

Job Interview Preparation

Full course guide | By Shady | Shadykone | English | Free USD 0

Prepare truthful examples, practice clear answers and make informed decisions about your next role. This course is designed for first-job applicants, entry-level candidates and career changers. No previous interview experience or paid tools are required.

How to use this course

Read one lesson, complete its exercise in the separate editable worksheets, then answer its three knowledge-check questions before reading the explanations. Practice aloud using a real vacancy where possible. The fictional practice role below is available if you do not have one.

Planning estimates only: 60 minutes reading and rereading, 210 minutes lesson practice, and 30 minutes for the final assessment and review. Actual time varies. No video lessons are included.

Total estimated study time is 5 hours. All model answers are fictional teaching examples. Replace them with your own truthful experience. Never invent a qualification, job, responsibility, result or reference. Completion does not guarantee employment, pay or promotion.

Course map

1. Research the employer and role — 10 minutes reading plus 30 minutes practice.
2. Answer tell me about yourself — 10 minutes reading plus 30 minutes practice.
3. Build truthful STAR examples — 10 minutes reading plus 40 minutes practice.
4. Handle common interview questions — 10 minutes reading plus 35 minutes practice.
5. Practice for remote and in person interviews — 10 minutes reading plus 45 minutes practice.
6. Ask questions and plan your next steps — 10 minutes reading plus 30 minutes practice.

Then complete the 12-question final assessment, use the 24-question mock interview bank and review your readiness with the five-part rubric. No accredited qualification or certification is awarded.

Practice vacancy

Fictional practice vacancy: Customer Support Assistant at Meadow Learning Supplies. Tasks: respond to routine product enquiries, keep accurate request records, organize follow-up tasks and refer issues beyond your authority to a supervisor. Helpful skills: clear communication, basic spreadsheets, careful checking and teamwork. Training is provided on the internal system. Hours, pay, location and selection process are intentionally unspecified so you can practice asking questions. This is not a real vacancy or employer.

Lesson 1 Research the employer and role

Estimated reading 10 minutes | Practice 30 minutes

What you will learn

- Identify three priority responsibilities in a job description.
- Separate verified employer facts from assumptions.
- Connect relevant evidence to a requirement and prepare a useful question.

Start with the work

An interview is easier to prepare for when you can describe the work in plain language. Save the job description and read it twice. On the first pass, identify what the employee will actually do. On the second, underline the skills, knowledge and working arrangements mentioned. A title such as assistant or coordinator may cover very different tasks at different employers.

Create three columns on paper: requirement, my evidence, question to clarify. Select three to five priorities, rather than trying to make every word equally important. Repeated tasks, essential criteria and stated outcomes are useful clues. A clue is not proof of the interviewer's scoring system. If the description is vague, mark the uncertainty.

Build a small research brief

Use the employer's official website and the original vacancy first. Record what it provides, whom it serves, where the role sits, and one current activity relevant to the vacancy. Add a source link and the date beside each fact. An undated slogan is weak evidence of a current priority. Reviews or news can raise questions, but one anonymous account does not establish the whole workplace culture.

Turn research into a reasoned connection. If an organization serves customers in several time zones and the role mentions handovers, you can ask how the team shares unresolved issues. Do not claim to know its internal workflow. Write "The vacancy mentions handovers" rather than "Your handover process is broken." Research should improve your questions, not encourage assumptions about people.

Translate experience honestly

Consider paid work, study, volunteering, community activity and independent projects. Name the setting accurately. Organizing a study group can demonstrate scheduling and follow-through; it does not make you a professional project manager. For each requirement, identify one action you personally took and one observable result. If there is no match yet, prepare a learning plan rather than inventing one.

Example requirement map: the vacancy asks for accurate records. Your evidence is checking a volunteer sign-up list against confirmation emails and correcting duplicates. Your question is how the team checks data quality. A gap might be an unfamiliar database. An honest response is that you have not used that system yet, followed by related tools you really have used and how you would learn.

Use research in an answer

A useful "Why this role?" answer connects a real feature of the work to a skill or interest you can support. Avoid praising the organization in broad terms. Choose one or two specific points, say why they matter to you, then show relevant evidence. Interest and capability are different: wanting to work with customers is strengthened by an example of listening carefully and resolving a misunderstanding.

Bad answer: "You are the best company, and I can do anything." Better answer: "The role includes answering customer questions and keeping clear records. In my volunteer shift I checked requests against the sign-up list and explained next steps to visitors. I would like to develop those skills in a customer-support team." This is a fictional teaching example. Replace it with your own facts; do not adopt the experience.

Exercise Create your one page research brief

1. Choose one real vacancy or use the supplied fictional practice role. Write a one-sentence description of the work.
2. List three requirements. Match each to one truthful example, or label it a gap.
3. Record two employer facts with their source and date. If using the fictional role, label all employer details as fictional.
4. Prepare one specific reason for applying and two questions that your research cannot answer.

Produce: One research brief with three requirement matches, two sourced facts and two open questions.

Quality check: Can a reader distinguish the employer's stated facts, your interpretation and what you still need to ask?

Lesson knowledge check

1. Which is the strongest first research source?

- A. A rumor in an unrelated forum
- B. The original vacancy and employer website
- C. A generic answer copied from another applicant

2. You have not used a required scheduling tool. What should you say?

- A. Claim expertise because another tool looks similar
- B. Avoid the subject even when asked
- C. State the gap, describe related experience and explain a realistic learning approach

3. Which research note is most useful?

- A. "The vacancy mentions weekend shifts; I need to ask about the rota."
- B. "Every employee must dislike weekend work."
- C. "The company is perfect."

Answers and explanations

1. B. Start with material tied directly to the role. Other sources can add context, but rumors and copied answers do not establish the requirements.
2. C. Related experience can be valuable, but it must not be presented as direct experience with an unfamiliar tool.
3. A. It identifies a source-backed condition and a genuine open question. The other notes are unsupported generalizations.

Further guidance: UCB1. See Sources and further reading for links.

Lesson 2 Answer tell me about yourself

Estimated reading 10 minutes | Practice 30 minutes

What you will learn

- Build a concise introduction linked to the target role.
- Replace unsupported adjectives with evidence.
- Adapt your introduction without memorizing a script word for word.

Give the listener a useful starting point

“Tell me about yourself” is a broad invitation. Use it to establish the experience and direction most relevant to this conversation. You do not need to give your entire life history. Begin with what you do now, or the most useful context for the role, then add evidence and explain why this next step makes sense.

For practice, use three prompts: current focus, relevant evidence, reason for this role. These are course prompts, not a rule every employer uses. Aim for roughly 60 to 90 seconds when practicing, then adapt to the question and any time limit. A shorter screen may need 30 seconds. If asked to walk through your whole CV, include a little more chronology.

Choose evidence before adjectives

“Hardworking,” “friendly” and “organized” are claims. A small, specific example helps the interviewer understand what you mean. Instead of listing five traits, choose one or two strengths relevant to the vacancy and show a behavior. You can explain that you organized weekly study sessions, kept an attendance record, or practiced a new tool, if those things really happened.

Use everyday words you would normally say. Explain unfamiliar course titles or acronyms. Do not exaggerate the duration, independence or professional level of an activity. Say you assisted rather than led when that is accurate. If you are changing careers, identify the skill that carries across and the part you still need to learn.

Compare two introductions

Bad answer: “I’m a perfectionist and a people person. I’ve done lots of things and just need a job. I’m the perfect candidate.” It offers little evidence, does not identify the work, and makes an absolute claim.

Better first-job example: “I recently completed a business administration course, where I practiced spreadsheets and organizing information. For a group assignment I maintained our task list and reminded the team about agreed deadlines. I’m now looking for an entry-level support role where I can use that attention to detail and learn your customer-service processes. The record-keeping and enquiry work in this vacancy are what interested me.” This fictional example demonstrates a structure, not experience you may claim.

Better career-change example: “My background is in retail, where I handled enquiries and kept shift handover notes. I found I most enjoyed solving practical problems and explaining the next step clearly. I’m now moving toward office support, and I’ve been practicing document and spreadsheet tasks. This position interests me because it combines communication with careful administration.” Use only the elements supported by your history.

Make the answer flexible

Write an initial draft, then reduce it to three or four cue words. Rehearse from the cues rather than reading a paragraph. Record yourself only if comfortable, or ask a trusted person to listen. Notice where a listener needs more context and where you repeat yourself. You can pause, breathe normally and restart a sentence without treating it as failure.

Prepare a short follow-up for each claim. If you mention a spreadsheet project, be ready to explain what you personally did, what was difficult and what you learned. If you mention teamwork, describe one interaction. An introduction should create truthful paths for the next question. Avoid adding impressive phrases that you cannot explain naturally.

Exercise Build and test two introductions

1. Write your current focus in one sentence. Add one relevant, true example. End with why this role fits your direction.
2. Underline each claim about skill or experience. Write evidence beside it, or revise it.
3. Practice a 30-second version and a 60-to-90-second version. Time them without rushing.
4. Ask a listener to name the role you want and the evidence they heard. Revise anything they could not identify.

Produce: Two spoken introductions and a three-line cue card.

Quality check: Does the answer sound like you, identify relevant evidence and leave room for conversation?

Lesson knowledge check

1. What should a useful introduction emphasize?

- A. Relevant background, evidence and reason for the role
- B. Every detail of your personal history
- C. Only a list of positive adjectives

2. Which claim is best supported?

- A. "I am always perfect."
- B. "I'm excellent at everything."
- C. "I kept our group assignment task list and checked agreed deadlines."

3. What is the best way to use a model answer?

- A. Memorize its experiences as your own
- B. Use its structure, replacing every claim with your actual experience
- C. Read it word for word regardless of the question

Answers and explanations

1. A. A focused introduction gives the interviewer a usable starting point. Relevant detail matters more than length or self-praise.
2. C. The third option describes a specific action that can be explored in a follow-up. Absolute claims are hard to support.
3. B. Examples teach organization. They are not permission to borrow someone else's history or ignore the question.

Further guidance: NCS3. See Sources and further reading for links.

Lesson 3 Build truthful STAR examples

Estimated reading 10 minutes | Practice 40 minutes

What you will learn

- Structure a past example using situation, task, action and result.
- Explain your individual contribution within a team.
- Use first-job or transferable experience without inventing achievements.

Turn a real event into evidence

A behavioral question asks about something that happened, often beginning with “Tell me about a time.” STAR is a way to organize the answer: Situation gives essential context; Task identifies the responsibility or problem; Action explains what you did; Result states what happened and what you learned. The National Careers Service describes these four parts and notes that useful examples can come from work, home or volunteering. [NCS2]

Choose the event before choosing impressive language. Write a rough timeline using facts you remember. Name the people by role where possible and omit private details. For a first interview, useful events may come from a class project, a club, volunteering or an independent learning task. Explain the setting plainly; a family responsibility is not paid employment.

Make the action yours

Give enough context for the listener to understand the problem, then spend most of the answer on your decisions and actions. “We did well” does not show your role. You can say “Our group divided the work; I checked the sources and consolidated the references.” Give others credit, explain what you owned, and identify where someone else made the decision.

A result does not need to be a percentage. It may be a corrected document, a completed task, fewer repeated questions, or specific feedback. Use a number only when you can explain where it came from. If you cannot verify an improvement, state what you observed without pretending it was measured. Some outcomes are mixed; explaining your adjustment can be more useful than describing a perfect ending.

Work through a first job example

Question: “Tell me about a time you dealt with a setback.” Bad answer: “My team was lazy, so I did everything and saved the project.” It blames others and gives no reliable detail.

Better fictional example: “During a college presentation project, one section was still missing two days before our deadline. I was responsible for assembling the final slides. I asked the group what was unfinished, agreed a shorter outline with them and made a shared checklist. I completed my own section and combined the drafts as they arrived, then flagged two missing references so their authors could fix them. We submitted on time, but our rehearsal was rushed. Next time I would set an earlier draft deadline.”

Here the situation is the group project; the task is assembling the presentation; the actions are checking, agreeing the outline, tracking and combining; the result includes on-time submission and a lesson. The speaker does not claim to have written every section or to have earned an invented grade. This example is a teaching scenario, not a story to present as your own.

Prepare a flexible story bank

Collect four to six real events covering teamwork, a problem, a mistake, learning, initiative and competing priorities. One event can show more than one skill, but answer the actual question. A successful presentation may show planning; it will not necessarily answer a question about handling criticism unless feedback was part of the event.

For each story, add a truthful limit: what you did not control, what you cannot quantify or what still went wrong. Practice follow-ups such as “What did you do personally?”, “Why that choice?” and “What would you change?” If no matching past event comes to mind, say so and offer a related example. If permitted, explain a hypothetical approach clearly as hypothetical. Never silently turn a possible future action into a past achievement.

Exercise Create three evidence cards

1. Choose three real events from any accurately labeled setting. Name the skill each may demonstrate.
2. Write one or two sentences for Situation and Task, three specific Action bullets, and an honest Result.
3. Add one thing you learned and one limit on your claim. Remove unsupported numbers.
4. Say each answer aloud. Ask a partner to identify what you personally did and ask one follow-up.

Produce: Three STAR cards you can defend with factual details.

Quality check: Could you explain each action, source of each number and the difference between your work and the team's work?

Lesson knowledge check

1. What does the A in STAR mean?

- A. Audience
- B. Action
- C. Ambition

2. You know a process improved but did not measure the change. What should you do?

- A. Invent a plausible percentage
- B. Claim the biggest improvement possible
- C. Describe the change you observed and avoid an unsupported number

3. Which is a truthful first-job example?

- A. A clearly labeled college project with your own actions
- B. A fictional management role presented as real
- C. A friend's achievement retold as yours

Answers and explanations

1. B. Action is what you actually did. It is the part that lets the interviewer assess your approach.
2. C. A concrete qualitative result is useful. An invented metric misrepresents the evidence.
3. A. Education and other non-work settings can demonstrate skills when their context and your contribution are accurately described.

Further guidance: NCS2. See Sources and further reading for links.

Lesson 4 Handle common interview questions

Estimated reading 10 minutes | Practice 35 minutes

What you will learn

- Distinguish a past-experience question from a hypothetical situation.
- Answer questions about strengths, development and mistakes with evidence.
- Clarify uncertainty without pretending to know an answer.

Identify what the question asks

Before speaking, decide whether the interviewer wants a fact, a past example, a reason or a proposed approach. “Tell me about a time you missed a deadline” needs a real past event. “What would you do if two deadlines conflicted?” asks you to reason about a hypothetical future. A motivation question asks why the work interests you. A knowledge question asks what you know or how you solve a role-specific problem.

Listen to all parts of a multi-part question. You can ask, “Would you like a specific example from my course project?” or “When you say urgent, do you mean a safety issue or a time-sensitive customer request?” A brief pause is useful. If you lose the thread, acknowledge it and return to the requested point rather than filling the silence with unrelated detail.

Show strengths and development honestly

For a strength, name a relevant behavior, give evidence and connect it to the role. Example: “I keep information organized. In our volunteer team I used a shared checklist so the next shift could see unfinished tasks.” This fictional example works because the behavior is visible. Adapt it only with your own facts.

For a development area, choose something real, explain its effect and describe a specific improvement method. Avoid disguised praise such as “I care too much.” Better fictional example: “I used to include too much detail in written updates. I now start with the action needed, then add background below it. I ask a peer to tell me when the main point is unclear.” Do not pretend that a critical skill gap has already disappeared.

Explain mistakes without blame

A mistake answer can show responsibility. Describe what happened, your part, how you responded and the change you made afterward. Do not expose confidential information or identify a colleague unnecessarily. It is reasonable to say that the example is simplified to protect privacy.

Bad answer: “I never make mistakes; any problem was someone else’s fault.” Better fictional answer: “I once sent a study-group reminder with the wrong start time. When I noticed, I sent a correction, asked members to confirm they had seen it and updated the shared calendar. One person still arrived early, so I apologized directly. I now check the date and time against the calendar before sending reminders.” The answer includes an imperfect consequence rather than a miraculous fix.

Reason through a situation

For a hypothetical question, start by clarifying the goal and any safety, privacy or time constraints. Explain a sequence: understand the facts, prioritize, act within your authority, communicate and check the outcome. When an employer has a policy, say you would follow it or ask the appropriate person. Do not promise unauthorized refunds, access to private data or specialist actions outside your competence.

Example: “Two people request urgent help while you are finishing a deadline.” A useful answer is: “I would check the actual deadlines and impact of each request. If there is an immediate safety concern, I would follow the escalation procedure first. Otherwise I would agree priorities with the supervisor if needed, tell the people affected what I can do and when, and update them if that changes.” The exact priority depends on the role and facts.

When you do not know

State the limit clearly: "I haven't used that system yet." Add related knowledge, the first steps you would take and when you would seek support. If asked a technical question, explain your reasoning and assumptions instead of bluffing. Practice is useful preparation; using hidden live assistance contrary to the interview rules can misrepresent your work. Ask in advance which notes, tools or resources are allowed.

Exercise Practice five different answer types

1. Choose one motivation, one strength, one development, one past-example and one hypothetical question from the question bank.
2. Label each type before you answer. Use STAR only where it fits.
3. Practice an answer, then ask a partner for one clarification or challenge.
4. Revise one vague claim into a concrete action and one overconfident claim into an accurate limitation.

Produce: Five answer outlines with a suitable structure for each.

Quality check: Does each response answer the actual question, remain truthful and show sound boundaries?

Lesson knowledge check

1. "What would you do if the instructions were unclear?" is mainly what kind of question?

- A. Hypothetical situation
- B. Request for your full life history
- C. Proof that you have already done the task

2. Which is the strongest development answer?

- A. "I have no weaknesses."
- B. A real limitation, its effect and a specific improvement action
- C. A fake weakness that is only praise

3. An unfamiliar system comes up. What is the best response?

- A. Pretend to have used it
- B. Claim every system works identically
- C. Explain the gap and how you would learn or seek support

Answers and explanations

1. A. It asks for a proposed approach. State assumptions and steps rather than inventing a past event.
2. B. A useful answer shows self-awareness and a credible improvement process without claiming instant perfection.
3. C. Honest boundaries allow the employer to understand both your current capability and your learning approach.

Further guidance: NCS3. See Sources and further reading for links.

Lesson 5 Practice for remote and in person interviews

Estimated reading 10 minutes | Practice 45 minutes

What you will learn

- Prepare the practical details for the interview format.
- Run a structured mock interview and use focused feedback.
- Plan accessibility needs and a backup route without judging appearance or disability.

Confirm the practical details

Check the date, time and time zone, expected length, format, location or meeting link, interviewer contact and any preparation task. For an in-person meeting, check the route, entrance, building access and arrival instructions. Allow time for travel disruption and finding the room. For a remote interview, confirm whether it is live, telephone or recorded; a recorded system may have strict preparation and submission limits.

Keep a compact folder with the vacancy, the application you submitted, your cue card and your questions. Review the same version of your CV that the employer has. Follow any instructions about documents, identification or assessments. If an instruction seems unusual, verify it through an independently checked employer contact before sharing sensitive information.

Make the technology manageable

Test the microphone, speakers, camera if used, connection and the actual meeting platform before the interview. Check charging and a stable place for the device. Reduce notifications and unnecessary noise where possible. A clear, ordinary background is enough; expensive equipment is not a course requirement. Check what other people can see or hear before screen sharing. [COS1]

Prepare a backup contact method. If the connection drops, use the agreed route to explain the problem and ask whether to reconnect, switch to a phone call or reschedule. Avoid repeatedly talking over broken audio. Practice this short message: "The audio is cutting out. Could we pause briefly while I reconnect? If it continues, is a phone call possible?" Never assume a recorded answer can be re-recorded; check the rules before starting.

Plan for access and communication

If you need an adjustment, contact the organizer early enough to discuss practical arrangements. You might ask about captions, an accessible entrance, written instructions, breaks or an alternative format. Availability and procedures vary by organization and location; this course does not determine legal entitlement. You can describe the practical barrier and request without putting private medical details in a practice worksheet. [NCS1]

A sample request is: "I'm preparing for the interview on [date]. Could you confirm whether live captions can be enabled and whether the task instructions will also be available in writing?" Adapt it to your needs and ask how to arrange it securely if more information is necessary. Focus your practice feedback on clarity and job-relevant evidence. Accent, disability-related behavior, eye contact style and expensive clothing are not measures in this course's scoring rubric.

Run a useful mock interview

Use a partner, a careers adviser if available, or self-practice. Select six questions without rehearsing them in the same order every time. Allow about 20 minutes for answers and employer questions, then 10 minutes for feedback. Ask the interviewer to include one follow-up such as "What did you do personally?" and one uncertainty such as a changed priority.

The observer should note specific evidence rather than impressions like "be more confident." Helpful feedback is "I could identify the problem and result, but I did not hear your action." Choose two

improvements only for the next round. If you record yourself, do so privately and get consent before recording anyone else. You can practice without recording at all.

Prepare a calm recovery

Nerves do not mean you lack ability. Practice saying, “Let me take a moment to choose the most relevant example,” or “Could you repeat the second part?” If you realize an answer was unclear, offer a short correction. Follow the interviewer’s lead on length. You do not need to perform a flawless script. A focused, honest conversation gives more useful information than a rushed recital.

Bad response to a dropped connection: disappear and send nothing. Better response: use the agreed contact, explain the issue briefly and ask for the next step. A technical problem may be outside your control; your plan should make communication easier, not promise that every problem can be prevented.

Exercise Complete one mock and one repair round

1. Fill in the interview logistics and accessibility plan in the worksheet. Test the relevant route or platform.
2. Run six questions from the bank and ask two employer questions. Record notes, with recording optional.
3. Score the five rubric criteria using observable evidence. Ask for one example behind each low score.
4. Repeat your two weakest answers after revising them. Write what changed.

Produce: A checked logistics plan, mock interview score and two revised answers.

Quality check: Are the connection or travel backup and any requested adjustments confirmed rather than merely assumed?

Lesson knowledge check

1. What should you do before a recorded video interview?

- A. Assume unlimited retakes
- B. Check time limits, allowed preparation and submission rules
- C. Submit a test recording as the final answer

2. Which practice feedback is most useful?

- A. “Your accent is wrong.”
- B. “Buy expensive clothes.”
- C. “Your answer explained the situation but not your own action.”

3. You need captions to participate effectively. What is a practical next step?

- A. Contact the organizer to discuss the arrangement in advance
- B. Assume every platform has captions enabled
- C. Put private medical records in a public practice document

Answers and explanations

1. B. Recorded systems differ. Check their instructions before beginning any timed or final submission step.
2. C. The third comment targets evidence and answer quality. Accent and spending are not job-relevant measures in this rubric.
3. A. An early practical request lets you confirm arrangements. Avoid unnecessary disclosure and do not assume a feature is active.

Further guidance: COS1, NCS1. See Sources and further reading for links.

Lesson 6 Ask questions and plan your next steps

Estimated reading 10 minutes | Practice 30 minutes

What you will learn

- Ask questions that help assess the actual work and support.
- Write a concise follow-up with accurate details.
- Review an offer's practical terms without relying on guarantees or legal assumptions.

Use your questions to learn

An interview also gives you information for your own decision. Prepare four or five questions and select the most useful two or three based on what has already been covered. Ask about responsibilities, success measures, training, supervision, workload, working arrangements or the selection timeline. You can ask for an example if an answer is too general.

Useful questions include: "Which tasks would be most important in the first three months?", "How are new starters trained?", "How does the team decide priorities when requests conflict?" and "What are the next steps and expected timing?" If the job description leaves hours or location unclear, clarify them. Ask about compensation and benefits respectfully when relevant, rather than treating them as forbidden topics or the only matters to discuss.

Replace vague questions with specific ones

Bad question: "Is this a good place to work?" Better question: "How does the manager give feedback, and how often would a new starter meet with them?" Bad question: "Can I get promoted quickly?" Better question: "What skills would someone need to demonstrate before taking on more responsibility?" Specific questions make it easier to compare an answer with your needs.

Listen rather than reading your entire prepared list. If the interviewer has already explained training, ask a follow-up about an unclear detail. Do not ask for confidential information about clients or other candidates. Write down important information afterward, separating what was promised, what was described as typical and what remains uncertain.

Follow up without pressure

After the interview, note the questions asked, evidence you gave, details you learned and one thing to improve. Where appropriate, a brief thank-you message can acknowledge the conversation and reinforce relevant interest. Respect an employer's instructions about contact. If they gave a timeline, use it to judge when an update request is appropriate; daily reminders are rarely helpful. [UCB1]

Editable thank-you example: "Hello [name], thank you for speaking with me about the [role] position today. Our discussion of [specific task] helped me understand the role. My experience with [true relevant example] is particularly relevant to that work. I'm interested in the opportunity and happy to provide any additional information you need. Best, [name]." Remove any sentence that is not accurate. This is a draft template, not a message to send unchanged.

Editable update request: "Hello [name], I'm following up on the [role] interview on [date]. You mentioned an update around [timeframe]. Is there any news on the next steps? Thank you, [name]." If no date was agreed, use a reasonable interval for the employer's process and keep the request brief. Do not invent a competing offer to create urgency.

Review an offer as a whole

If offered a role, request the terms in writing and check what you understand before making a commitment. Review the role and responsibilities, pay amount and currency, pay frequency, hours, location or remote expectations, start date, benefits, reporting line, response deadline and any stated conditions. Distinguish

guaranteed pay from variable or discretionary elements. Check any unresolved questions with the employer. [NCS1]

Use your own priorities to evaluate practical fit: travel time and costs, schedule, learning, accessibility, support and the work itself. This course does not tell you whether to sign a contract or establish legal rights, tax treatment or employment status. For those questions, seek appropriate qualified local advice. Do not assume a verbal statement overrides written terms, or that a deadline can be ignored.

Learn from any outcome

A good interview does not guarantee a job, salary or promotion. Decisions can depend on factors you cannot observe. If you do not receive an offer, you can ask for feedback when appropriate and review your own evidence. Keep useful stories, adjust unclear answers and continue your search. If an offer does not fit your needs, seek clarification before deciding. The purpose of preparation is better communication and a more informed decision.

Exercise Prepare your closing and follow through

1. Choose three employer questions that matter to your decision and are not already answered.
2. Draft a thank-you or update message using only real details. Keep it unsent until relevant.
3. List your three most important offer considerations and the information needed to assess each.
4. Complete the final assessment and choose one practice action from the rubric.

Produce: Three employer questions, one editable follow-up draft and a personal offer-review checklist.

Quality check: Have you separated confirmed terms from assumptions and avoided commitments you have not chosen to make?

Lesson knowledge check

1. Which question is most likely to produce useful detail?

- A. "Is everything perfect here?"
- B. "Will I definitely be promoted?"
- C. "How would you assess a new starter's progress in the first three months?"

2. The employer gave a response timeline that has not passed. What is usually best?

- A. Respect that timeline and any contact instructions
- B. Send repeated daily demands
- C. Invent another offer

3. What should you do with an offer before deciding?

- A. Rely only on the job title
- B. Review written terms and clarify important uncertainties
- C. Assume benefits and remote work are identical everywhere

Answers and explanations

1. C. It asks about a concrete process. Absolute or guaranteed outcomes are not something an interview question can establish.
2. A. The stated process is a useful guide. Repeated pressure or false claims can undermine trust.
3. B. The actual terms and practical fit matter. This course cannot determine legal meaning or guarantee an outcome.

Further guidance: NCS1, UCB1. See Sources and further reading for links.

Final assessment

Allow 30 minutes including review. Choose one answer for each of the 12 questions before reading the answer key. A suggested learning target is 9 correct, followed by reviewing every missed answer. This is self-study, not an accredited examination or hiring prediction.

1. You have 30 minutes to research a role. What should you prioritize?

- A. Collecting unrelated industry trivia
- B. Reading the vacancy, checking the employer website and mapping three requirements
- C. Memorizing the company's entire history

2. Which statement clearly separates fact from uncertainty?

- A. "The vacancy says hybrid; I need to ask how many office days are expected."
- B. "Hybrid always means fully remote."
- C. "Every employee chooses any hours."

3. Which opening best fits a focused introduction?

- A. "Let me tell you every event since childhood."
- B. "I am perfect at every task."
- C. "I recently completed an administration course and practiced organizing records."

4. Your model introduction describes a project you never did. What should you do?

- A. Keep it because it sounds convincing
- B. Replace it with your own truthful evidence
- C. Change only the project name

5. Which sentence belongs mainly in the Action part of STAR?

- A. "The deadline was Friday."
- B. "The group had four members."
- C. "I checked the list against confirmations and corrected duplicate entries."

6. A team succeeded, but you owned only the schedule. How should you describe it?

- A. Credit the team and explain your scheduling contribution
- B. Claim you personally completed every task
- C. Avoid saying what you did

7. You are asked what you would do with conflicting priorities. What is the strongest approach?

- A. Choose randomly and hide the delay
- B. Clarify impact and deadlines, agree priorities when needed and communicate
- C. Promise to finish everything immediately

8. You do not understand part of a question. What should you do?

- A. Answer a different question
- B. Pretend you understood
- C. Ask for clarification and then answer

9. Your video audio fails. What is the best prepared response?

- A. Use the agreed contact or backup route and explain the problem
- B. Leave permanently without explanation
- C. Submit confidential information through a random new link

10. Which criterion belongs in the course self-assessment rubric?

- A. Accent matching the interviewer
- B. Clarity of your evidence and individual contribution
- C. Cost of your interview outfit

11. Which follow-up message is most appropriate?

- A. "Reply now or I will post about you."
- B. "I have another offer" when you do not
- C. A brief, accurate message that respects the agreed timeline

12. What does completion of this course establish?

- A. You completed preparation and practice activities, without a hiring guarantee
- B. A guaranteed job offer
- C. A guaranteed salary increase

Final answers and explanations

1. B. Start with the work and evidence relevant to it. Extra facts help only when they improve understanding of the vacancy.
2. A. It records what is stated and names what still needs confirmation.
3. C. A relevant, factual starting point helps the listener understand your background.
4. B. A model answer supplies a structure, not a history you can borrow.
5. C. It describes the speaker's specific behavior, rather than context.
6. A. Accurate attribution makes the evidence clear without exaggerating ownership.
7. B. A reasoned sequence is more credible than an unrealistic promise.
8. C. Clarification helps you address the actual request and avoids unnecessary assumptions.
9. A. A verified backup route keeps communication going without creating a new privacy risk.
10. B. The rubric focuses on job-relevant communication and preparation, not personal characteristics or spending.
11. C. Useful follow-up is factual and proportionate. Pressure or fabricated leverage is not appropriate.
12. A. Learning and practice can improve preparation. They do not control an employer's decision or pay.

Choose your next action

For each missed or guessed question, return to the relevant lesson and write one action you will practice. A high quiz score does not replace a mock interview. Complete the exercises and explain your evidence aloud before treating preparation as finished.

Mock interview question bank

Choose six questions across the categories. Allow about 20 minutes for the conversation and 10 minutes for feedback. Ask a follow-up for each past example. Choose a different sequence next time so that you practice listening rather than reciting.

Opening and motivation

- Tell me about yourself in relation to this role.
- What interested you in the responsibilities listed in this vacancy?
- Which strength would help most with these responsibilities?
- What skill are you working to improve, and how?

Past evidence

- Tell me about a time you helped a team finish a task.
- Describe a mistake you made and what you changed afterward.
- Give an example of learning an unfamiliar process.
- Tell me about a time priorities changed.
- Describe a time you explained something to someone with different knowledge.
- Tell me about a disagreement and how you handled your part.
- Describe a task where accuracy mattered.
- Give an example of using feedback to improve your work.

Situations and judgment

- What would you do if two requests had the same deadline?
- How would you handle instructions you did not understand?
- What would you do if you noticed an error just before submission?
- How would you respond to a frustrated customer within your authority?
- What would you do if asked to share information you were unsure was confidential?
- How would you begin learning a tool you have not used?

Follow ups and closing

- What did you do personally in that example?
- What other option did you consider, and why did you choose this one?
- How do you know the result happened?
- What would you do differently next time?
- What support would help you learn this role?
- What questions would you like to ask us?

Self assessment rubric

Score each of the five criteria from 1 to 4, using observable evidence. Total: 5 to 20. A useful practice target is at least 3 in every criterion, with all experience claims truthful. This rubric is a learning aid, not a validated hiring prediction. Accent, eye contact, disability-related behavior and clothing cost are excluded.

Role relevance

- 1 — Answers are unrelated to the role.
- 2 — Some relevant links, but mostly generic.
- 3 — Clear links to key requirements.
- 4 — Clear, selective links with useful employer questions.

Truthful evidence

- 1 — Claims lack support or are knowingly inaccurate.
- 2 — Examples are real but vague or ownership is unclear.
- 3 — Specific examples with accurate personal contribution.
- 4 — Specific evidence, honest limits and clear result or learning.

Answer structure

- 1 — The main point is difficult to identify.
- 2 — Some organization; important parts are missing.
- 3 — Question answered clearly with suitable structure.
- 4 — Clear, concise answer adapted to follow-up questions.

Listening and judgment

- 1 — Ignores the question or suggests unsafe unauthorized action.
- 2 — Needs prompting to clarify or recognize limits.
- 3 — Clarifies uncertainty and explains reasonable boundaries.
- 4 — Explains choices, tradeoffs and appropriate escalation clearly.

Practical readiness

- 1 — Key logistics are unknown.
- 2 — Some details checked; important gaps remain.
- 3 — Format, timing, materials and backup are checked.
- 4 — Readiness includes confirmed access needs and a tested backup where relevant.

Write one observed example behind each score. Choose two improvements and repeat those answers. Correct any inaccurate claim before further practice regardless of the total. Confirm unresolved access needs or logistics before treating the plan as ready.

Sources and further reading

The exercises, fictional examples, question bank and rubric are original learning materials. The following official careers guidance was checked on 4 October 2026. These sources support the general preparation principles identified below; they do not endorse this course. Guidance may change and local practices differ.

NCS1 National Careers Service Interview tips

Interview preparation, checking the format, accessibility planning and written offer details.

<https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/careers-advice/interview-advice>

NCS2 National Careers Service The STAR method

The four STAR components and examples from work, home or volunteering.

<https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/careers-advice/interview-advice/the-star-method>

NCS3 National Careers Service Common interview questions

Question categories and using experience outside paid employment.

<https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/careers-advice/top-10-interview-questions>

COS1 CareerOneStop Virtual interviews

Testing equipment, preparing the space and planning for connection problems.

<https://cloudfront.careeronestop.org/JobSearch/Interview/virtual-interviews.aspx>

UCB1 UC Berkeley Career Engagement Interview Process Overview

Researching the employer, matching experience, debriefing and following up.

<https://www.career.berkeley.edu/prepare-for-success/interviewing/>

Scope and use

This course offers general interview preparation. It does not establish legal rights, contract meaning, tax treatment, financial suitability or employment status. Seek appropriate qualified local advice for those questions. Keep sensitive personal information out of practice files and use only verified employer channels for real applications.