

# **INTERVIEW PREP PLAYBOOK**

## **College Student Edition**

by  
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# Book Synopsis

Here's a summary of the game plan described in *Interview Prep Playbook*.

**Step 1: Form an Interview Group.** Your best resources for getting a great job will be your peers. By forming an interview group, you'll create a team of people who will help you build your job hunting strategy, polish your resume, and practice your interview skills. Most importantly, by committing to an interview group, you'll have people who will hold you accountable for your progress.

Make sure you choose people who are motivated. If you find that someone in your group doesn't show up or doesn't want to do the work, it's OK to kick them out. Not everyone wants to put forth the effort needed to get the best jobs. You should surround yourself with people who are willing to work hard. That will create a culture of success, which will be important if you're going after the best jobs in your field.

Also, remember to find people who you enjoy being around. Interview groups should be fun, so make sure

your group is filled with people you want to spend time with.

**Step 2: Build Your Job Hunting Strategy.** During this phase, you'll research your career field to make sure it's right for you. If not, this is a good time to change your major so you don't spend years going down the wrong path.

Once you're sure you've chosen the right career for you, start researching organizations that hire people in your field of interest. You can do this with the help of your school's career development office, student organizations, and professors. You can also talk with other students who are majoring in the same subject as you.

As you evaluate potential employers, start categorizing them into tiers. Your top tier will include employers that are the best fit for your professional and personal goals. Other potential employers can be included in your second tier or your list of safety companies. If you can't get into your top tier choices, these other companies might still be good places to start your career.

As you identify potential employers, take notes on the names and contact information for their recruiters as well as their interview dates. Those notes will ensure you know who to contact and when to interview with each organization.

Also, make sure you find job descriptions from your top tier employers. Those job descriptions will be your cheat sheets as you polish your resume and practice your interview skills.

**Step 3: Polish Your Resume.** The secret to a good resume is using a job description to write it. Your resume should include any experience you have that relates to the job description for the job you want.

For each experience you put on your resume, list the actions you've done and the results you've gotten that are most like those on the job description. Recruiters are looking for people whose experiences line up with the role they're hiring for. As such, make sure your resume lines up as closely as possible with the recruiters' job descriptions.

Also, remember to include a few eye-catching interests at the bottom of your resume. Those interests may entice a recruiter to add you to their interview list

because they have something in common with you or they're curious about something you've done.

**Step 4: Get a List of Interview Questions.** This is the easiest step in the process. Since most recruiters ask the same types of questions, you can start with the list of interview questions on my website. Just go to [AmazingJobSkills.com](http://AmazingJobSkills.com) and download the questions. You can find them by clicking on the "Templates" link that's in the menu at the top of the home page. You can also contact your school's career development office, student organizations, and even potential employers to see if they have lists of interview questions.

There are hundreds of books that include lists of interview questions. My favorite is *Amazing Interview Answers* by yours truly. Yes, I am biased. However, I won't be offended if you use other sources to get your list of interview questions, as long as you have a good list to work with.

**Step 5: Practice the Opening Questions.** The most important interview question is typically the one recruiters start with, which is "tell me about yourself."

You should absolutely nail this question. Since you know it's coming, you should have an amazing answer for it.

I recommend you use the P-E-N framework to tell the recruiter what you're passionate about, what relevant experiences you have, and what you want to do next. Make sure your passion, experiences, and next line up with the job you want.

Remember, recruiters are trying to find people who will love working for their organizations. Therefore, when you're practicing for this question, look at the recruiter's job description and tell them why you'll be passionate about doing the tasks on that job description.

You can also use the P-E-N framework to answer other opening questions including "walk me through your resume, why are you interested in this job, and why should I hire you."

**Step 6: Practice the Fit Questions.** When recruiters ask you fit questions, you should be ready with a variety of good answers that use the S-T-A-R framework. That means you should have stories that highlight the situations, tasks, actions, and results from your past experiences.

I recommend you start with your four or five biggest accomplishments. For each of them, write down one sentence that describes the situation, which could include your job title and the organization you were in. Then, write down your task, which could be the assignment or goal you had. Then, list the two or three actions you took to accomplish that task. Finally, write down the result you got, and try to state that result is a way that's as measurable as possible.

This S-T-A-R technique will make your answer interesting for recruiters since it will give them a story about you that has a beginning, a middle, and an end. It will also show them that you can work towards a goal, take necessary actions, and get meaningful results.

You should choose S-T-A-R stories from your past that highlight the type of work you want to do. If you're in a creative field, practice telling stories about the times you've delivered creative results. If you're in an analytical field, your stories should highlight your analytical skills.

**Step 7: Practice the Case Questions.** This is the trickiest part of the process. Since case questions are different for every type of career field, you'll have to do a

little extra research to develop good answers to these questions.

Currently, there are a variety of books available about case questions for technology, consulting, and healthcare jobs. If you're in another field, you might need to look harder to find good questions. I've included a few case questions in my *Amazing Interview Answers* book, but you'll likely need more if you're in a case-oriented field. If so, see if your school's career development office, student organizations, or professors have case questions you can use. Once you get a good list of questions, practice your answers with other people in your career field.

**Step 8: Nail the Interviews.** The final step of the process is to nail your interviews. Most employers use the interviews as the primary factor when considering candidates for jobs. Sure, a good resume or a compelling cover letter might get you into an interview, but it's the interview itself that will determine whether you get a job offer.

As such, make sure you're well-rested and well-prepared for your interviews. Show up on your interview day dressed appropriately and ready to dazzle the recruiter.



The best way to perform well in interviews is to have plenty of practice ahead of time. In addition to the practice sessions with your interview group, I recommend you schedule several mock interviews with counselors in your school's career development office. Or, see if there are upperclassmen or college professors who will interview you before your interviews with recruiters. That way, you'll get used to being in a situation with people who have experience assessing interview answers.

Remember, if your priority is to get a good job, you should commit the time and effort needed to prepare. This book gives you the game plan. You just need to execute that plan.

*You can purchase a complete copy of this book at [www.amazon.com/dp/1980404119](http://www.amazon.com/dp/1980404119).*