



# How to Prepare for Your Interview

We pinky-promise that this is super-useful for landing your dream job :)  
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# You might be thinking . . .

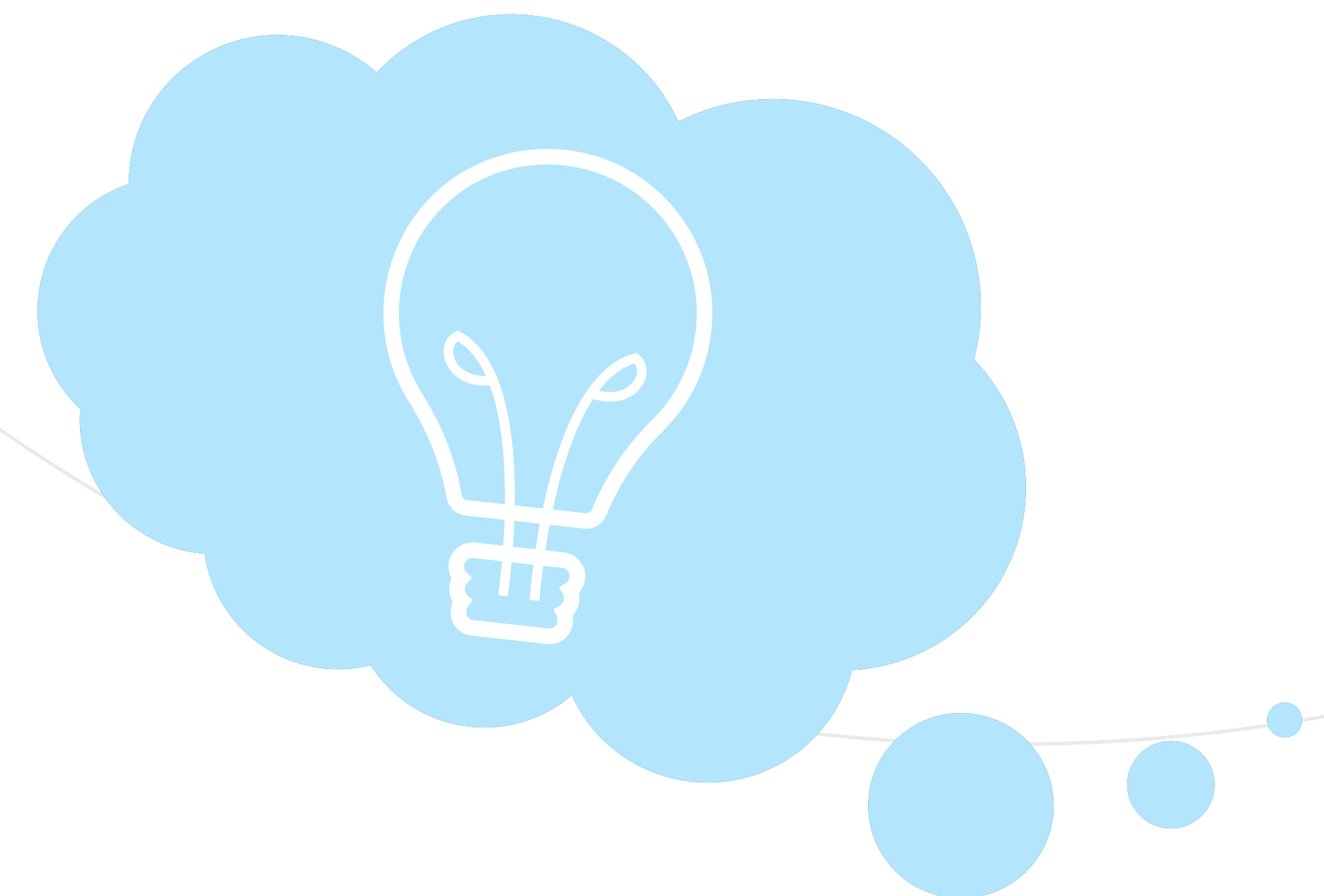
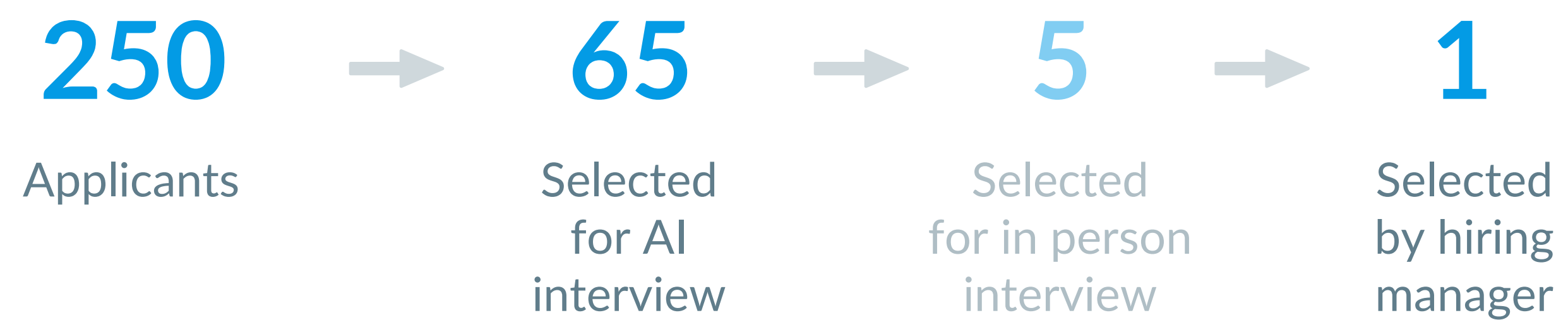
Do I *really* have to prepare? I mean, I'm good at winging stuff. Like, you-wouldn't-*believe* good. Yeah, we get it :) Maybe you've pulled off some pretty amazing papers, projects, and tests at the last minute.

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.

And these days, employers are conducting more and more AI interviews, which are a crucial step in the hiring process. Here's what it looks like:



# But don't stress out

Our team at Quinnia 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

**Let  
Your Personality Shine!**

3

**Know  
What to Talk About**

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

#### How?

#### Why?

#### Dress (to Impress!)

- Stick to styles that are appropriate for your desired industry.
- Ensure your hair is tidy & professional.
- Keep noisy jewelry to a minimum.

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

#### Posture

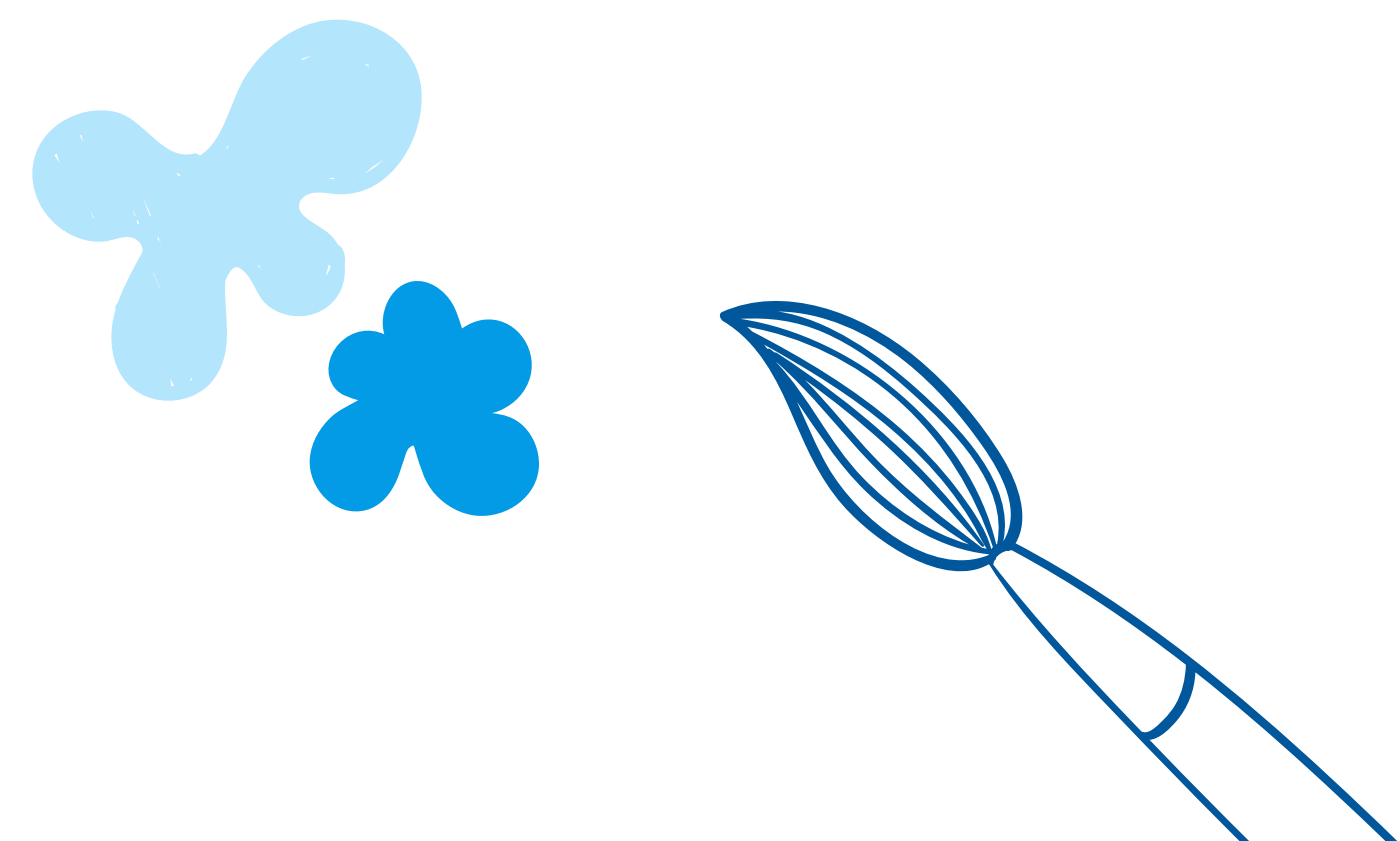
- Lean slightly forward when you're sitting.
- Make sure your arms are uncrossed.

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

#### Eye Contact

- Maintain direct eye contact.
- Remember to look at your computer's camera—and not the computer screen.

Establishes rapport, interest, and trustworthiness.





## Nonverbal Behavior

### How?

#### Smiling

- Show your pearly whites a moderate amount—not too rarely, and not all the time.

#### Voice Inflections

- Pay attention to your voice inflections (pitch/tone changes) to ensure you sound attentive & pleasant.

#### Vocal Pace + Content

- Speak clearly—and not too fast.
- Give yourself a moment to think about your reply, before you start talking.
- Avoid fidgeting and using phrases such as “um,” “you know,” and “I mean.”

### Why?

Expresses your positivity.

Demonstrates interest & enthusiasm.

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

## And consider these extra visual (i.e. nonverbal) elements when taking an AI or video-call interview:

#### Lighting

- Find a room with good natural light—so your face is visible and not lost in shadow or over-exposure.
- Use a household lamp, off-screen, if you don’t have natural light.
- If you’re near a window during the daytime, consider closing your blinds, if necessary.

For an AI interview—if the AI cannot see your face it will not be able to analyse and you might get a lower score.

For in-person interviews—allows the interviewer to see your smiley face.

#### Background

- Be mindful of your background—remove clutter and anything considered unprofessional.
- Stay away from colorful or “busy” backgrounds—they’re distracting.

Conveys your professionalism and organization.

LET

# Your Personality Shine!

*Don't be afraid to be your brilliant self.*

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

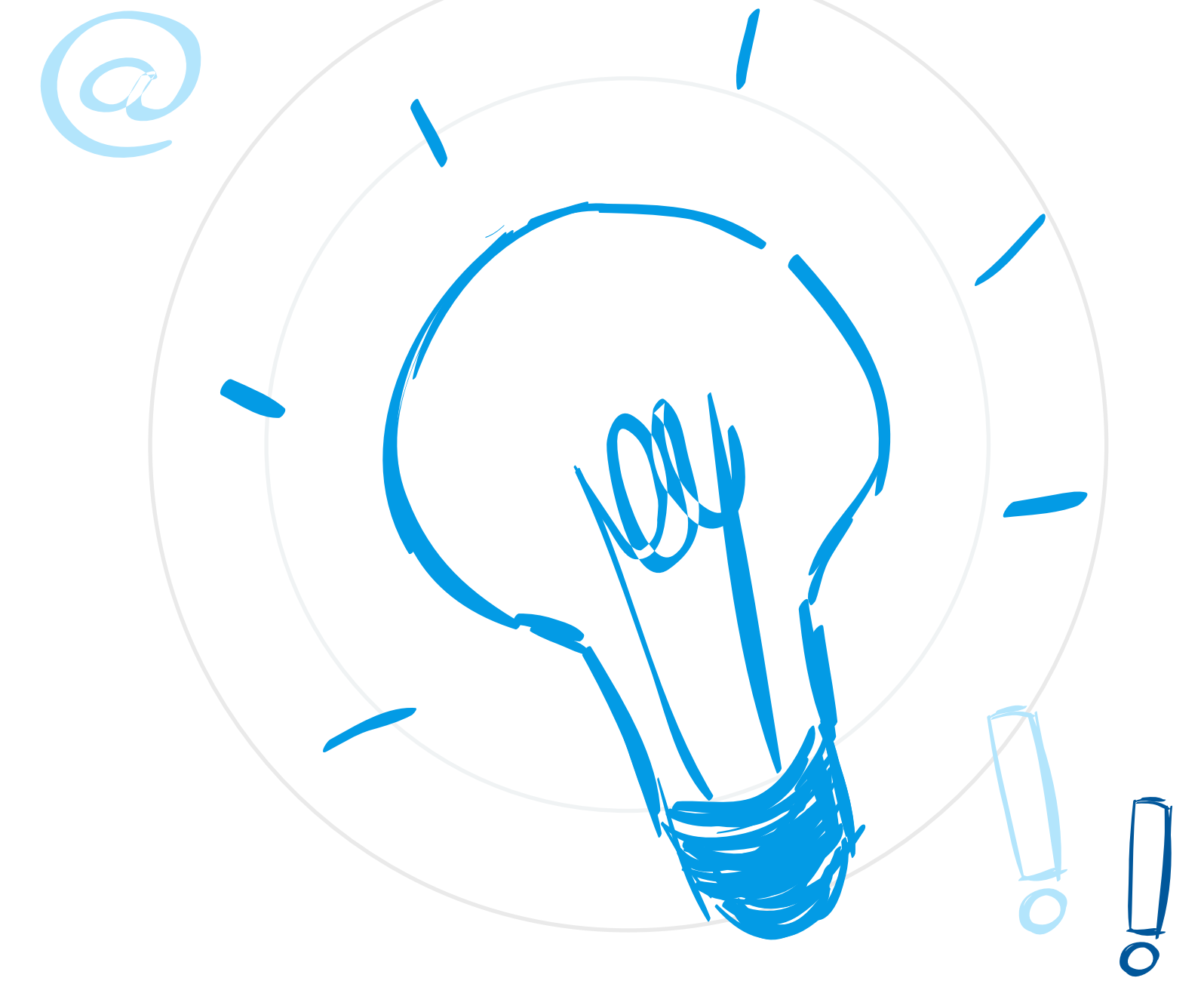
Your interview performance isn't only about **what** you say, but also **how** you, as a unique individual, say it.

**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

K N O W

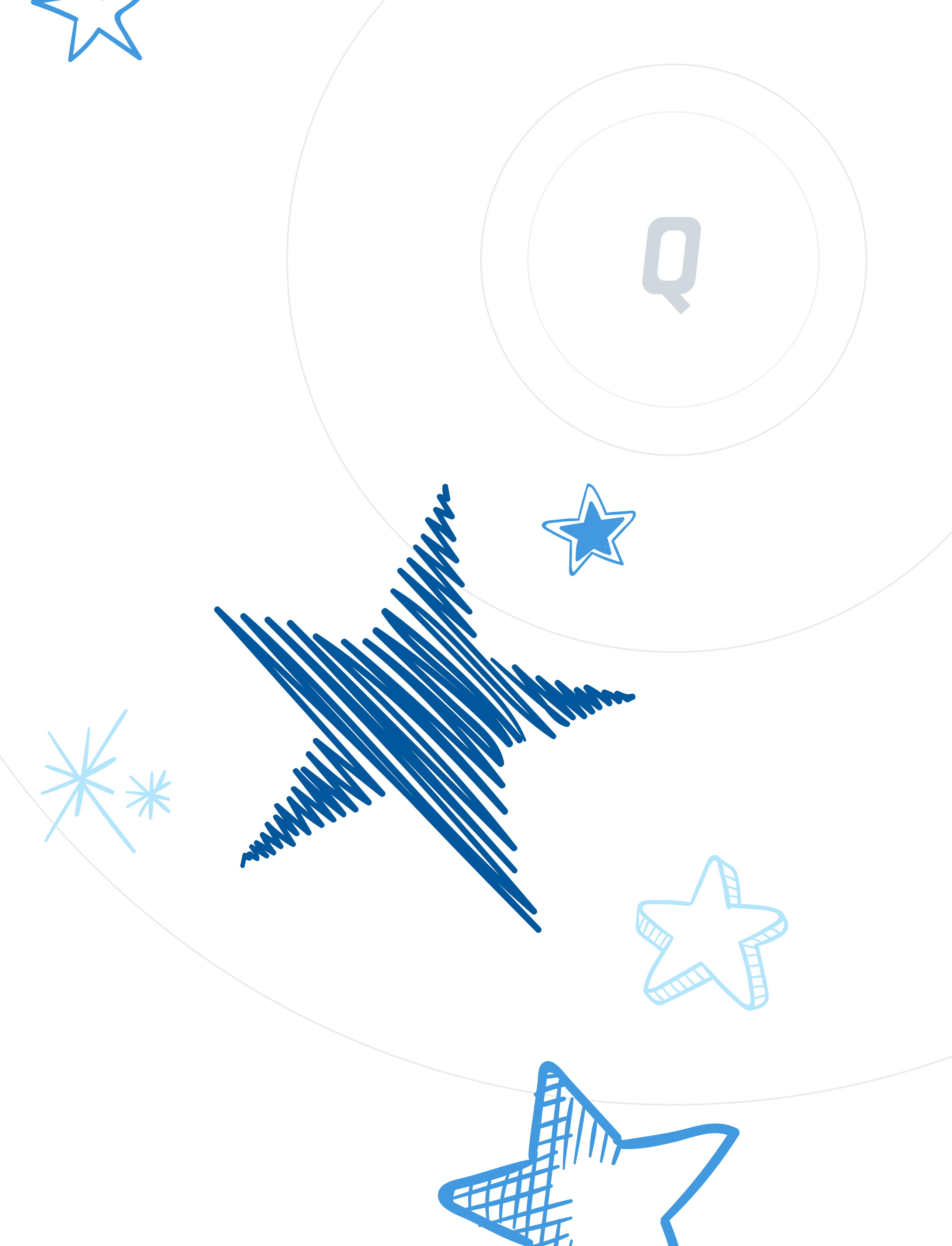
# What to Talk About

*This is a big one.*

Don't worry! This seems like a ton of information, but we will be here with you every step of the way as you learn these tricks :)

## What are the tricks?

- PPF (Past, Present, Future)
- WIT (What, Impact, Takeaway)
- STAR (Situation, Task, Action, Result)
- How and Why
- Analytical
- Thought Process of Response



# Methods

## ★ PPF Method

### Past

- Previous internships
- Part-time jobs
- Groups & activities
- 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



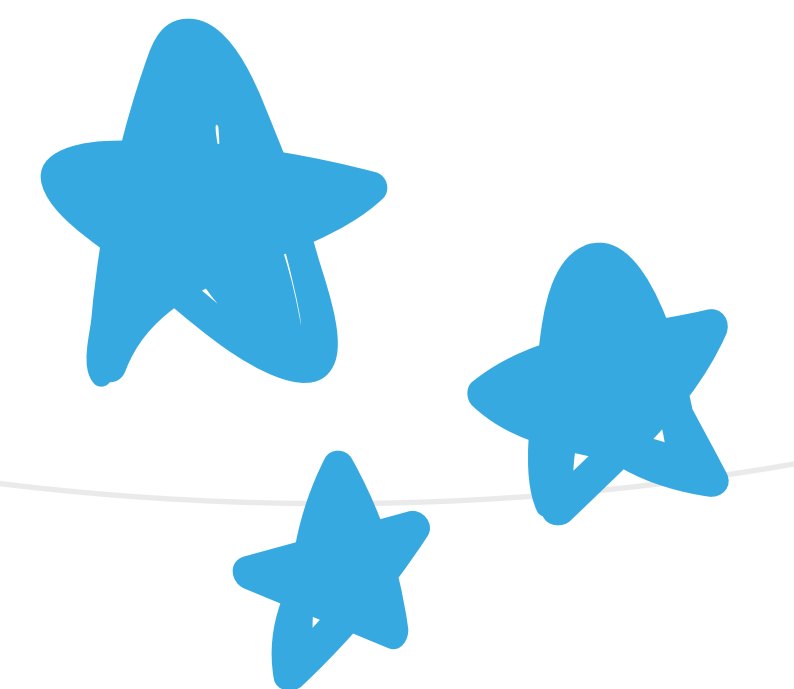
### Practice answers to the most common prompts:

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



**Tip:**

Ready your elevator pitch with this trick. Try to make it less than 2 minutes. (You got this!)





## ★ WIT Method

### What

Concisely describe the specifics of your story.

### Impact

Explain how your story was transformative for you as an individual.

### Takeaway

Identify your main takeaways from your experience.

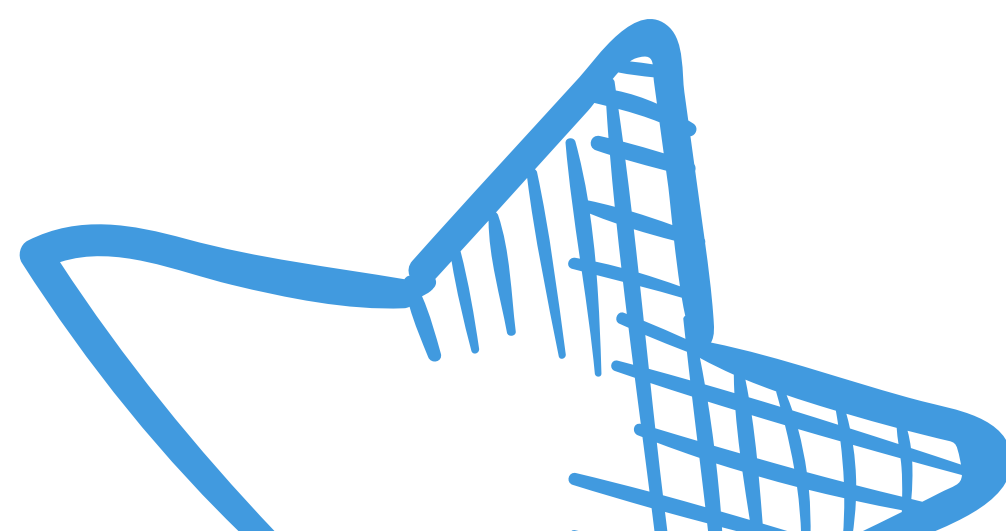
### Follow-up questions may sound like this:

- What was your takeaway from your experience at X?
- Could you elaborate on your position with company Y?
- You mentioned co-founding Z, could you tell me more about that experience?
- You said you attended the University of X, how did you choose that college and why?



#### Tip:

Use this trick to prepare for follow-up questions. For example, if you finish your elevator pitch and the interviewer is interested in learning more about an experience you mentioned, use WIT!



## ★ STAR Method

### Situation

Describe the situation you were in (e.g., the name of the internship or course you were taking).

### Task

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

### Action

Explain what your interaction was, to best relate it to the question at hand. **(Tip: this is the most important part!)**

### Result

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



### Examples of questions you may be asked:

- Describe an experience in which you used your leadership abilities.
- Tell me about a time you led a difficult project.



#### Tip:

The interviewer is looking for concise and relevant answers. Good for situational and leadership questions.

#### In your answer focus on:

- *Technical Skills (ex: Google Suite, research)*
- *Essential Skills (ex: communication, listening)*
- *Quantifiable results (ex: "...I finished the year 10% ahead of my sales goal")*
- *Relevant experiences (to the position/company)*

### Example

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

**A:** **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

## ★ How and Why Method

### How

Relevancy is key. Tie your previous experiences, such as teamwork, into your answer to show the interviewer how you've been a strong participant in the past and have gained recognizable skills.

#### Types of questions interviewer may ask:

- Why do you think you are the ideal candidate for this position?
- What are the 3 qualities that make you stand out compared to other people?
- Can you tell me about a time you tried to do something and failed?



#### **Tip:**

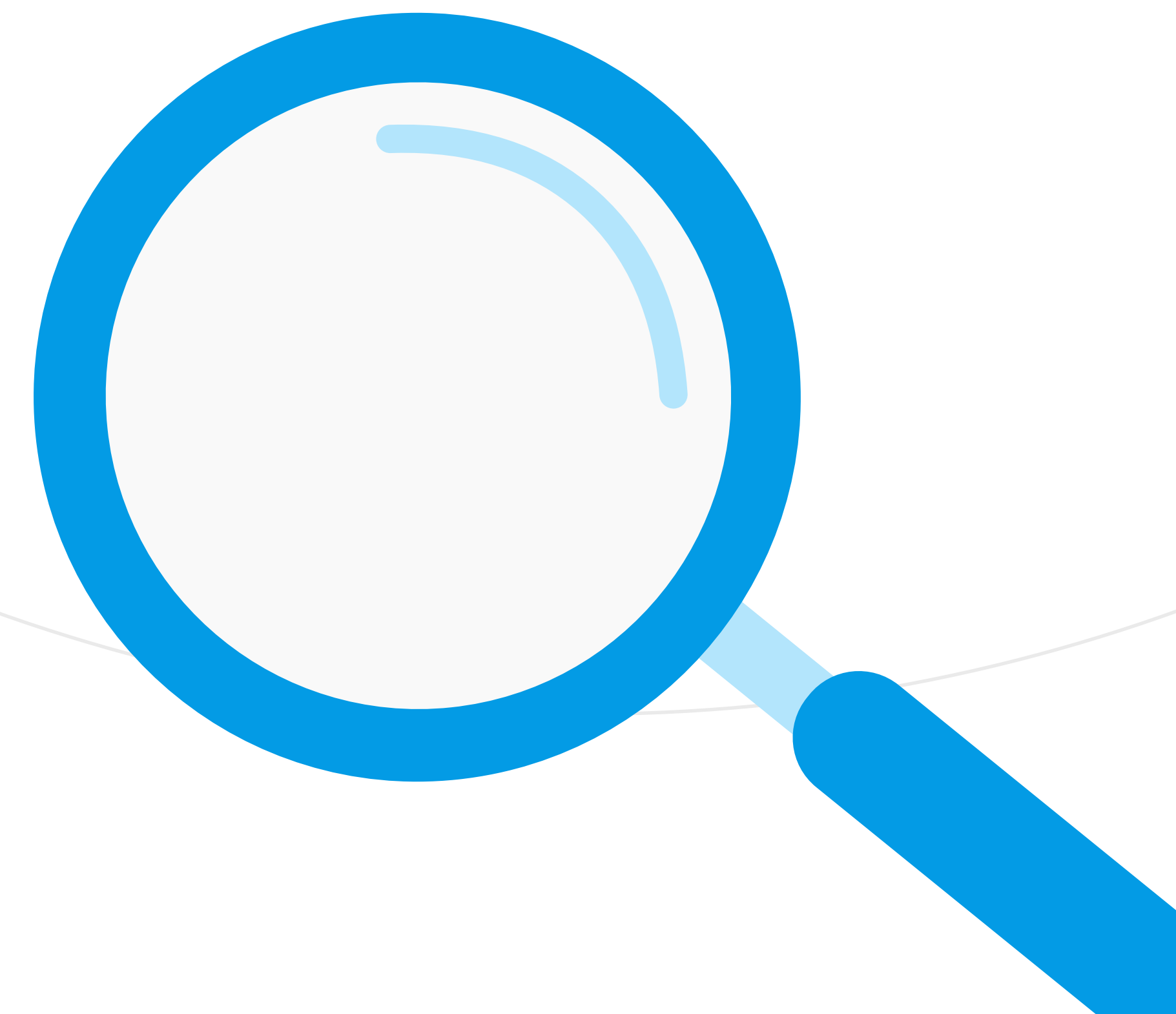
*This is a great method to use for self-assessment or creative questions.*

- *Answer with a step-by-step breakdown of your how and why.*

### Why

Interviewers want to know why you think the way you do, why you think parts of yourself are strengths and weaknesses and how you rationalize it.

A large, stylized question mark icon inside a circular graphic element, representing the 'Why' section of the method.



## ★ Analytical Method

### Analyze

Show the interviewer that you can explain yourself. Additionally, let the interviewer know your rationale for response. There is often no right answer.

#### Prepare for a questions like this:

- 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?
- Your manager wants to buy new software or hardware that will increase the team's productivity and asks for your recommendation. How would you reply?
- How do you weigh pros and cons before making a decision?



#### Tip:

*Prepare with this method for situational and analytical interview questions.*

#### Example

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

**A:** 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—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.”

A large, stylized letter 'Q' icon centered within a circular graphic element on the right side of the page.

## ★ Thought Process of Response

*You made it! Last trick to learn*

### Thought process

Interviewers are looking for a thorough and thought-out answer. Take a deep breath and explain yourself!

#### Questions you may be asked:

- Explain to me how to make a peanut butter and jelly sandwich.
- Tell me about a time when you showed initiative by taking the lead on a team project
- Explain a time that you took initiative.



**Tip:**

*Interviewers will sometimes ask questions that do not have an answer, like these. Practice this trick with problem-solving and creative interview questions.*



### What to prepare

**Be ready with specific stories and experiences you want to share with the interviewer.**

- Make sure they are relevant to the industry you're applying to.
- Think about how you can pull out different experiences from a previous position to answer an array of questions.

**Prepare your questions.**

- Ensure you prepare questions you'd like to ask the interviewer.

**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.

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!



Q

# Different Strategies You Can Use To Answer Questions

## #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:*

- 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?
- 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?

## #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?



### #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?

### #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?







## #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 a perfectionist 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<sup>2</sup> (Quinnica x Quinn)