



How to Prepare for Your Interview

We pinky-promise that this is super-useful for landing your dream job :)
© 2017 Quinnacia Inc. All Rights Reserved

You might be thinking . . .

Do I *really* have to prepare? I mean, I'm good at winging stuff. Like, you-wouldn't-*believe* good. Yeah, we get it :) Maybe you've pulled off some pretty amazing papers, projects, and tests at the last minute.

But this is different.

This is your career, your livelihood, your life mission. Trust us, you'll care later on, if you don't now. Our team at Quinncia wants to make this process as easy, efficient, and painless as possible. After all, we are on your team ;) Let's review best practices so you nail your interviews with Quinn, with your first job interviewer, with your make-or-break, career-changing, once-in-a-lifetime interview in the future.

First, learn about the three key aspects of an interview:

1

**Master
the Visual Arts**

2

**Know
What to Talk About**

3

**Let
Your Personality Shine!**

Then, to boost your interview skills, read about the **Types of Questions & Helpful Examples**.

Read on,
Quinn (& her minions) superheroes!!!



M A S T E R

The Visual Arts

No visual arts degree required!

What on earth do we mean?

Here's how we break down the visual (i.e., nonverbal) elements of your interview:

Nonverbal Behavior

Dress (to Impress!)

Posture

Eye Contact

Smiling

Voice Inflections

Vocal Pace + Content

How?

- Stick to styles that are appropriate for your desired industry.
- Ensure your hair is tidy & professional.
- Keep noisy jewelry to a minimum.
- Lean slightly forward when you're sitting.
- Make sure your arms are uncrossed.
- Maintain direct eye contact.
- Remember to look at your computer's camera—and not the computer screen.
- Show your pearly whites a moderate amount—not too rarely, and not all the time.
- Pay attention to your voice inflections (pitch/tone changes) to ensure you sound attentive & pleasant.
- Speak clearly—and not too fast.
- Give yourself a moment to think about your replies, before you start talking.
- Avoid fidgeting and using phrases such as “um,” “you know,” and “I mean.”

Why?

Shows your professionalism & seriousness. Minimizes distractions so that you—and your interviewer—can fully concentrate on what you're saying.

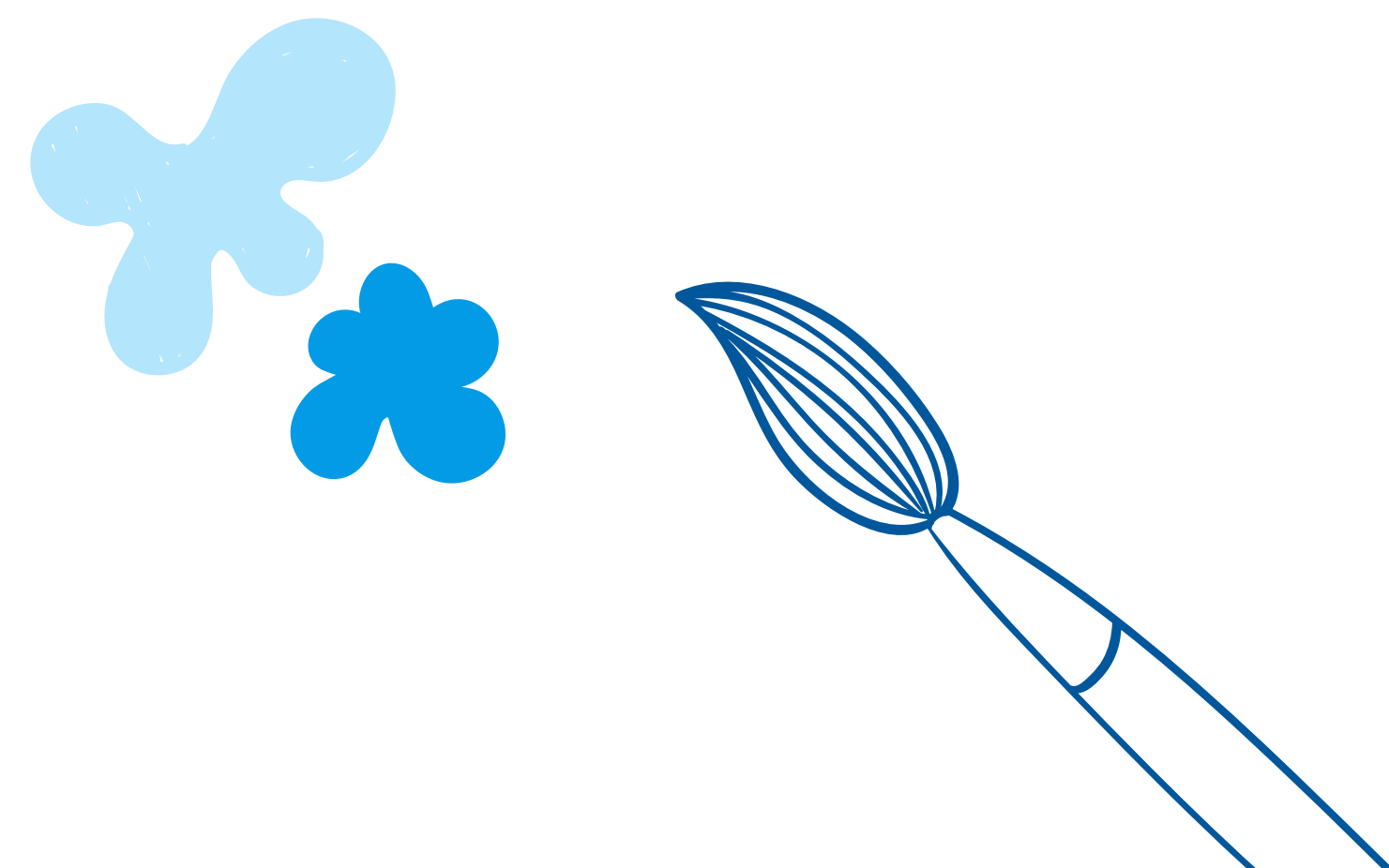
Communicates interest in what the interviewer is saying, and shows professionalism.

Establishes rapport, interest, and trustworthiness.

Expresses your positivity.

Demonstrates interest & enthusiasm.

Conveys your level of confidence—and whether you're ready for this next big opportunity!



K N O W

What to Talk About

This is a big one.

- ★ Use the STAR method to answer situational interview questions.

Example

Describe an experience in which you used your leadership abilities.

Situation

Describe the situation you were in (e.g., in detail, like what was going on, which internship or course and task).

Task

Identify the specific project you were working on, and briefly discuss what it entailed.

Action

Explain what your action was, however best relates to the question at hand (Remember: This is the most important part!).

Result

Finish your answer by stating the outcome of your project & actions.



★ Ready your elevator pitch.

Practice answers to the most common prompts:

- ★ Please tell me about yourself.
- ★ Walk me through your resume.
- ★ And many more (keep reading to see!)

Use the PFF trick (Past, Present, Future). Some suggestions to get you started:

★ Past

- Previous internships
- Groups & activities
- Part-time jobs
- Leadership roles
- Your background
- Why you chose your college/university

★ Present

- What you're studying
- When you're graduating
- Which activities you participate in
- Any leadership roles
- Team projects

★ Future

- What you want to do after graduation
- What types of companies & roles you're considering
- How you want your life to look five years from now

★ Prepare your questions.

Follow the three Ps:

- ★ Prepare answers
- ★ Practice these replies
- ★ Perform on the big day!

★ Streamline your answers.

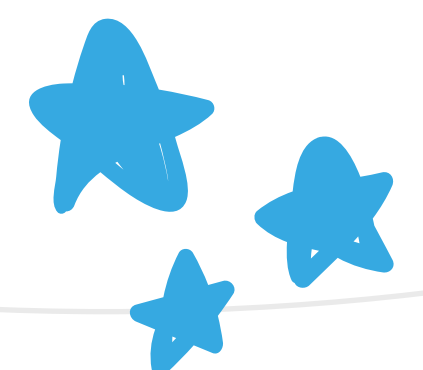
Make your replies as specific & concise as possible.

Avoid overly personal or irrelevant examples (e.g., stories about roommates).

Remember: Content & delivery both matter! So work on both.

★ Prepare your questions.

In person interview, always ensure you prepare questions you'd like to ask the interviewer.



L E T

Your Personality Shine!

Don't be afraid to be your brilliant self.

During an interview, your personality makes a **big** impression.

Your interview performance isn't only about **what** you say, but also **how** you, as a unique individual, say it.

How you communicate influences how your interviewer perceives your confidence & competence. Your personality, which, of course, strongly influences your communication style, is what can convey your passion & excitement.

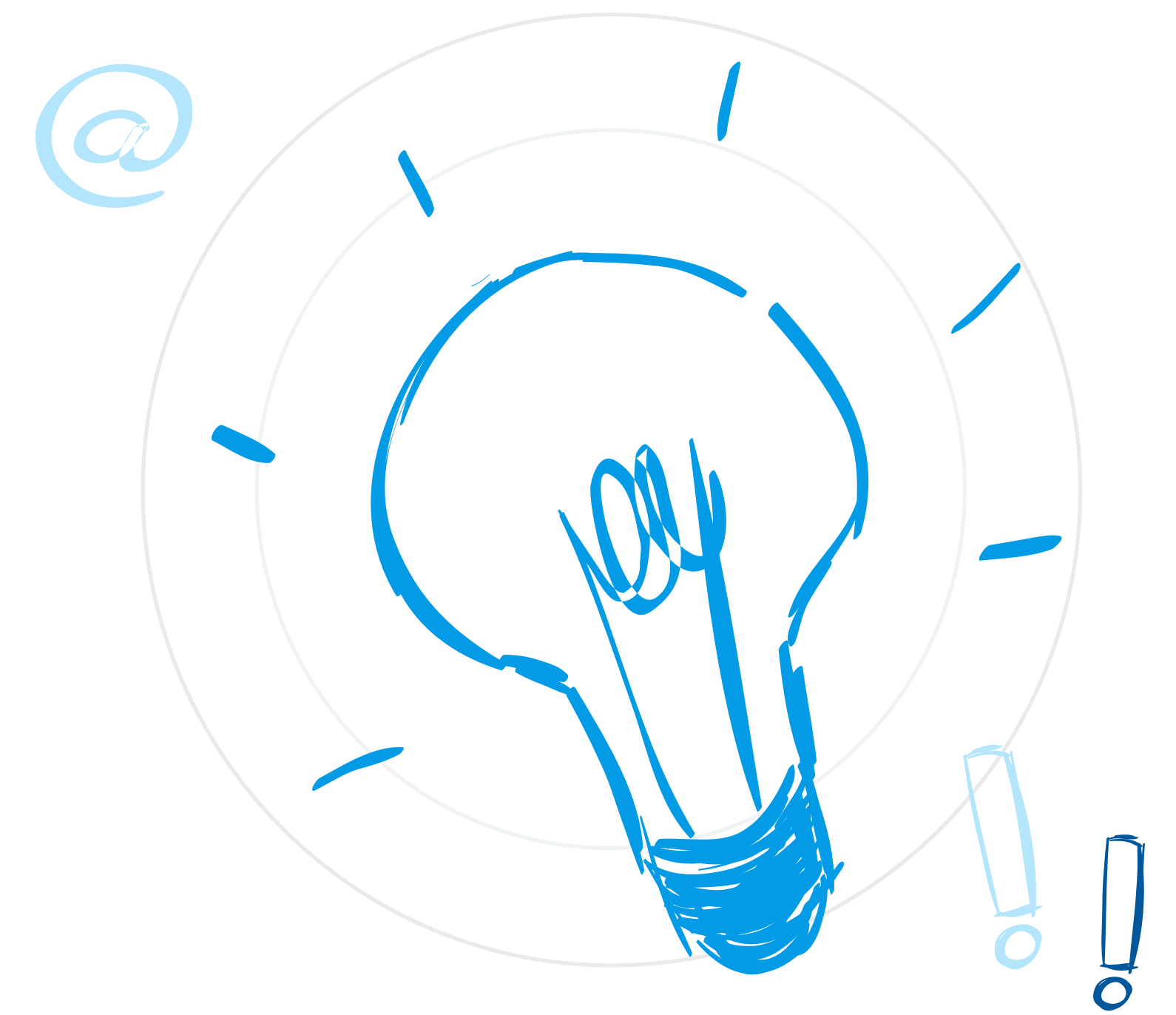


Personality traits are difficult to demonstrate on a resume. . .

. . . so you put them in the spotlight during your interview! Note that in Western culture, showing more enthusiasm is a good thing.

As much as possible, in the natural flow of the interview, show that you're:

- Flexible
- Confident
- Organized
- Dependable
- Hardworking
- A team player
- Self-motivated
- An effective communicator
- Someone who works well under pressure



T Y P E S O F

Questions & Helpful Examples

Because we think you're already awesome, and we want you to be even more awesome!

Unless you have an incredibly accurate crystal ball (if you do, could we borrow it?), you'll never be able to anticipate **every** interview question you might be asked. There can **always** be a curveball.

But!
You **can** get a head start.

How?
By developing strong, concise answers to common interview questions.

Most interviewers will ask similar questions to the ones we share (right below!) to learn about a candidate's abilities, qualifications, and compatibility with the job & industry.

So, learn the **best techniques** & review these **stellar examples** that can catapult you to the top of the heap (not literally, but we sure hope figuratively!).

But first . . .

Prepare with solid research.

Detailed research about your industry, the employer, and yourself are all key.
To ace your interview, you must have these in place.

- 1. Your Industry:** Familiarize yourself with information about your industry, as well as general industry trends.
- 2. The Employer:** Learn about the company/institution. Review their website's About Us page to understand their mission, culture, and more. Also research their products, services, and other website pages that explain everything they do and support.
- 3. Yourself:** Prepare to discuss your experiences, goals, and accomplishments. Know your resume inside out.

Pro tip:
First impressions are crucial. Stay aware of your nonverbal cues!





#1: Behavioral Questions

Why do interviewers ask behavioral questions?

Because people believe that **how you behaved in the past reflects how you'll behave in the future.**

Prepare to tell stories about how you handled various project situations in the past. Your stories should reveal your skills & personality.

Examples:

- Tell me about a time when you had to work with someone who was difficult to get along with.
- Tell me about a time when you were unable to meet a project deadline. How did you react?
- What do people most often criticize about you? And how do you react to that?
- How do you handle stress and pressure?
- Describe a time when you motivated yourself to complete an assignment or task that you didn't feel like doing.
- What will be your biggest challenge in your first job after graduation?

#2: Competency Questions

Ready yourself to **talk for several minutes** about your participation in a particularly strong team you've been part of—and how your teamwork capabilities helped lead a task/project to successful completion.

Also answer **how** and **why** you think aspects of yourself are a weakness or a strength. Make sure you mention what you're actively doing to maintain the strength or remove the weakness.

Examples:

- What are your weaknesses?
- Describe some recent projects you've worked on.
- Tell me about an achievement you're proud of. What did you find challenging about it?
- Explain a time that you took initiative.
- How would you say your education has prepared you for this industry?

#3: Situational Questions

First, take a deep (but subtle ;) breath, and strive to deliver an analytical answer.

Be prepared to analyze any situation—and how you'd behave. You can use the STAR method, which can help you construct an organized, specific, thoughtful, and concise answer.

Examples:

- You're working on a project with a tight deadline, but you find that you're unable to complete your section because your coworkers and your supervisor are unavailable to answer a few key questions. How do you deal with the situation?
- You're a team leader. What would you do if the work of one of your subordinate team members wasn't meeting expectations?
- How would you handle a customer who isn't happy with your service, even though you've done nothing wrong, and they're actually the ones who have made the mistake?

How you could use the STAR method to answer a situational interview question:

Q: Describe an experience in which you used your leadership abilities.



Situation:

During my third year of college, I was elected Vice President for Professional Programs for my student association. My duties included securing speakers for our meetings, advertising the programs to the campus community, introducing speakers, and evaluating each program.

Task:

Previous attendance at meetings had decreased substantially, due to a decrease in the overall student population. The goal was to implement programs to address the professional development of our association—and increase attendance by 25%, compared to the prior year's figures.

Action:

I assembled a team to help with the program design and speaker selection. I developed a survey to determine the members' professional interests and ideas for possible speakers and topics. My team and I had each member complete the survey. Then, we randomly selected members for a focus group interview. I'd learned about this research technique in my marketing class and thought it'd help us identify why attendance had dropped.

Result:

Thanks to the information we gathered from the surveys and interviews, we selected speakers for the entire year, produced a brochure describing each program and the featured speaker. Under my leadership, attendance increased 150% over the previous year.

#4: Leadership Questions

If you've reflected on leadership qualities you've demonstrated in the past, before the interview, then you can deliver a focused answer.

Think about what activities/clubs you participated in, and discuss them during your interview. Employers look for people excited about contributing—and who can take on leadership positions.

Examples:

- What motivates you?
- Tell me about a time you led a difficult project.
- How do you respond to feedback?

#5: Problem-Solving & Creative Questions

Showcase your ability to (1) identify obstacles, (2) understand the best approaches to overcome them, and (3) develop & implement solutions.

Give a step-by-step breakdown of how you can achieve the goal(s).
Use your imagination to see a problem in a fresh way.

Devise a new solution.
Prove that you can think on your feet.
We know you can do it!

Remember: There might not be a right or wrong answer to the question. Often, the interviewer wants to observe your thought process and how you solve an unexpected problem. So, walk them through your thought process and how you arrive at the solution, instead of just stating your answer.

Examples:

- If you were a superhero, which superhero would you be, and why?
- Explain a time that you took initiative.
- Tell me about a time when you used good judgement & logic to solve a problem.
- Tell me about a time when you showed initiative by taking the lead on a team project.
- Describe a time when you had to handle multiple priorities at once and deliver results.
- Tell me about a time when you faced an unexpected challenge during a school project. How did you handle it?

Sample Q&A for a Creative Question:

Q: If you saw a penguin wearing a sombrero, what would you do?

Well, if I saw a penguin wearing a sombrero, I'd think that since penguins are Antarctic birds, and they can't fly, the bird must have somehow landed in a hot climate. Perhaps he's moving from the South Pole to the North Pole. In the process, he visited Mexico.

Because he really liked the country's culture and people, he adopted their style of dress and now is continuing toward the North Pole—perhaps by boat—with his new look. I'd say to him, “¡Hola, amigo! Hope you have a safe journey, and don't drop your hat on your journey northward.”





#6: Team-Oriented Questions

Talk about your individual contributions, as well as your cooperative & leadership abilities. Refer to times when others saw you as a great team player, and explain times when your individual skills were critical to a project's success.

Examples:

- How would you describe your ability to work as a team member?
- Do you prefer teamwork or working independently?
- Can you tell me about a successful project that demonstrates your teamwork skills?
- How do you rely on others to make you better?

#7: Emotional Intelligence Questions

Be honest and genuine. Talk about a real, relatable situation or flaw. Reveal that you're self-aware—and aware of others' feelings.

End your answer on a positive note. How? By highlighting what's positive about the negative attribute, or explaining how you're improving that shortcoming. Ensure you offer a real situation or flaw (saying, for instance, you're too perfectionistic and can't make mistakes doesn't sound authentic!).

Examples:

- What are your greatest weaknesses?
- Can you tell me about a time you tried to do something and failed?
- Tell me about a time you received negative feedback from your professor. How did that make you feel?
- Explain an example of when your work was criticised. How did you feel?
- Choose one instance of when you needed to ask for help on a project, and tell me about it.



You made it!

Thanks for sticking around and reviewing all this information (pure gold, we know ;) These tips will serve you well now, and for years to come!

Best of luck (& skill),

Q^2 (Quinnicia x Quinn)