

# INTERVIEWING: YOUR STORY

FIND IT → SHAPE IT → TELL IT → LIVE IT

## Before.

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- Consider completing assessments that help you understand your personality, values, interests, strengths, and skills
- Research the organization, department, environment, and office that you are considering applying to cater your resume and cover letter to
- Consider an informational interview with an employee at the company you are applying to
- Practice answering questions and consider scheduling a Mock Interview with the COVE Career Center for feedback
- Review the application process to ensure you complete and submit all requirements with quality, without error, and by meeting deadlines
- Check your social media for appropriate and professional image

## During.

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- Formulate answers to be specific and concise, with examples and stories
- Present yourself with appropriate professional attire and look
- Bring a portfolio/folder with updated resumes & cover letters to distribute, as well as questions to ask the interview(ers)
- Tailor your answers (see job description) to questions to demonstrate your ability to perform the job and brand yourself as the ideal candidate

## After.

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- Send a personalized, hand-written thank you card to the interview(ers)
- Reflect on what you did well, what you need more practice on, and what you will do different at a future interview

For all of our resources, visit the COVE Career Center at

[www.westmont.edu/career-development-calling/tell-your-story](http://www.westmont.edu/career-development-calling/tell-your-story) & [@theCoveWC](https://www.instagram.com/theCoveWC)

## INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

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- Tell me a little about yourself. Describe yourself in 3 words.
- Why should we hire you? Tell us why you want to work/intern for us?
- What did you do to prepare for this interview?
- What career options do you have at this moment?
- How would you define success?
- What do you know about our organization?
- What other jobs are you considering?
- What do you find most attractive and least attractive about this job?
- What have been (were) your most significant accomplishments?
- What important trends do you see in our industry?
- Why are you leaving (did leave) your present (last) position?
- What would your former boss say about you?
- What was the last book you read...movie you saw...?
- Who do you look up to?
- What past experiences do you have that would qualify you?
- Under what conditions and in what environment do you work best?
- Share an example of when you failed or solved a problem.
- What are your major strengths and weaknesses.
- Share a time when you dealt with conflict.
- What do you do when you are right and others disagree?
- Where do you see yourself in 5 years?

**Practice out loud.**

**Schedule a Mock Interview** appointment [via Handshake.](#)

### INTERVIEW BRAINSTORM

Theme	Story			Relevance of position in applying to and/or our lesson learned
	Position 1: Advertising Intern	Position 2: Camp Counselor	Position 3: Study abroad experience	
1 Analytical/Academic	I have creative eye for seeing trends and interpreting his data of others	I had think critically and quickly in order to make the best decisions for solving various problems that occurred among campers.	I am adaptable in new and various surroundings, I will as I learn new concepts quickly.	Each experience increased my ability to see details and facts that are adaptable of make decisions when adapting to different environments and people, which will directly assist in the position.
2 Influence/Persuasion				
3 Challenge/Failure				
4 Teamwork				
5 Leadership				
6 Service/Orientation				
7 Individual/Triumph				

# INTERVIEW CHEAT SHEET

Company Name

Job Title

Interviewer Name

Interviewer Job Title

## ABOUT THE COMPANY

Mission:

Products/Services:

CEO:

Culture:

Recent News:

## ABOUT ME

Elevator Pitch:

Relevant Experience:

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Why this role/company:

## QUESTIONS FOR THE COMPANY

1.

2.

3.

4.

## QUESTIONS TO PREPARE FOR

Tell me about a time you...

Made a mistake:

Handled a difficult situation:

Went above & beyond:

Stepped up as a leader:

# Story Statement

Tell Me About Yourself | Elevator Pitch | Networking

## INTRO

Name  
School/Degree

STEP  
01

## REASON

Who is your audience?  
What are you talking to  
them about?

STEP  
02

## YOU

Experience, skills, strengths,  
interests, personality  
\*keywords!?

STEP  
03

## CLOSE

If appropriate, remind them  
what you are hoping for or  
why you're talking to them

STEP  
04

# INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWS

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An Informational Interview is an interview for information, NOT an interview for a job. It is a meeting you request with a professional who has a job, or works for a company, that interest you. You want to find out what that person does on the job and to gather information for further exploration of that career.

This simple act will clarify a job or an industry, give you a realistic perspective of an occupation, and provide you with important networking contacts for the future.

## GUIDELINES

- Avoid a phone interview if possible; there is no substitute for face to face, or video call, contact. Initial outreach should be concise and professional (see the Story Statement page).
  - State the who and why: “ I am currently a student at Westmont College, and I plan to pursue a career in entertainment law in Los Angles. I found your profile on Job Spot, LinkedIn, Alumni Database, and noticed that you have had great success in the entertainment industry. I would be grateful for the opportunity to speak with you about your experiences and your career path. Please let me know if there is a convenient time for us to talk. Thank you in advance for your help.”
- Be sure to stick to the length of time you asked to meet for
- Don't put the person on the spot by asking for a job; that shows a lack of integrity.
- Dress and carry yourself as if you were going on a job interview; though that is not the goal, it may end up being just that.
- Be sure and send a thank you note the day after the interview.

## QUESTIONS TO ASK

1. How did you decide to enter this field?
2. What steps did you take to enter this field
3. What are your activities and responsibilities? What is a typical day like?
4. What do like best about your job?
5. What is challenging about your job or industry?
6. How and by whom are work decisions made that affect you?

7. How much influence do you have over decisions affecting you?
8. If you could try any other job for a day what would it be?
9. Is there any specific advice you would give to someone entering this field?
10. Are there academic programs that you would recommend that would be good preparation for entering this field?
11. Can you suggest the names of other people I might speak with?

## **RESEARCH:**

### The Organization and the State of the Industry

- What characteristics does a successful \_\_\_\_\_ have at this organization?
- What are the current trends/changes you have seen in this practice area?
- What developments do you see affecting the practice area in the future?
- How is the industry changing and how do you see adapting to those changes?
- What specialized technologies does the organization use?
- What future industry trends do you project will affect your organization?
- How does the organization differ from its competitors?
- What are the organization's goals and objectives for the coming years?
- What are the organization's policies regarding X, Y, Z?

### Internal Atmosphere

- How is the organization structured?
- What is management's philosophy?
- What kind of atmosphere do they strive to create? What is the company culture?
- What kind of group activities does the organization encourage?
- How often do you work in groups vs. on your own?
- How are project teams organized?
- Are there formal training programs in the organization? Professional development?
- What are the typical jobs to which people leaving the firm have entered?
- How is performance measured? Is there a regulated exchange of feedback?

### Career Fields/Positions

- What are the major responsibilities and skills required of this position?
- What are the key responsibilities of a \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_ field?



- What is a typical day like?
- What do you find most satisfying about the job? The least satisfying?
- What types of decisions are made at your level?
- What part of the job do you find most challenging?

### Skills and Experience

- What classes, activities, etc., should I consider to prepare me for this field/position?
- When a \_\_\_\_\_ is hired, what are the qualifications you look for?
- Which of my skills set me apart from others in the field?
- Do you think my experiences thus far make me competitive for this practice area?
- Taking into account my skills, education, and experience, what other practice areas would you suggest I explore before making a final decision?

### **What About Virtual Interviews?**

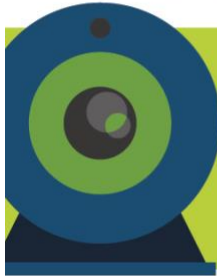


## PLANNING IS KEY

Your surroundings can tell the hiring manager a lot about your personality so think about the background and keep it tidy. When preparing answers to the proposed questions, try using post it notes for key points and prompts to help - just don't create a script!

## BODY LANGUAGE

When presenting, maintain the hiring manager's full attention - do this through nonverbal methods like eye contact, smiling, expressive hand gestures and body language. Don't slouch as it could come across negatively.

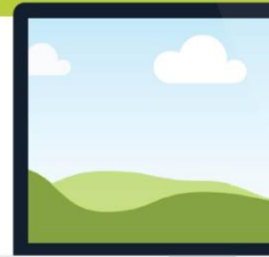


## DRESS APPROPRIATELY

Treat video interviews the same as face-to-face interviews - try to look professional. Make sure you look smart when filming and keep what you wear quite plain - it could appear differently on camera!

## TECHNOLOGY

It may sound obvious - but make sure all of your technology is appropriate and working. The camera position needs to be fixed and central with effective lighting so that the recruiter is able to see you clearly. Also, make sure your Wi-Fi signal is strong!



## INTERRUPTIONS

There should be no interruptions when filming. The environment should be the same as when you are being interviewed in an office, so you can be heard clearly. No people or other distracting sounds should be heard - keep pets out of the room!

## VERBAL

The most important one - make sure your voice is clear and speak at a constant and good speed. Throughout the interview you should be conscious of time, don't waffle and don't rush your replies. Relax, be confident and really let your personality shine through the camera.

