unsupported claims such as "natural team player" should be replaced by evidence.

REMEMBER: STAR is not four equal boxes. Keep the context short, make your actions visible and finish with evidence.

My correction log

WHAT I SAID	A STRONGER VERSION

STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES & GROWTH.

Answer honestly—without clichés, false modesty or unnecessary damage.

THE BIG IDEA

Questions about strengths and weaknesses test self-awareness, relevance and development. A strong candidate neither advertises perfection nor lists every limitation. They select useful evidence, describe a manageable weakness and show credible action.

By the end of this unit, you can:

- choose strengths that match the vacancy;
- support strengths with concise evidence;
- select a genuine but manageable weakness;
- show improvement through specific action;
- discuss gaps or limited experience professionally.

Quick diagnostic

1. Which strength would you mention first?
2. What evidence proves it?
3. Which weakness would you currently choose?
4. What have you done to improve it?

TRAINER EXTENSION Record the first strength and weakness answers. Listen for unsupported adjectives, disguised strengths and vague improvement claims.

1. What is the interviewer testing?

QUESTION	THEY ARE TESTING	A STRONG ANSWER SHOWS
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What are your strengths?	fit, evidence, self-awareness	a relevant capability supported by proof
What is a weakness?	honesty, risk awareness, development	a real limitation plus active improvement
What would you improve?	reflection and learning	a focused development priority
What feedback have you received?	openness and behaviour change	how feedback affected your work

Exercise 1 — What is missing?

Mark R relevance missing, E evidence missing, A improvement action missing, O outcome missing or C complete.

- ___ My strength is communication.
- ___ I used to rush written work, so now I use a final checklist.
- ___ I completed a presentation course and practised weekly, but I do not know whether anything changed.
- ___ I am excellent at advanced coding, although the role involves no technical work.
- ___ I found prioritising difficult; I began planning three key tasks each morning, which reduced missed deadlines.

SELF-STUDY CHECK A complete answer does not need to be long, but every sentence should serve the employer's question.

2. Choose job-relevant strengths

The best strength is not your favourite adjective. It is a capability that matters in this vacancy and that you can prove truthfully.

VACANCY CLUE	POSSIBLE STRENGTH	EVIDENCE SOURCE
accurate records	attention to detail	checks, error prevention, reliable documentation
busy customer contact	calm communication	complaints, queues, competing requests
changing priorities	adaptability	replanning, learning, switching tasks

independent work	ownership	decisions, follow-through, escalation
team coordination	collaboration	updates, shared planning, support

Exercise 2 — Match the strength

Choose the strongest match: A accuracy, B adaptability, C customer care, D ownership, E teamwork.

- ___ noticed a duplicate payment before approval
- ___ reorganised tasks after a supplier delay
- ___ followed an unresolved issue until the customer received an answer
- ___ shared progress early so colleagues could adjust their work
- ___ explained a policy calmly to an upset visitor

The two-strength rule

FOCUS BEATS VOLUME

Prepare two or three strengths for each vacancy. In the answer, develop one or two well instead of listing six unsupported qualities.

LEVEL UP Identify one strength the employer expects but never names directly. Which advert clues support your inference?

3. Prove the strength briefly

A strength answer usually needs less detail than a full STAR story. Use Strength → Evidence → Relevance, then be ready for a follow-up.

PART	PURPOSE	EXAMPLE
Strength	name the capability clearly	One strength I would bring is accuracy.
Evidence	show where it appears in your work	I check order details against source documents and flag discrepancies before release.

Relevance	connect it to this job	That would be useful in a role handling stock records.
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Exercise 3 — Upgrade the adjective

Add concise evidence and relevance.

1. I am organised. → In my experience... This would help me...
2. I communicate clearly. → For example... This matters here because...
3. I learn quickly. → Recently... I could apply that by...
4. I am reliable. → One example is... In this role...

Avoid overclaiming

CALIBRATE THE LANGUAGE

Use confident but proportionate wording: a strength I have developed; I am confident in; I have solid experience of. Avoid “I am the best”, “I never make mistakes” or expertise you cannot demonstrate.

4. Select a safe, genuine weakness

A useful weakness is real, relevant enough to matter, manageable and already being addressed. It should not destroy your suitability for a core requirement.

POOR CHOICE	WHY IT FAILS	BETTER DIRECTION
I am a perfectionist.	sounds rehearsed or disguised	a specific tendency and its practical effect
I work too hard.	not a credible weakness	a real boundary or efficiency issue
I am always late.	serious reliability risk	choose a different genuine development area
I hate dealing with people.	damages a customer-facing application	do not choose a core-role contradiction

I have no weaknesses.

shows low self-awareness

identify a manageable limitation

Exercise 4 — Safe to discuss?

Target role: Office Administrator. Mark S suitable, R risky or F false/disguised.

- ___ I sometimes spend too long perfecting formatting.
- ___ I regularly forget confidential documents.
- ___ I am not yet confident using advanced spreadsheet functions.
- ___ I care too much about doing an excellent job.
- ___ I used to hesitate before asking for clarification.
- ___ I strongly dislike routine and accurate record-keeping.

Three safety questions

- Is this essential to the role?
- Could it create a serious safety, legal or trust concern?
- Can I describe specific improvement honestly?

5. Build the weakness answer

Use Weakness → Impact → Action → Progress. Keep the weakness direct; do not hide it inside a long introduction.

PART	QUESTION	USEFUL LANGUAGE
Weakness	What is the specific limitation?	I have found... challenging / I used to...
Impact	How did it affect the work?	This sometimes meant...
Action	What exactly did you change?	To address it, I now...
Progress	What evidence shows improvement?	As a result... / I am now able to...

MODEL

"I used to spend too long checking low-risk details, which slowed routine tasks. I now decide the required standard and deadline before starting,

then use one final check. This has helped me finish routine reports more consistently on time.”

Exercise 5 — Complete the development chain

WEAKNESS	ACTION	PROGRESS
nervous presenting to groups	_____	_____
limited advanced Excel	_____	_____
hesitant to delegate	_____	_____
overly detailed emails	_____	_____

Progress is not perfection

You do not need to claim the weakness has disappeared. Show awareness, repeatable action and credible improvement.

6. Weaknesses at different career stages

CANDIDATE	POSSIBLE AREA	STRONG EMPHASIS
Entry-level	limited exposure to a system or process	learning plan and related foundation
Career changer	sector knowledge still developing	research, training and transferable skill
Experienced	delegation, strategic perspective, new technology	specific adjustment and evidence of progress
Returning after a gap	confidence with updated tools	recent refresh and current readiness
Promotion candidate	moving from doing to leading	delegation, coaching and wider priorities

Exercise 6 — Improve the framing

WEAK FRAMING

I have never worked in logistics, so I do not know how warehouses operate.

Rewrite for a career changer. Include a genuine limitation, preparation already completed and a transferable strength.

WEAK FRAMING

I have been out of work for years and technology has changed completely.

Rewrite for a returner. Keep private detail brief; emphasise refreshed skills and current evidence.

POLISH-SPEAKER ALERT “Słaba strona” translates literally as “weak side”, but English interview language uses “weakness”, “development area” or “something I am working to improve”.

7. Discuss experience gaps professionally

A gap is not automatically a weakness. Address what the interviewer needs to understand, then move towards readiness and relevant evidence.

SITUATION	FOCUS
No direct experience	transferable evidence + learning readiness
Employment gap	brief neutral explanation + current readiness

Missing preference	related skill + plan to close the gap
Career change	reasoned direction + transferable value
Short tenure	neutral facts + what you are seeking now

A three-part bridge

ACKNOWLEDGE → BRIDGE → REASSURE

“I have not used SAP directly. I have learned two other stock systems quickly, including one during a busy launch. I have started an introductory SAP course and would be ready to follow your internal training.”

Exercise 7 — Build the bridge

Write one answer for a real gap in your target vacancy.

ACKNOWLEDGE	RELATED EVIDENCE	PREPARATION / REASSURANCE
_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____

Do not apologise repeatedly

Acknowledge the gap once. Then show evidence, preparation and fit. Repeated apology makes the limitation sound larger than it is.

8. Feedback and growth questions

Interviewers may ask about criticism, feedback or something you would do differently. They are testing whether learning changes your behaviour.

WEAK RESPONSE	STRONGER RESPONSE
I take all feedback well.	name specific feedback and what changed

My manager was too critical.	separate useful message from emotional reaction
I disagreed, so I ignored it.	explain how you checked, discussed or tested it
I cannot think of anything.	prepare one proportionate example

Exercise 8 — Evidence of change

Complete the chain with one genuine example.

FEEDBACK	MY RESPONSE	CHANGED BEHAVIOUR	EVIDENCE
_____	_____	_____	_____

Useful frame

“I received feedback that _____. Initially, I _____. After discussing/reflecting on it, I changed _____. Since then, _____.”

LEVEL UP CHALLENGE Describe feedback you partly disagreed with. Show professional evaluation rather than automatic acceptance or defensiveness.

9. Build your answer bank

PROMPT	MY PREP
Strength 1 + evidence + relevance	_____ _____
Strength 2 + evidence + relevance	_____ _____
Weakness + impact	_____ _____
Improvement action	_____ _____
Evidence of progress	_____ _____

Experience gap bridge

Feedback that changed behaviour

Core strength frame

One strength I would bring is _____. In my experience, I have used this when _____. This would be useful in the role because _____.

Core weakness frame

One area I have been improving is _____. It used to affect _____. I now _____, and this has helped me _____.

Level Up frame

A development area I have become more deliberate about is _____. I recognised it when _____. Since introducing _____, I have seen _____, although I continue to work on _____.

Final integrity check

- Is the strength relevant and evidenced?
- Is the weakness genuine but manageable?
- Is the action specific and repeatable?
- Is the progress credible—not magically complete?

10. Interview Gym

Round 1 — Strength under pressure

Give one strength in 45 seconds. The interviewer asks: “What evidence proves that?”

Round 2 — Weakness follow-up

Answer in 45–60 seconds. Then answer one follow-up:

- When did this last affect your work?
- What exactly have you changed?
- How do you know you are improving?

- Why is this not a risk in this role?

Round 3 — Change the vacancy

Adapt both answers for a different job. Keep your facts the same; change the relevance and risk assessment.

Feedback card

CHECK	YES	NOT YET
My strength matched the vacancy.	☐	☐
I gave concise evidence.	☐	☐
My weakness was genuine and manageable.	☐	☐
My improvement action was specific.	☐	☐
I showed credible progress.	☐	☐

BEFORE THE NEXT UNIT

Prepare two strength answers, one weakness answer, one gap bridge and one feedback example. Record each without reading a script.

11. Self-study review

A. Complete the principles

1. A strength should be relevant and supported by _____.
2. A weakness answer needs specific improvement _____.
3. Do not choose a weakness that contradicts a _____ requirement.
4. Progress should be credible, not presented as instant _____.
5. For an experience gap, acknowledge, bridge and _____.

B. Diagnose the answers

STRENGTH

I am hardworking, friendly, organised, creative, punctual and a perfectionist.

WEAKNESS

My weakness is that I care too much and always work harder than everyone else.

Identify the problems. Rebuild each answer using [truthful evidence needed] where facts are missing.

C. Record and compare

Record your strength and weakness answers. Listen for evidence, relevance, ownership, action and progress.

Unit checkpoint

I can... ☐ select relevant strengths ☐ prove them concisely ☐ choose a manageable weakness ☐ show improvement ☐ bridge experience gaps

Answer key and suggested answers

Exercise 1

1 E; 2 O; 3 O; 4 R; 5 C. For item 5, relevance still depends on the vacancy, but evidence, action and outcome are present.

Exercise 2

1 A; 2 B; 3 D; 4 E; 5 C.

Exercises 3–4

Exercise 3 answers vary; each needs truthful evidence and vacancy relevance.

Exercise 4: 1 S; 2 R; 3 S; 4 F; 5 S; 6 R.

Exercise 5 — Possible actions

Presenting: practise in smaller groups and request feedback. Excel: complete guided tasks and use functions in a real sheet. Delegation: agree outcomes and checkpoints instead of taking work back. Emails: lead with the decision/request and move background detail below. Progress must be observable.

Exercise 6 — Suggested structures

Career changer: acknowledge limited logistics exposure; mention preparation such as safety/stock training; bridge to accuracy, procedures or shift work. Returner: briefly acknowledge time away; name refreshed tools, recent course or current project; reassure with present evidence.

Exercises 7–8

Answers vary. Exercise 7 must contain all three bridge parts. Exercise 8 must show specific feedback, response, changed behaviour and observable evidence—not only “I learned”.

Self-study review

A: 1 evidence; 2 action; 3 core/essential; 4 perfection; 5 reassure. B: the strength is an unsupported list; the weakness is a disguised compliment and comparison with others. Strong revisions require truthful, specific facts.

REMEMBER: Confidence is not pretending to be complete. It is knowing your value, recognising a real development area and showing what you do about it.

My correction log

WHAT I SAID	A STRONGER VERSION
_____	_____
_____	_____

My final answer bank

ANSWER	FIVE SPEAKING KEYWORDS
Strength 1	____ _
Strength 2	____ _

Weakness and progress

— — — — —

Experience-gap bridge

— — — — —

Final check: ☐ evidence ☐ vacancy relevance ☐ specific action ☐ credible progress ☐ natural delivery

WHY THIS JOB?

WHY THIS COMPANY?

Turn research and motivation into an answer that sounds specific and true.

THE BIG IDEA

A convincing motivation answer joins three things: what the role involves, what the organisation or sector offers and what you can contribute or develop. Research supplies the facts; your reasoning makes the answer personal.

By the end of this unit, you can:

- distinguish role, company and sector motivation;
- research what genuinely matters;
- turn company facts into personal reasons;
- avoid praise that could fit any employer;
- discuss practical motivations without making them the whole answer.

Quick diagnostic

1. Why does your target role interest you?
2. Why this employer rather than another?
3. Which company fact can you connect to your experience?
4. What contribution would you like to make?

TRAINER EXTENSION Ask “Why us?” before showing the unit. Count generic phrases and specific reasons.

1. Four layers of motivation

LAYER	FOCUS	EXAMPLE
Role	tasks, responsibility,	I enjoy work that

	working style	combines planning with customer contact.
Organisation	product, service, scale, values, approach	Your structured training programme stood out to me.
Sector	type of problem or people served	I want to work closer to sustainable manufacturing.
Contribution	what you can bring or develop	My stock-control experience would support accurate fulfilment.

Exercise 1 — Name the layer

Write R role, O organisation, S sector or C contribution.

- ___ I would like more responsibility for coordinating a shift.
- ___ Your company supplies components used in medical equipment.
- ___ I am interested in logistics because reliable delivery affects every customer.
- ___ My experience resolving complaints would help your service team.
- ___ The role combines reporting with practical problem-solving.
- ___ Your apprenticeship pathway shows a clear approach to development.

SELF-STUDY CHECK A strong answer usually combines at least two layers; it does not need all four.

2. Research with a purpose

Research is not collecting facts to impress the interviewer. Look for information that changes your understanding of the work or gives you a genuine point of connection.

SOURCE	LOOK FOR	USE CAREFULLY
Vacancy	tasks, priorities, reporting line, language	most important source for role fit
Company website	services, customers, locations, values, current focus	separate evidence from marketing slogans

Recent news/posts	projects, expansion, awards, challenges	check date and reliability
Employee/recruitment pages	training, progression, working practices	avoid assuming every team is identical
Your network	first-hand context and questions	protect privacy; verify important claims

Exercise 2 — Useful research or trivia?

Mark U useful for motivation, Q useful mainly for a question or T trivia unless clearly connected.

- ___ the company's main products and customers
- ___ the exact year every office opened
- ___ a training route mentioned for new employees
- ___ a current investment affecting the target department
- ___ the founder's favourite food
- ___ the role's main operational problem
- ___ a value supported by a real company example

RESEARCH BOUNDARY

Never pretend to know internal facts from public information. Use careful language: "From the vacancy...", "I noticed on your website..." or "I would be interested to learn more about..."

3. Turn a fact into a reason

Repeating a company fact does not explain motivation. Use Fact → Meaning → Connection.

STEP	QUESTION	EXAMPLE
Fact	What did you learn?	The team serves customers in several European markets.
Meaning	Why does it matter?	The role requires clear communication across different expectations.
Connection	Why does it fit you?	I have supported

international customers and enjoy adapting explanations.

Exercise 3 — Complete the connection

COMPANY / ROLE FACT	WHAT IT MEANS	MY CONNECTION
structured six-week training	_____	_____
new warehouse opening	_____	_____
small cross-functional team	_____	_____
service available in two languages	_____	_____
focus on reducing waste	_____	_____

The “so what?” test

After every fact, ask: “So what does this mean for the work, and why does that matter to me?”

LEVEL UP Identify one possible challenge hidden inside an attractive company fact. Explain why you still find the work motivating.

4. Avoid generic praise

GENERIC	WHY IT IS WEAK	MORE SPECIFIC
You are a great company.	could describe any employer	Your investment in technician training caught my attention.
I love your values.	no evidence or connection	Your repair-first policy reflects how I approach reducing waste.
This is my dream job.	emotional but	The balance of analysis

	unsupported	and customer explanation fits my experience.
You are very successful.	praise without job fit	Your recent expansion would make accurate onboarding especially important.

Exercise 4 — Specific enough?

Mark S specific, G generic or U unsupported assumption.

- ___ Your company has an amazing reputation.
- ___ The vacancy emphasises improving handovers, which matches my process experience.
- ___ Everyone in your company is friendly.
- ___ I noticed the team supports both online and in-person customers.
- ___ Your culture is perfect for me.
- ___ The role's mix of practical checks and reporting suits how I like to work.

Use names sparingly

ACCURACY BEFORE FLATTERY

Use the organisation and role names correctly, but do not repeat them unnaturally. Never praise a product, value or project you have not actually researched.

5. Build the complete answer

A useful structure is Role fit → Organisation connection → Contribution/next step.

PART	CONTENT	USEFUL START
Role fit	tasks or problems that genuinely interest you	What appeals to me about the role is...
Organisation connection	one researched and meaningful feature	I was particularly interested to see...
Contribution / next step	evidence you bring and	My experience in...

direction you seek

would help me...

MODEL

“What appeals to me is the combination of stock accuracy and practical problem-solving. I noticed that you are opening a second distribution site, so reliable processes and clear handovers will be especially important. In my current retail role, I check deliveries and resolve discrepancies, and I would like to bring that experience into a larger logistics operation.”

Exercise 5 — Build from notes

ROLE FIT	ORGANISATION CONNECTION	CONTRIBUTION / NEXT STEP
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Core frame

I am interested in this role because _____. I noticed that your organisation _____. This matters to me because _____. My experience in _____ would help me contribute by _____.

6. Different candidates, different reasons

CANDIDATE	STRONG MOTIVATION EMPHASIS	AVOID
Entry-level	learning structure, real tasks, foundation already built	only “I need experience”
Career changer	reasoned direction, transferable fit, preparation	escaping the old job
Experienced	scope, challenge,	title or status alone

	impact, specialist fit	
Returner	current readiness, stable direction, refreshed skills	lengthy private explanation
Internal candidate	wider contribution, deeper knowledge, next responsibility	assuming fit is obvious

Exercise 6 — Choose the stronger reason

A — CAREER CHANGER

I am bored with retail and want to try something completely different.

B — CAREER CHANGER

Retail taught me to manage stock, priorities and customer expectations. I am moving towards logistics because I want to focus more deeply on accurate flow and operational problem-solving.

Why is B stronger? Add one researched company connection.

A — ENTRY-LEVEL

I need someone to give me my first chance.

B — ENTRY-LEVEL

My course gave me a foundation in office software and records. This trainee role interests me because the structured rotation would let me apply those skills across real departments.

7. Practical reasons: salary, location and stability

Practical reasons are legitimate. The problem is not caring about them; it is presenting convenience as the only reason you want the work.

PRACTICAL FACTOR	WEAK AS THE WHOLE ANSWER	PROFESSIONAL INTEGRATION
Salary	It pays more.	The responsibility and salary both represent a realistic next step.
Location	It is close to home.	The location is sustainable for me, and the shift pattern and work itself fit my goals.
Stability	I need something secure.	I am looking for stable work where I can build long-term knowledge of the operation.
Hours	The schedule is convenient.	The schedule suits my availability, and I am comfortable with the role's peak periods.

Exercise 7 — Rebalance the answer

Rewrite each answer so the practical reason remains honest but is not the only motivation.

1. I applied because the office is ten minutes from my house.
2. I want the role because the salary is higher.
3. I am looking for any stable job.
4. The hours work well for my family.

Do not invent passion

CREDIBLE IS ENOUGH

You do not need to claim lifelong passion for every job. Interest in the tasks, standards, team, customers, development or dependable work can be completely convincing when explained honestly.

8. “Why should we hire you?” is different

“Why us?” focuses on your motivation and connection. “Why you?” focuses on the value and evidence you offer. The answers overlap, but the centre changes.

QUESTION	CENTRE OF ANSWER	FINAL EMPHASIS
Why do you want this job?	role + organisation + honest direction	why the fit makes sense to you
Why should we hire you?	requirements + evidence + contribution	what the employer gains
Why are you leaving?	neutral transition + future direction	what you are moving towards

Exercise 8 — Answer the right question

Mark M motivation-centred, V value-centred or T transition-centred.

- ___ The role’s mix of customer contact and reporting fits the direction I want to develop.
- ___ I meet the three main requirements and can bring direct evidence of accurate case handling.
- ___ I have learned a great deal, but I am now looking for broader operational responsibility.
- ___ Your multilingual service model stood out because I enjoy adapting communication.
- ___ My experience would help reduce the training time needed for the booking system.

POLISH-SPEAKER ALERT Avoid “I want to develop myself.” Say what you want to develop: “I want to develop my reporting skills” or “I am ready to take wider responsibility.”

9. Research and answer planner

RESEARCH POINT	MY NOTES
Three role priorities	1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____
One meaningful company fact	_____

What that fact means for the work	_____ _____ _____
My genuine connection	_____ _____
Evidence I can contribute	_____ _____
Development/next step	_____ _____
One question still unanswered	_____ _____

Core answer frame

The role interests me because _____. From the vacancy/website, I understand that _____. This connects with my experience of _____. I would be able to contribute _____, while developing _____.

Level Up frame

The feature that stood out was _____, because it suggests the team is currently focused on _____. In my previous experience, I have _____. I would be motivated to apply that background while learning more about _____.

Integrity check

- Can I point to the source of the company fact?
- Have I explained meaning—not just repeated it?
- Would this answer change for another employer?
- Have I included contribution as well as personal benefit?

10. Interview Gym

Round 1 — Thirty-second research pitch

Explain one role fact, one company fact and one personal connection in 30 seconds.

Round 2 — Full motivation answer

Answer “Why do you want this job?” in 60–75 seconds without reading a script.

Round 3 — Challenge questions

- What specifically attracted you to us?
- Which part of the role interests you least?
- What do you know about our customers?
- How would you contribute in the first months?
- Are you applying to similar organisations?

Feedback card

CHECK	YES	NOT YET
I explained role fit.	☐	☐
I used one accurate company fact.	☐	☐
I explained why the fact mattered.	☐	☐
I connected my own evidence.	☐	☐
The answer could not fit every employer.	☐	☐

BEFORE THE NEXT UNIT

Prepare one 30-second and one 60-second motivation answer. Write five keywords and one intelligent question prompted by your research.

11. Self-study review

A. Complete the principles

1. A strong motivation answer connects role, organisation and personal _____.
2. Research facts need explanation and personal _____.

3. Generic praise could fit almost any _____.
4. Practical reasons may be included, but should not be the _____ reason.
5. “Why should we hire you?” centres on employer _____.

B. Diagnose the answer

CANDIDATE ANSWER

I want to work here because you are a famous and successful company with great values. I have always dreamed of joining a market leader. The office is also close to my home and I heard the salary is good.

Identify four weaknesses. Rebuild using [role fact], [company evidence], [personal connection] and [contribution] where information is missing.

C. Specificity test

Replace the company name with a competitor's. If the answer still works unchanged, add a more specific fact, meaning or connection.

Unit checkpoint

I can... ☐ separate motivation layers ☐ research purposefully ☐ connect facts to reasons ☐ include contribution ☐ avoid generic praise

Answer key and suggested answers

Exercise 1

1 R; 2 O; 3 S; 4 C; 5 R; 6 O.

Exercise 2

1 U; 2 T; 3 U; 4 U; 5 T; 6 U; 7 U. A different choice is acceptable only with a clear, credible connection.

Exercises 3–4

Exercise 3 answers vary; each row needs a logical meaning and personal connection. Exercise 4: 1 G; 2 S; 3 U; 4 S; 5 U; 6 S.

Exercise 5

Answers vary. A complete plan must contain role fit, one researched organisation connection and a contribution or next step.

Exercise 6

B is stronger in both pairs: each gives evidence, direction and a professional reason. A suitable company connection must be accurate and relevant to the candidate's reason.

Exercise 7

Answers vary. Each revision may retain the practical factor but must add role, organisation, contribution or long-term professional fit.

Exercise 8

1 M; 2 V; 3 T; 4 M; 5 V.

Self-study review

A: 1 direction/fit; 2 connection; 3 employer/company; 4 only/main; 5 value/benefit. B uses unsupported praise, no role detail, no evidence of values, convenience and hearsay about salary, and no contribution.

REMEMBER: Research makes an answer specific. Meaning makes it intelligent. Personal connection makes it convincing.

My final motivation bank

TARGET	FIVE SPEAKING KEYWORDS
Role fit	___ ___ ___ ___ ___
Company connection	___ ___ ___ ___ ___
Contribution	___ ___ ___ ___ ___
Question to ask	___ ___ ___ ___ ___

Employer comparison

Use this to test whether your motivation is truly specific—not to criticise another employer.

COMPARISON POINT	TARGET EMPLOYER	ANOTHER EMPLOYER
role emphasis	_____	_____
training / development	_____	_____
customers / product	_____	_____
my strongest connection	_____	_____

Final 60-second outline

Role reason: _____ Company fact: _____

Meaning/connection: _____ Contribution: _____

Final check: ☐ accurate research ☐ genuine reason ☐ personal connection ☐ employer benefit ☐ one intelligent question

DIFFICULT QUESTIONS

Stay calm, answer honestly and guide the conversation back to evidence.

THE BIG IDEA

A difficult question is not always a trap. The interviewer may be testing judgement, self-awareness, risk, clarity or composure. Your task is to answer the real concern without becoming defensive, vague or over-explanatory.

By the end of this unit, you can:

- identify what a difficult question is really testing;
- use a calm structure when you need thinking time;
- handle gaps, mistakes, conflict, failure and missing experience;
- set professional boundaries around inappropriate questions;
- practise follow-up questions without memorising a script.

Quick diagnostic

1. Which interview question makes you most uncomfortable?
2. What concern might sit behind it?
3. Which fact or example could reduce that concern?
4. What must remain private or confidential?

TRAINER EXTENSION Ask one difficult question without warning. Observe the first reaction, then repeat it after teaching the CALM structure.

1. Find the question behind the question

The words may sound challenging, but the employer usually needs information about a practical risk. Listen for the concern before choosing your answer.

QUESTION

POSSIBLE CONCERN

USEFUL EVIDENCE

Why were you unemployed?	readiness, reliability, current skills	constructive use of time + present readiness
Why so many jobs?	commitment, pattern of leaving	clear reasons + what is different now
You lack direct experience.	training time, performance risk	transferable evidence + learning plan
Tell me about a failure.	ownership, judgement, improvement	specific lesson + changed behaviour
Why should we trust you with this?	risk, confidentiality, accuracy	relevant standard + verified example

Exercise 1 — Name the concern

Match each question to the main concern: A commitment, B competence, C judgement, D relationship skills, E motivation.

- ___ Why are you leaving after only eight months?
- ___ Tell me about a disagreement with a colleague.
- ___ What would you do if you made the same error twice?
- ___ Why do you want to change career now?
- ___ You have never used our system. How would you manage?

SELF-STUDY CHECK One question may test several things. Choose the main concern, then prepare evidence for the most important secondary concern.

2. Use CALM under pressure

STEP	ACTION	USEFUL LANGUAGE
C — Centre	pause, breathe, keep neutral posture	That is an important question.
A — Acknowledge	answer the concern directly	I understand why you are asking.
L — Link evidence	give a fact, example or correction	What I can show is...
M — Move forward	state readiness, safeguard or next step	Since then, I have... / My plan would be...

MODEL

"You are right that I have not worked in healthcare before. What I can show is two years of accurate customer records in a regulated financial setting. I learned its privacy procedures quickly and passed every internal audit. I would bring the same disciplined approach while completing your sector training."

Thinking-time language

- Let me think of the most relevant example.
- There are two parts to that answer.
- I would like to answer that carefully.
- The short answer is yes; the important context is...

Exercise 2 — Build a CALM response

PROMPT	C / A	L	M
You have never led a team.	_____	_____	_____
Your CV shows a ten-month gap.	_____	_____	_____
Why did the project fail?	_____	_____	_____

3. Employment gaps and short stays

Be truthful and concise. Explain the period only as far as it affects work, show anything constructive or necessary, and finish with present readiness. You do not owe a detailed private history.

SITUATION	STRONG CONTENT	AVOID
Redundancy	business context + positive next step	speaking as if dismissed for performance
Care responsibilities	brief fact + availability now	private medical or family detail

Health/personal break	boundary + current readiness	diagnosis unless you choose to disclose
Study/training	skills gained + relevance	listing courses without application
Several short roles	honest pattern + stable direction	blaming every employer

MODEL — GAP

“I took time away from paid work for family responsibilities. During that period I kept my digital skills current through an online bookkeeping course and voluntary administration. My availability is now stable, and I am ready to return to a structured role.”

Exercise 3 — Cut, keep, add

Improve this answer. Cross out unnecessary detail, underline the necessary fact and add evidence of readiness.

CANDIDATE ANSWER

“I was not working because several difficult things happened in my family. It was a very stressful year and I did not know what would happen next. Anyway, everything is better now, so I hope the gap will not be a problem.”

Rewrite:

TRAINER NOTE Do not ask a learner to disclose private details. Coach the professional boundary and the evidence of readiness.

4. Leaving a job and workplace conflict

Use neutral facts. Show what you learned and what you are moving towards. Never reveal confidential information or turn the interview into a complaint.

WEAK MOVE	PROFESSIONAL MOVE
My manager was impossible.	We had different expectations about communication; I learned to clarify priorities earlier.
The company was a disaster.	The role changed significantly after restructuring, so I am seeking a position closer to my strengths.
My colleague caused the problem.	We disagreed about the handover; I arranged a short review and we agreed a shared checklist.
I just need to get out.	I am ready for a role with more responsibility for...

Exercise 4 — Neutralise the language

1. The boss never listened to anyone.
2. The team was lazy and I did everything.
3. The company gave me no opportunities.
4. My colleague kept making ridiculous mistakes.

A conflict answer needs an ending

- What did you do—not only what did they do?
- How did you protect the work or relationship?
- What was agreed, changed or learned?
- What would you do earlier next time?

BOUNDARY

You may say: “I cannot discuss confidential details, but I can explain my role, the decision process and what I learned.”

5. Mistakes, failure and criticism

Choose a genuine example with manageable consequences. A strong answer shows ownership, correction and prevention—not perfection.

PART	QUESTION	EXAMPLE LANGUAGE
------	----------	------------------

Fact	What went wrong?	I used an outdated price list.
Ownership	What was your responsibility?	I should have checked the version before sending it.
Repair	How did you limit the effect?	I contacted the customer immediately and corrected the quote.
Learning	What changed permanently?	I introduced a version check and shared it with the team.

Exercise 5 — Which answer builds trust?

A

“I cannot think of a real failure. I am very careful, and problems usually happen because other people do not follow the process.”

B

“I once confirmed a delivery before checking the updated schedule. I informed the customer, agreed a revised time and then added a final schedule check to my confirmation routine. I have not repeated the error.”

Why is B stronger? Identify ownership, repair and prevention.

Handling criticism

Use: feedback received → first reaction managed → action taken → evidence of change.

LEVEL UP Explain a time when the criticism was partly unfair. Show how you separated tone from useful information and responded professionally.

6. Missing experience or qualifications

Do not disguise a real gap. Name it accurately, then reduce the employer's risk with adjacent evidence and a credible learning plan.

MOVE	PURPOSE	EXAMPLE
Name the gap	shows honesty	I have not used SAP in a live role.
Bridge	shows adjacent competence	I use another ERP daily for orders and stock.
Proof of learning	shows adaptability	I learned that system during a two-week launch.
Plan	shows practical readiness	Before starting, I would complete the basic modules and practise the key workflows.

Exercise 6 — Build the bridge

GAP	ADJACENT EVIDENCE	LEARNING PLAN
no formal leadership title	_____	_____
no sector experience	_____	_____
language level below preferred	_____	_____
missing software tool	_____	_____
returning after a long break	_____	_____

Do not overpromise

CREDIBLE PLAN

“I learn quickly” is a claim. A credible plan names the resource, practice method, likely support and first milestone.

POLISH-SPEAKER ALERT Avoid “I don’t have experience on this position.”
Say: “I do not yet have direct experience in this role, but...”

7. Salary, overqualification and commitment

These questions often test retention risk and expectations. Stay honest; connect practical needs with the actual scope of the role.

QUESTION	REAL CONCERN	ANSWER FOCUS
What salary do you expect?	budget and level alignment	researched range + total role + flexibility
Are you overqualified?	boredom or quick departure	deliberate choice + valued work + realistic scope
Will you stay?	recruitment/training risk	direction + reasons this role supports it
Are you interviewing elsewhere?	timing and genuine interest	brief truth + why this role remains specific

MODEL — OVERQUALIFIED

“I understand the concern. I am applying deliberately because I want a hands-on role with direct customer responsibility rather than a larger management position. The service standards and training responsibility described here are work I value, and the scope matches what I want for my next stage.”

Exercise 7 — Strengthen the commitment

Add one specific role reason and one realistic retention reason to each reply.

1. I think I would stay because it seems like a nice company.
2. I know I have more experience, but I do not mind doing easier work.
3. I am applying elsewhere, but your job is also interesting.

SALARY NOTE Prepare a range based on the role and market. State whether you mean gross/net and monthly/hourly where relevant. Do not invent flexibility you do not have.

8. Inappropriate or overly personal questions

Laws and norms vary, but you can protect privacy while returning to job-relevant information. A calm boundary is not a confrontation.

OPTION	WHEN USEFUL	LANGUAGE
Clarify relevance	question is unclear	Could you explain how that relates to the role?
Redirect	you can answer the work concern	My personal arrangements are private, but I can confirm...
Set a boundary	detail is not appropriate	I prefer not to discuss that. I am happy to discuss my availability.
Answer voluntarily	you genuinely choose to	Brief answer, then return to job evidence.

Exercise 8 — Redirect to work

Write a professional response that answers the legitimate work concern without unnecessary personal detail.

1. Do you have children? [Concern: travel availability]
2. How old are you? [Concern: physical demands/experience]
3. Are you planning a family? [Concern: future availability]
4. Where are you really from? [Concern unclear]

SAFETY AND DISCRIMINATION

If a question feels discriminatory, unsafe or unrelated, you may decline and later document what was asked. Decide whether the organisation's response affects your wish to continue.

TRAINER EXTENSION Practise three tones: warm redirect, firm boundary and ending the interview. The learner chooses the level of disclosure.

9. Follow-up pressure

Interviewers may challenge the first answer: “But why?”, “What exactly did you do?” or “How do you know?” This often tests depth, not hostility.

FOLLOW-UP	WHAT TO ADD
That sounds vague.	one observable action or result
Why should I believe it changed?	evidence after the event
What was your part?	use “I” for your actions; “we” for team outcomes
What would your manager say?	balanced strength + known development area
What if that happens here?	prevention + escalation + communication

Exercise 9 — Add the missing depth

FIRST ANSWER	FOLLOW-UP	SECOND-LAYER EVIDENCE
I improved communication.	What exactly changed?	_____ _____
I learned from the mistake.	How do you know?	_____ _____
We solved the delay.	What did you personally do?	_____ _____
I work well under pressure.	Give me proof.	_____ _____

When you do not know

HONEST UNCERTAINTY

“I do not know enough to give a reliable answer yet. I would first check ____, speak to ____ and then decide based on ____.”

10. Interview Gym

Round 1 — Ten-second reset

Trainer asks a difficult question. Candidate pauses, identifies the concern aloud and chooses a CALM opening. No full answer yet.

Round 2 — Evidence under pressure

- Why did you leave your last job?
- What is your biggest professional failure?
- Why have you changed roles several times?
- What can you offer without direct experience?
- Why should we believe you will stay?
- Tell me about difficult feedback.

Round 3 — Follow-up chain

Answer for 45–60 seconds. Trainer asks two follow-ups: one requesting detail and one challenging the conclusion.

Feedback card

CHECK	YES	NOT YET
I answered the real concern.	☐	☐
I stayed neutral and concise.	☐	☐
I used a specific fact/example.	☐	☐
I showed repair, learning or a plan.	☐	☐
I protected privacy/confidentiality.	☐	☐
I handled a follow-up calmly.	☐	☐

PERSONAL ACTION STEP

Record one difficult answer twice. In version 2, remove excuses and

unnecessary context; add one stronger piece of evidence.

11. Self-study review

A. Complete the principles

1. A difficult question often hides an employer _____.
2. CALM means Centre, Acknowledge, Link evidence and _____ forward.
3. A mistake answer needs ownership, repair and _____.
4. A skills gap needs adjacent evidence and a credible learning _____.
5. A privacy boundary should redirect to job-relevant _____.

B. Diagnose the answer

CANDIDATE ANSWER

"I left because my manager was unfair and the team never supported me. I did everything I could, but they blamed me when a client complained. I would never let that happen again because I work better with professional people."

Identify at least five risks. Rewrite it with neutral context, personal responsibility, action, learning and forward direction.

C. Pressure test

Ask yourself: What would the interviewer challenge next? Add one fact that would survive that follow-up.

Unit checkpoint

I can... ☐ find the concern ☐ use CALM ☐ discuss gaps and mistakes ☐
☐ bridge missing experience ☐ set a boundary ☐ handle follow-ups

Answer key and suggested answers

Exercises 1-2

Exercise 1: 1 A; 2 D; 3 C; 4 E; 5 B. Exercise 2 answers vary. Each response should acknowledge the concern, add relevant evidence and move towards readiness, repair or a plan.

Exercises 3-5

Exercise 3 should remove private detail and uncertainty, briefly name the gap and add present availability or current skills. Exercise 4 answers must replace blame with observable facts, the candidate's action and learning. Exercise 5: B shows a real error, ownership, immediate repair and a prevention system; A avoids responsibility.

Exercises 6-7

Exercise 6 answers vary; each bridge needs truly adjacent evidence and a specific learning action. Exercise 7 must avoid empty promises: add a role feature the candidate genuinely values and a credible reason the scope supports their next stage.

Exercises 8-9

Exercise 8 examples: "I keep family matters private, but I can confirm that I can travel on the schedule stated"; "I prefer not to discuss age, but I meet the physical requirements and can give relevant examples." Exercise 9 answers must contain observable actions or results, not another adjective.

Self-study review

A: 1 concern/risk; 2 Move; 3 prevention/learning; 4 plan; 5 information. B risks: blame, emotional language, no clear facts, no ownership, no repair, unsupported promise and criticism of future colleagues.

REMEMBER: Calm is not silence. Honesty is not over-disclosure. Evidence turns a difficult question into a professional answer.

My difficult-question bank

QUESTION / CONCERN	FOUR SPEAKING KEYWORDS
Gap or short stay	___ _ _ _
Mistake or failure	___ _ _ _
Conflict or departure	___ _ _ _

Missing experience

____ _

Commitment / salary

____ _

Privacy boundary

____ _

Final CALM outline

Concern: _____ Acknowledge: _____

Evidence: _____ Move forward: _____

Final check: ☐ truthful ☐ concise ☐ neutral ☐ evidence-based ☐ no
confidential detail ☐ ready for follow-up

SALARY & AVAILABILITY

Discuss practical conditions clearly—without apologising, guessing or promising what you cannot deliver.

THE BIG IDEA

Salary and availability questions test alignment. The employer needs to know whether the role, budget, timetable and working conditions can work for both sides. A professional answer is prepared, specific and honest.

By the end of this unit, you can:

- research and state a realistic salary range;
- clarify gross/net, hourly/monthly and fixed/variable pay;
- discuss benefits and the whole offer;
- state notice period, start date and scheduling limits;
- negotiate calmly without making false promises.

Quick diagnostic

1. What salary range would you give today?
2. Which pay unit and currency would you state?
3. When could you realistically start?
4. Which conditions are essential, preferred or flexible?

TRAINER EXTENSION Ask “What are your salary expectations?” before teaching the unit. Note whether the learner gives a number, unit, evidence and flexibility.

1. What the employer needs to know

QUESTION	EMPLOYER IS	YOU NEED TO
----------	-------------	-------------

	CHECKING	CLARIFY
What are your salary expectations?	budget and seniority alignment	range, basis, currency, total package
What do you earn now?	reference point or leverage	whether you choose/can disclose
When can you start?	staffing timetable	notice, commitments, realistic date
Can you work shifts/travel?	operational coverage	frequency, times, location, notice
Are you flexible?	room to agree terms	what is flexible and what is not

Exercise 1 — Identify the missing detail

Write N number/range, U unit/basis, T timing, C condition or E evidence.

- ____ “I would expect around 6,000.”
- ____ “I can start soon.”
- ____ “I am flexible about shifts.”
- ____ “My range is based on similar roles and the stated responsibilities.”
- ____ “My expected hourly rate is...”
- ____ “I can travel occasionally with advance notice.”

ALIGNMENT, NOT EMBARRASSMENT

Pay is a normal employment condition. You can discuss it warmly and directly. Preparation prevents both unrealistic demands and unnecessary underpricing.

2. Research a defensible range

Use several sources because one advert, one colleague or one online figure may not represent the role you are discussing.

SOURCE	WHAT IT ADDS	CHECK
Vacancy/adverts	real offers for comparable roles	location, level, contract, date

Salary guides/data	wider market range	sample, methodology, current year
Recruiters/network	local and sector context	experience behind the opinion
Your evidence	value you can already deliver	skills, scope, results, scarcity
Your minimum	personal decision boundary	do not confuse it with market value

Exercise 2 — Compare like with like

For each pair, circle the factors that could justify different pay.

1. Junior coordinator / senior coordinator: scope, independence, team size, results.
2. Capital city / small town / remote role: location, travel, market, expenses.
3. Employment contract / freelance contract: tax, leave, equipment, risk.
4. Fixed daytime schedule / rotating nights: hours, premium, predictability.

My evidence line

My range reflects _____, _____ and _____.

LEVEL UP Prepare two ranges: one for the role as advertised and one if the final scope includes wider responsibility.

3. Range, target and minimum

NUMBER	MEANING	KEEP PRIVATE?
Market range	credible external band for comparable work	no—explain the basis
Target	a fair result you would be pleased to accept	usually your negotiating anchor
Minimum	lowest total offer you would actually accept	often yes; use for your own decision
Stretch	higher figure justified by	only with clear evidence

additional scope/value

CORE ANSWER

“Based on comparable roles in this location and the responsibilities described, I would expect a gross monthly salary in the range of ____ to _____. I would also consider the full package and the final scope of the role.”

Exercise 3 — Build the sentence

ELEMENT	MY WORDING
Evidence/basis	_____ _____
Range	from _____ to _____
Unit	☐ gross ☐ net ☐ hourly ☐ monthly ☐ annual
Currency	_____ _____
Conditional flexibility	_____ _____

A range must make sense

- The bottom is a figure you could genuinely accept.
- The top is defensible for the role—not a random wish.
- The range is not so wide that it gives no information.
- You know what could move you within or beyond it.

4. Speak the same financial language

Many misunderstandings come from the basis, not the amount. Repeat the important terms aloud.

TERM	CLARIFY
------	---------

Gross / net	before or after deductions; local usage may differ
Hourly / monthly / annual	time basis and expected working hours
Fixed / variable	guaranteed pay versus bonus or commission
Full-time equivalent	figure adjusted to a standard full-time schedule
Employee / contractor	different responsibility for tax, leave, equipment and risk
Currency	especially for international or remote work

Exercise 4 — Repair the ambiguity

1. I expect about 40 an hour.
2. The salary should be 7,000.
3. I want 60,000 per year including bonus.
4. My freelance rate is the same as my employee salary.

Useful clarification questions

- Is that figure gross or net?
- Is the bonus included in that range or additional?
- How many paid hours does the monthly figure assume?
- Is the contract employment, freelance or another arrangement?

POLISH-SPEAKER ALERT Do not say “I earn 6,000 on hand.” In international English, say “My take-home pay is...” or state the gross amount clearly.

5. The whole offer

Salary matters, but two offers with the same headline figure can have very different value and risk.

AREA	POSSIBLE ITEMS	QUESTION TO ASK YOURSELF
Pay	base, overtime, bonus, commission	What is guaranteed?

Time	hours, leave, flexibility, on-call	What will a normal month require?
Costs	travel, equipment, meals, training	What will I pay myself?
Security	contract length, probation, notice	How predictable is the arrangement?
Growth	training, review cycle, progression	What is specific and documented?
Work pattern	remote, site, shifts, travel	Is it sustainable for me?

Exercise 5 — Compare two offers

FACTOR	OFFER A	OFFER B
Guaranteed pay	_____	_____
Variable pay	_____	_____
Hours/travel	_____	_____
Leave/benefits	_____	_____
Costs/risk	_____	_____
Development	_____	_____

My better overall fit is _____ because _____.

DO NOT COUNT PROMISES TWICE

“Possible bonus,” “future promotion” and “salary review” are not guaranteed value. Ask about criteria, timing and who makes the decision.

6. Current salary and salary history

Rules and employer practices differ. You can decide how much to disclose, while redirecting the conversation to the value and scope of the new role.

APPROACH	LANGUAGE
Answer directly	My current gross monthly salary is _____, plus _____.
Give context	My current package reflects a different scope and location.
Redirect	I would prefer to focus on the range appropriate for this role.
Set a boundary	I keep current compensation confidential, but my expectation is...
Correct a low anchor	My present salary is not the basis for this move; the advertised responsibilities are wider.

Exercise 6 — Choose your response

Write one direct answer and one polite redirect. Both must end with your expectation for the new role.

Direct:

Redirect:

Never invent an offer

CREDIBILITY

Do not claim a competing offer, salary or deadline that does not exist.

You may say truthfully: "I am in other recruitment processes, but I do not yet have another offer."

7. Negotiate without fighting

A negotiation is a conversation about evidence, scope and trade-offs. Keep the tone cooperative and make a clear request.

STEP	PURPOSE	LANGUAGE
Appreciate	show genuine interest	Thank you. I am pleased to receive the offer.
Clarify	confirm the full terms	Could we confirm whether ____ is included?
Reason	connect request to evidence	Given the responsibility for ____ and my experience in ____...
Request	state the change clearly	Would you be able to move the base to ____?
Pause	allow a considered reply	I understand you may need to discuss that internally.

MODEL COUNTEROFFER

"Thank you—the role remains very attractive to me. Given the responsibility for two sites and my direct experience leading the same reporting process, would you be able to increase the gross monthly base from ____ to ____? I would be happy to discuss the total package."

Exercise 7 — Strengthen the request

1. I need more money because my costs are high.
2. That offer is too low.
3. Can you do better?
4. I will accept today if you add a large bonus.

LEVEL UP Prepare one non-salary trade-off that would improve the offer: review timing, schedule, leave, training, title, equipment or another genuine priority.

8. Notice period and start date

A reliable start-date answer separates what is known, what must be confirmed and what is only a preference.

DETAIL	EXAMPLE
Contractual notice	My notice period is four weeks.
Earliest realistic date	The earliest realistic start date would be ____.
Possible uncertainty	I need to confirm whether unused leave affects the final date.
Existing commitment	I have a pre-booked commitment on ____, which I want to disclose now.
Negotiable preference	If possible, I would prefer to start on ____, but I can discuss alternatives.

Exercise 8 — Make it reliable

Rewrite each answer with an exact condition or date.

1. I can start immediately.
2. Probably in about a month.
3. I think my employer will let me leave early.
4. Any start date is fine.

Notice-period planner

CHECK	MY INFORMATION
Contract/notice says	_____
Resignation date assumed	_____
Earliest confirmed start	_____
Dates already unavailable	_____
What needs confirmation	_____

9. Hours, shifts, travel and remote work

“Flexible” is not a complete answer. Define the practical limits before the interview so you do not agree under pressure and withdraw later.

CONDITION	QUESTIONS TO CLARIFY
Shifts	which times, rotation, weekends, notice, swaps?
Overtime/on-call	how often, paid or time back, response time?
Travel	frequency, distance, overnight, transport, expenses?
Remote/hybrid	fixed days, location rules, equipment, availability?
Part-time	minimum/maximum hours, pattern, seasonal change?

Exercise 9 — Essential, preferred or flexible?

Mark E essential, P preferred or F flexible. Then write the exact boundary.

ITEM	E/P/F	MY BOUNDARY
start/finish times	___	_____
weekends	___	_____
overnight travel	___	_____
remote days	___	_____
overtime notice	___	_____

PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARY

“I can work one Saturday per month with advance notice. I am not available for regular Sunday shifts.” Clear information helps both sides

decide.

10. Interview Gym

Round 1 — Clean salary answer

Answer in 30 seconds: basis, range, unit and one sentence of conditional flexibility.

Round 2 — Availability briefing

State notice period, earliest realistic start, any known unavailable dates and one condition that still needs clarification.

Round 3 — One role-play

The employer offers below the candidate's target and asks for an earlier start plus occasional weekends. Clarify the package, make one evidence-based request and state one boundary.

Feedback card

CHECK	YES	NOT YET
I gave a clear, researched range.	☐	☐
I stated the financial basis.	☐	☐
I explained evidence, not personal need.	☐	☐
I considered the whole offer.	☐	☐
My start date was realistic.	☐	☐
My availability boundary was exact.	☐	☐

PERSONAL ACTION STEP

Write a private decision sheet with your target, minimum, priority trade-off, earliest start date and non-negotiable scheduling limit.

11. Self-study review

A. Complete the principles

1. A salary answer should state amount, currency and financial _____.
2. A range needs market evidence and a defensible upper and lower _____.
3. Variable pay is not the same as _____ pay.
4. A start date must account for notice and existing _____.
5. Flexibility should be described with exact conditions and _____.

B. Diagnose the answer

CANDIDATE ANSWER

"I am looking for about 8,000, but I am flexible because I really want the job. I can probably start immediately and I can work whenever you need. My current employer will understand. Benefits are not important."

Identify at least six risks. Rewrite it with basis, range/unit, conditional flexibility, notice, realistic start date and one scheduling boundary.

C. Decision test

If the offer meets your salary target but breaks an essential time or travel boundary, what will you ask, trade or decline?

Unit checkpoint

I can... ☐ research a range ☐ state the basis ☐ compare the whole offer ☐ negotiate ☐ give a reliable start date ☐ define availability

Answer key and suggested answers

Exercises 1–2

Exercise 1: 1 U (and N may also be missing); 2 T; 3 C; 4 E; 5 U; 6 C. Exercise 2 answers vary; valid comparisons must account for scope, level, location, hours and contract type rather than comparing headline figures alone.

Exercises 3–5

Exercise 3 requires evidence, a coherent range, a clear basis/currency and conditional—not unlimited—flexibility. Exercise 4 answers must add the missing unit, basis, currency or treatment of variable pay. Exercise 5 should compare guaranteed value, time, costs, risk and sustainability.

Exercises 6–7

Exercise 6 responses may disclose or redirect, but both must remain truthful and return to the new role's value. Exercise 7 should replace personal need, judgement or vague pressure with appreciation, evidence and a specific request.

Exercises 8–9

Exercise 8 answers need exact dates or stated conditions; an unconfirmed early release is not a start date. Exercise 9 is personal: a strong answer names frequency, timing, notice and a real boundary.

Self-study review

A: 1 basis/unit; 2 figure/point; 3 guaranteed/fixed; 4 commitments; 5 limits. B risks: no basis or unit, no real range, unlimited flexibility, unclear notice, unconfirmed start, unsustainable hours, assumption about employer and no whole-offer review.

REMEMBER: Know your evidence. Name the basis. Protect the conditions that make the job sustainable.

My offer and availability bank

DECISION POINT	MY PREPARED POSITION
Market range	_____
Target / private minimum	_____

Best evidence	_____
Priority trade-off	_____
Earliest start	_____
Availability boundary	_____

Final answer outline

Range + basis: _____ Flexibility:

Notice/start: _____ Boundary:

Final check: ☐ researched ☐ clear unit ☐ truthful ☐ conditional flexibility ☐
realistic date ☐ sustainable agreement

Offer decision check

TEST	YES / NO / NEED TO ASK
Is the guaranteed pay clear?	_____
Can I sustain the hours and travel?	_____
Are variable pay criteria clear?	_____
Is the start date possible?	_____
Are my essential conditions met?	_____

Three professional endings

ACCEPT: "Thank you. I am happy to accept the offer on the terms confirmed."

CLARIFY: "I remain interested. Before deciding, could we confirm _____?"

DECLINE: "Thank you for the offer. After careful consideration, I am unable to accept because the agreed conditions do not match my essential requirements."

QUESTIONS FOR THE EMPLOYER

Use your questions to understand the work, test the fit and finish with professional curiosity.

THE BIG IDEA

“Do you have any questions for us?” is part of the interview—not an afterthought. Strong questions show preparation, uncover useful information and help you decide whether the role is right for you.

By the end of this unit, you can:

- prepare questions that cannot be answered by a quick website search;
- adapt questions to the interview stage and interviewer;
- ask about expectations, team, challenges and conditions;
- listen, follow up and evaluate the answer;
- close the interview with clarity and interest.

Quick diagnostic

1. Which three questions would you ask today?
2. What do you genuinely need to know before accepting?
3. Which public facts should you research rather than ask?
4. What answer would make you reconsider the role?

TRAINER EXTENSION Ask “Any questions?” and record the learner’s first three choices. Revisit them after the unit.

1. Three jobs your questions must do

JOB	PURPOSE	EXAMPLE
Understand	learn how the work operates	What would a successful first three months look

Demonstrate	show relevant preparation and thinking	like? I noticed the team is expanding. How will that affect priorities?
Decide	test whether the conditions fit you	How often does the advertised travel occur in practice?

Exercise 1 — Name the job

Mark U understand, D demonstrate or C decide. Some questions may do two jobs; choose the strongest.

- ___ What is the most urgent problem the new person will inherit?
- ___ I saw that the service recently expanded. What has changed for this team?
- ___ How much weekend work occurred in the last three months?
- ___ How will performance be measured during probation?
- ___ What do people usually find surprising after joining?

CURIOSITY WITH A PURPOSE

Do not ask a question only because it sounds impressive. Know what information you need and how the answer will affect your understanding or decision.

2. Research first—then ask deeper

PUBLIC FACT	WEAK QUESTION	DEEPER QUESTION
Company has three sites	How many sites do you have?	How does this role coordinate work across the three sites?
New product launched	What products do you sell?	What has the launch changed for this team?
Training advertised	Do you provide training?	Which skills are prioritised in the first six weeks?
Hybrid work stated	Can I work remotely?	How are hybrid days

Exercise 2 — Upgrade the website question

1. What does your company do?
2. What are your values?
3. Do you have offices abroad?
4. Is this a growing company?
5. Do you offer career development?

Evidence-led opening

I noticed / From the vacancy, I understand / You mentioned earlier that _____. How does that affect _____?

LEVEL UP Ask one question that respectfully tests whether a company claim is visible in everyday work: “Could you give an example of how that value shapes a recent team decision?”

3. Ask about success and priorities

Questions about outcomes help you understand the real job beyond the task list.

FOCUS	STRONG QUESTION
First weeks	What would you want the new person to understand first?
Three months	What would make you say the person is progressing well?
Measures	Which results or behaviours matter most in this role?
Priorities	If two priorities conflict, how does the team decide?
Immediate need	What problem would you most like the new person to solve?
Scope	Which decisions can this role make

independently?

Exercise 3 — Choose the sharper question

A

What does success look like?

B

At the end of the first three months, which two results would show that the new person is on track?

Why is B easier to answer precisely? Rewrite A for your target role.

Follow the priority

- What makes that difficult now?
- How is it currently measured?
- Who would I work with on that?
- What has already been tried?

4. Ask about team and management

TOPIC	NEUTRAL QUESTION	LISTEN FOR
Teamwork	How does the team divide and coordinate work?	clear ownership and handovers
Manager	How do you normally give feedback and set priorities?	frequency, clarity, examples
Meetings	Which meetings are essential for this role?	purpose and decision-making
Support	Where does a new person go when blocked?	access, escalation, psychological safety
Conflict	How are disagreements about priorities handled?	process, respect, accountability

Exercise 4 — Make it neutral

- 1. Is the manager nice?
- 2. Does the team get along?
- 3. Are there many office politics?
- 4. Will people help me if I struggle?
- 5. Do you micromanage employees?

Ask for behaviour, not labels

SPECIFIC BEATS “GOOD”

“Supportive,” “friendly” and “fast-paced” mean different things to different people. Ask for a routine or recent example.

SELF-STUDY CHECK Write what a useful answer would contain. If you cannot recognise a useful answer, the question may still be too vague.

5. Ask about challenge and change

Every role has pressure. A mature question explores it without sounding negative or demanding an impossible guarantee.

WEAK	STRONGER
Is the job stressful?	When does workload usually peak, and how does the team manage it?
Are there problems?	What is the biggest operational challenge facing the team now?
Why do people leave?	What have you learned from recent turnover in this role?
Will the role change?	Which parts of the role are most likely to change this year?
Is the system bad?	Which process currently creates the most rework?

Exercise 5 — Read between the answers

For each answer, write one respectful follow-up.

EMPLOYER ANSWER	MY FOLLOW-UP
"It gets very busy."	_____
	—
"The team is changing."	_____
	—
"You need resilience."	_____
	—
"We move very quickly."	_____
	—

RED FLAG OR INCOMPLETE ANSWER?

A vague answer is not automatically a red flag. Give the interviewer one chance to clarify with a factual follow-up.

6. Ask about learning and progression

Separate onboarding, skill development and promotion. They are related, but they are not the same promise.

AREA	QUESTION
Onboarding	What does the first month's onboarding include?
Learning	Which skills usually take longest to develop?
Feedback	When does a new employee receive the first formal review?
Progression	What evidence is needed before someone takes wider responsibility?
Examples	Could you describe a recent example of development from this role?

Exercise 6 — Promise or process?

Mark P process with clear steps, H hope/possibility or V vague.

- ____ “There are many opportunities here.”
- ____ “After probation, employees can apply for internal vacancies.”
- ____ “High performers move up quickly.”
- ____ “The role has monthly coaching and a skills review after three months.”
- ____ “We hope to create a senior role next year.”

Do not ask only about promotion

CONTRIBUTION FIRST

Balance development questions with questions about performance and contribution. Show that you want to earn wider responsibility, not simply receive a title.

7. Adapt to the interviewer and stage

INTERVIEWER / STAGE	BEST TERRITORY
Recruiter / first screen	process, broad conditions, timetable, role basics
Hiring manager	priorities, measures, decisions, management, challenges
Future colleague	workflow, handovers, tools, peak periods, team routines
Senior leader	direction, customers, change, wider contribution
Final stage / offer	remaining risks, terms, start, decision process

Exercise 7 — Route the question

Write R recruiter, M manager, C colleague, L leader or F final stage.

- ____ How are daily handovers managed?
- ____ What are the next steps and expected timetable?
- ____ Which result matters most to the wider business?

- ____ Could we confirm the travel frequency in the offer?
- ____ What would you want me to prioritise in month one?

If the interviewer cannot answer

That is useful information too. Ask: “Who would be the best person to ask?” or “Could that be clarified at the next stage?”

POLISH-SPEAKER ALERT Avoid “I have a question to you.” Say “I have a question for you” or simply “Could I ask about...?”

8. Sensitive conditions and timing

Salary, leave, flexibility and contract questions are legitimate. The best timing depends on what has already been shared and whether the answer affects your decision.

STAGE	APPROPRIATE FOCUS
Before applying	essential eligibility, location, schedule stated in advert
First screen	salary range if not published, contract, broad availability
Main interview	practical working pattern linked to the role
Offer stage	exact pay, benefits, leave, start date, all written conditions

Exercise 8 — Improve the timing and tone

1. How soon can I take holiday?
2. Exactly how much will you pay me?
3. Can I work from home whenever I want?
4. How quickly will I be promoted?

Essential means ask early

DO NOT HIDE A DEAL-BREAKER

If a condition makes the role impossible—location, hours, legal

permission or essential accessibility—clarify it early enough to avoid wasting both sides' time.

TRAINER NOTE Help the learner distinguish anxiety-driven questions from genuine decision information. Both can be discussed, but they need different preparation.

9. Listen, note and follow up

A prepared list is not a script. Ask one question, listen fully, note a keyword and respond to what was actually said.

MOVE	USEFUL LANGUAGE
Acknowledge	That is helpful—thank you.
Clarify	When you say ____, what would that involve in practice?
Connect	That links to my experience of ____.
Deepen	What tends to make that successful?
Close the thread	That answers my question, thank you.

Exercise 9 — Build the follow-up chain

MY QUESTION	KEYWORD IN ANSWER	FOLLOW-UP
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Do not interrogate

- Prioritise two to four questions, depending on time.
- Do not ask several questions in one breath.
- Accept that some detail belongs at a later stage.
- Notice when the interviewer has already answered your question.

10. Interview Gym

Round 1 — Prioritise

Choose five prepared questions. Rank them: must ask, useful if time, later stage.

Round 2 — One role-play

The interviewer gives five minutes for questions. Ask three questions, use one evidence-led opening and one spontaneous follow-up. Finish without rushing.

Round 3 — Evaluate

After the role-play, separate facts, examples, vague claims, unanswered points and information that changes your decision.

Feedback card

CHECK	YES	NOT YET
My questions had a clear purpose.	☐	☐
I avoided basic website questions.	☐	☐
I adapted to the interviewer/stage.	☐	☐
I listened before following up.	☐	☐
I learned something useful.	☐	☐
I closed professionally.	☐	☐

PERSONAL ACTION STEP

Prepare a six-question bank for one real vacancy: two about success, one about team, one about challenge, one about development and one

decision question.

11. Close the interview professionally

When time is nearly finished, stop adding new topics. Confirm interest only if it is genuine, summarise one fit point and ask about next steps.

PART	EXAMPLE
Thank	Thank you—that has given me a much clearer picture of the role.
Connect	The focus on accurate handovers particularly matches my experience.
Interest	I remain very interested in the opportunity.
Next step	Could you explain the next stage and expected timetable?

Exercise 10 — Build your close

Thank:

Connection:

Interest/next step:

After-interview note

CAPTURE WITHIN 15 MINUTES	MY NOTES
Important facts	
Strong examples	
Unanswered questions	
Concerns/red flags	
Effect on my interest	

12. Self-study review

A. Complete the principles

1. A strong question helps you understand, demonstrate or _____.
2. Research basic facts before asking a _____ question.
3. Ask for behaviour or examples rather than vague _____.
4. Adapt questions to the interviewer and interview _____.
5. Listen for a keyword before asking a _____.

B. Diagnose the questions

CANDIDATE LIST

What does your company do? Is the manager nice? How soon can I be promoted? Is the job stressful? How many holidays do I get? Do you have any other benefits?

Identify at least six weaknesses. Replace the list with three purposeful questions for a main interview and one condition question for the appropriate stage.

C. Decision test

Which employer answer would increase your interest? Which answer would require clarification? Which answer would make you withdraw?

Unit checkpoint

I can... ☐ research first ☐ ask purposeful questions ☐ adapt to stage ☐ follow up ☐ evaluate answers ☐ close clearly

Answer key and suggested answers

Exercises 1–3

Exercise 1: 1 U; 2 D; 3 C; 4 U; 5 C. Exercise 2 answers vary; each must move from a public fact to its effect on the role, team or priorities. Exercise 3: B defines a time period and asks for two observable results, making a precise answer easier.

Exercises 4–6

Exercise 4 should replace labels with questions about feedback, routines, coordination, support and conflict processes. Exercise 5 follow-ups should request frequency, example, effect or response. Exercise 6: 1 V; 2 P; 3 V; 4 P; 5 H.

Exercises 7–9

Exercise 7: 1 C; 2 R; 3 L; 4 F; 5 M. Exercise 8 answers should be respectful, specific and timed to the relevant stage. Exercise 9 answers vary; the follow-up must connect to something actually said.

Exercise 10 and review

A strong close thanks the interviewer, names one genuine connection and asks about the next step. Review A: 1 decide; 2 basic; 3 labels; 4 stage; 5 follow-up. The candidate list is generic, partly researchable, self-focused, vague and poorly timed.

REMEMBER: Good questions are not decoration. They improve your understanding and protect the quality of your decision.

My six-question bank

PURPOSE	MY QUESTION
Success	_____
	—
Success / priority	_____
	—
Team / manager	_____
	—
Challenge / change	_____
	—
Development	_____
	—
Decision condition	_____
	—

Final interview close

Key connection: _____ Remaining question:

Next-step question:

Answer-quality check

EMPLOYER ANSWER	NOTE
Specific fact/example	_____
Vague claim to clarify	_____
Unanswered point	_____
Effect on my decision	_____

Final check: ☐ researched ☐ purposeful ☐ well-timed ☐ listened ☐ followed up
☐ evaluated the answer

THE COMPLETE INTERVIEW

Bring every answer, example and decision together in one realistic rehearsal.

THE BIG IDEA

Preparation is complete only when you can use it in sequence, under time pressure and in conversation. The goal is not a perfect script. It is a calm, flexible performance supported by evidence.

By the end of this unit, you can:

- prepare the practical details for in-person or online interviews;
- manage first impressions, pace, voice and body language;
- complete a full mock interview without reading scripts;
- recover when an answer goes wrong;
- evaluate performance and create a final action plan.

Quick diagnostic

1. What will you prepare 24 hours before the interview?
2. Which three answers need the most rehearsal?
3. How will you recover if your mind goes blank?
4. What evidence should the interviewer remember?

TRAINER EXTENSION Run a five-minute baseline interview now. Do not correct during it. Compare it with the final mock.

1. The 24-hour preparation

AREA	CONFIRM
Role	vacancy, priorities, requirements, salary/conditions

Employer	services, customers, current facts, meaningful connection
Evidence	five STAR stories, strengths, growth example, results
Practical	time, route/link, contact, documents, clothing
Questions	three priority questions plus one condition question
Mindset	sleep, food, water, realistic arrival/log-in buffer

Exercise 1 — Build the final folder

Tick ready or write the action needed.

ITEM	READY	ACTION
Vacancy copy	☐	_____
CV/application copy	☐	_____
Evidence keywords	☐	_____
Employer notes	☐	_____
Questions to ask	☐	_____
Contact and directions/link	☐	_____

DO NOT CRAM

The final evening is for checking and light rehearsal—not writing ten new scripts. Stop early enough to rest.

2. In-person and online setup

IN-PERSON	ONLINE
-----------	--------

Check route, entrance and travel time.	Test link, camera, microphone and connection.
Arrive nearby early; enter at the appropriate time.	Join a few minutes early, ready but not distracted.
Carry documents neatly and silence the phone.	Close notifications and unnecessary applications.
Notice reception and staff interactions.	Use a quiet, front-lit space and stable device.
Plan for security, parking or building access.	Keep a phone/backup contact for technical failure.

Exercise 2 — Failure-proof the interview

RISK	PREVENTION	RECOVERY
delay	_____	_____
link fails	_____	_____
audio fails	_____	_____
document missing	_____	_____
unexpected interruption	_____	_____

Technical recovery language

“I am sorry—the connection has become unstable. May I reconnect using the same link?”

“I can hear you, but my microphone has stopped. I will rejoin immediately and use my backup device.”

3. First impressions without acting

Professional does not mean stiff. Aim for calm attention, respectful energy and behaviour suited to the workplace.

MOMENT	USEFUL BEHAVIOUR
--------	------------------

Greeting	clear greeting, name, natural smile, culturally appropriate contact
Waiting	phone away, observe instructions, treat everyone respectfully
Opening	sit/position comfortably, listen to names and roles
Throughout	open posture, steady attention, no performance mask
Leaving	thank people, collect belongings calmly, acknowledge reception

Exercise 3 — Replace the rule with a principle

Rigid advice can create anxiety. Rewrite each as a flexible principle.

1. Maintain eye contact every second.
2. Never move your hands.
3. Always give a firm handshake.
4. Smile throughout the interview.
5. Sit perfectly still.

ACCESSIBILITY AND CULTURE

There is no single correct body language. Use what is natural and accessible for you while showing attention and respect. You may request reasonable interview arrangements.

4. Voice, pace and answer length

PROBLEM	ADJUSTMENT
Too fast	pause before the first sentence; breathe at punctuation
Too quiet	support the voice; check audio/room rather than forcing
Long answer	lead with the point; use one example; stop after the result

One-word answer	add reason, evidence or next step
Monotone	stress key words and allow meaning to shape the voice
Filler words	replace repeated fillers with a short silent pause

Exercise 4 — Time the answer

QUESTION	TARGET	ACTUAL	ONE CHANGE
Tell me about yourself	60–90 sec	_____	_____
Why this job?	45–75 sec	_____	_____
STAR example	75–120 sec	_____	_____
Difficult question	45–90 sec	_____	_____

The stop signal

Finish the sentence when you have answered the question. A brief pause invites the interviewer to follow up; it does not mean you failed.

5. Listen before answering

Prepared candidates sometimes answer the question they expected rather than the question asked. Identify the instruction and the focus.

QUESTION WORDS	RESPONSE NEEDED
Tell me about a time...	one specific example
How would you...	approach, steps and judgement
Why...	reason and connection
What did you personally do?	your actions, not only team actions
What would you do differently?	reflection and changed behaviour

Can you...

direct yes/no, then evidence or condition

Exercise 5 — Answer the exact question

Underline the instruction word and write the centre of the answer.

1. How would you prioritise two urgent requests?
2. Tell me about a time you corrected an error.
3. Why are you leaving now?
4. What did you personally contribute?
5. What would you do differently next time?

Clarify rather than guess

"Would you like an example from my current role or a more technical example?"

"Do you mean my earliest start date or my preferred date?"

6. Recover when an answer goes wrong

MOMENT	RECOVERY LANGUAGE
Mind goes blank	Let me take a moment to choose the most relevant example.
Wrong example	That example does not show the point clearly. May I replace it?
Answer too long	Let me summarise the main point.
Misunderstood	I may have answered a different question. Could I respond again?
Missing knowledge	I do not know enough to answer reliably. I would first...
Emotion rises	May I take a moment? I would like to answer carefully.

Exercise 6 — Practise the reset

Choose three recovery lines. Say each naturally, then continue with a 30-second answer.

TRIGGER	MY RESET	NEXT POINT
blank	_____	_____
too long	_____	_____
wrong question	_____	_____

A CORRECTION CAN BUILD TRUST

A calm, brief correction often shows more judgement than pretending a weak answer was complete.

7. The complete mock interview

Use one real vacancy. The trainer follows the sequence but chooses natural follow-ups. Working alone: record the full interview, pausing only between interviewer prompts.

Opening and fit

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. Why are you interested in this role and organisation?
3. What do you understand about the main priorities?

Evidence and judgement

1. Which strength would help you most here?
2. Tell me about a result you are proud of.
3. Describe a difficult problem, conflict or mistake.
4. Give an example of learning or adapting quickly.

Risk and conditions

1. What experience do you still need to develop?
2. Why are you leaving / explain the relevant gap or change.

3. What are your salary expectations and availability?

Candidate questions and close

1. What would you like to ask us?

2. Is there anything else you would like us to know?

ONE ROLE-PLAY Complete the whole sequence once without coaching interruptions. Feedback comes afterwards.

8. Mock interview scorecard

AREA	1	2	3	EVIDENCE / NOTE
Role understanding	☐	☐	☐	_____ _____
Motivation	☐	☐	☐	_____ _____
Relevant evidence	☐	☐	☐	_____ _____
STAR clarity	☐	☐	☐	_____ _____
Difficult questions	☐	☐	☐	_____ _____
Listening/ follow-up	☐	☐	☐	_____ _____
Voice/pacing	☐	☐	☐	_____ _____
Employer questions	☐	☐	☐	_____ _____

Scale: 1 unclear or unsupported • 2 adequate but inconsistent • 3 clear, specific and convincing

Evidence-based feedback

KEEP	CHANGE	NEXT PRACTICE
------	--------	---------------

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

LIMIT THE CORRECTION

Choose the two changes that would improve the interview most.
Repeating ten corrections at once usually makes performance less natural.

9. Upgrade the weakest answer

Do not simply add more words. Diagnose what the answer lacks.

MISSING	ADD
Relevance	connect directly to the vacancy priority
Specificity	one situation, action, fact or result
Ownership	state what you personally decided or did
Reflection	show learning or changed behaviour
Structure	lead with the point; order the evidence
Credibility	remove exaggeration and unsupported claims

Exercise 7 — Before and after

Weakest question:

Why the answer was weak: ☐ relevance ☐ evidence ☐ ownership ☐ reflection ☐ structure ☐ credibility

Five-keyword plan: _____

Improved answer:

Follow-up pressure test

What detail would the interviewer challenge?

Which fact supports my conclusion?

10. After the interview

WHEN	ACTION
Immediately	record questions, answers, names, facts and concerns
Same day	send a concise thank-you only when appropriate
Before next stage	correct evidence gaps and research new information
By agreed date	follow up professionally if no update arrives
After rejection	request feedback where appropriate; preserve the relationship
After offer	confirm terms in writing and review the whole decision

Exercise 8 — Interview debrief

QUESTION	MY NOTE
What went well?	
Which answer needs repair?	
What did I learn about the employer?	
What remains unclear?	
Has my interest changed? Why?	

NO INSTANT CATASTROPHISING

A difficult question, interviewer's neutral expression or one imperfect sentence does not reveal the final decision. Debrief using facts.

11. Self-study review

A. Complete the principles

1. The final evening is for checking and light _____.
2. Listen for the instruction and answer the exact _____.
3. A silent pause is better than repeated filler _____.
4. If an answer goes wrong, use a brief professional _____.
5. Mock-interview feedback should prioritise the two highest-impact _____.

B. Diagnose the performance

CANDIDATE PATTERN

The candidate arrives just on time, answers quickly, uses memorised paragraphs, gives three examples without clear results, apologises repeatedly after forgetting a word and asks no questions because the interview ran late.

Identify at least six improvements. Create a two-priority action plan rather than correcting everything at once.

Priority 1: _____ Practice:

Priority 2: _____ Practice:

C. Readiness test

Can you complete the full mock with only keyword notes? If not, which single unit should you revisit?

Unit checkpoint

I can... ☐ prepare logistics ☐ manage pace ☐ listen accurately ☐ recover calmly ☐ complete a mock ☐ improve from evidence

Answer key and suggested answers

Exercises 1–3

Exercise 1 is personal; every missing item needs a concrete action. Exercise 2 requires prevention plus a realistic recovery/contact route. Exercise 3 principles should allow natural, culturally appropriate and accessible behaviour while showing attention and respect.

Exercises 4–6

Exercise 4 target times are guides, not rigid limits. Exercise 5 centres: 1 prioritisation method; 2 one correction example; 3 reason for leaving now; 4 personal contribution; 5 reflection. Exercise 6 succeeds when the reset is brief and the candidate then answers.

Exercises 7–8

Exercise 7 must diagnose the missing quality and add evidence, not simply length. Exercise 8 should separate performance facts, employer information, remaining questions and emotional assumptions.

Self-study review

A: 1 rehearsal; 2 question; 3 words; 4 reset/correction; 5 changes. B improvements include earlier arrival/login, calmer pace, keyword rather than scripted answers, clearer results, fewer apologies, recovery language and protected time for priority questions.

REMEMBER: The interviewer does not need perfection. They need enough clear, relevant evidence to make a confident decision.

My final interview toolkit

TOOL	✓	TOOL	✓
60-second introduction	☐	motivation answer	☐
five STAR stories	☐	strength + growth	☐
difficult-question reset	☐	salary + availability	☐

employer
questions ☐

professional close ☐

Final five-keyword card

FIT _____ EVIDENCE _____ GROWTH _____
CONTRIBUTION _____ QUESTION _____

Interview-day promise to myself

I will listen, pause, answer honestly and use evidence. I do not need to perform a perfect script. I am also deciding whether this role is right for me.

Final readiness dashboard

AREA / UNIT	✓	AREA / UNIT	✓
Vacancy + employer / 1, 6	☐	Skills + evidence / 2, 4	☐
Introduction / 3	☐	Strengths + growth / 5	☐
Difficult questions / 7	☐	Salary + availability / 8	☐
Employer questions / 9	☐	Full rehearsal / 10	☐

My final practice plan

DATE	PRACTICE	RESULT / NEXT CHANGE
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

The final ten-minute check

☐ Route/link and contact ready • ☐ Documents and keyword card ready • ☐ Phone/notifications managed • ☐ Water and practical needs prepared • ☐ Three slow breaths; first answer not rushed.

YOU'RE READY — Listen, think, respond. ☐ prepared ☐ rested ☐ specific
☐ honest ☐ curious