

How to Prepare for a Technical Interview

Even to the most skilled software engineers, the interview may feel like one of the most daunting parts of the hiring process. Unique from a conventional qualification interview, tech interviews are designed to also assess the hard skills of a developer before hire. They can be conducted remotely or in-person, synchronously or asynchronously, on a whiteboard or a laptop, or using a variety of formats.

As unpredictable as this process may prove itself to be, there are many solid ways to present your best self as a prospective employee to the company you've had eyes on.

Before the interview

Get into the right mindset

So, you got the interview? Here's some good news: **they already believe you're qualified**. Keeping this in mind as you prepare, as it may save you from wasting any precious time or experiencing any self-doubt regarding your abilities. It's important that you redirect your energy towards your preparation, which is the one (vital) thing you can control in the interview.

Remind yourself that those interviewing you are people too. In fact, they've likely gone through a number of trying tech job searches and coding interviews to get where they are today. Know that they are there to help, not fail you.

Hone your interview skills

Start by searching for "typical" interview questions your target company might ask with resources like Glassdoor and use them in your preparation.

Don't be afraid to ask friends and peers to do mock interviews with you. Allow yourself that simulated space to talk through the problems as you work, asking questions, and so on. The more practice you get in beforehand, the more confident you will be when it's time for the real thing.

In addition to your coding ability, the interviewers also want to know what kind of person you are. Will you work well with others, are you collaborative, can you explain your work, is your personality egotistic or reserved when it comes to things you both know and don't know—are you somebody that they

wouldn't mind working with or having on their team for hours a day and days a week? Use mock interviews as the opportunity to refine your soft skills—an element of the [developer job](#) that is often overlooked. **Your communication, collaboration, and problem-solving skills are just as valuable to the employer as your ability to perform the technical tasks asked of you.**

If you have contacts working for this particular tech company, they are an incredibly valuable resource to you! Try to learn more about the coding interview process, what kinds of questions are up for asking, etc.

Refresh your knowledge of fundamentals

Don't overlook the basics, especially when it comes to algorithms and [data structures](#). In fact, while many product companies actively use these tasks on General Programming, so many candidates don't anticipate receiving a technical task with algorithms in the interview room and regret not properly preparing. With that said, give yourself as much time as possible to review everything you can.

Practice, practice, and then practice some more

Because of the nature of tech job interviews, their preparation may require a lot of time and effort. Again, sufficient preparation will not only serve you well in the interview itself, it will make you feel more secure and confident before you even begin.

PRACTICE

PLATFORMS: [LeetCode](#), [HackerRank](#), [Pramp](#), [ExpertMitra](#), [interviewing.io](#), [HackerEarth](#), [AlgoExpert](#)

INTERVIEW GUIDES: [Tech Interview Handbook](#), [Coding Interview University](#), ["How to ace coding interviews"](#), [Interviews.school](#)

BOOKS: [Cracking the Coding Interview](#) (Gayle Lackmann McDowell)

During the interview

Be direct

While nerves may kick in at this point, it's crucial that you don't succumb to them. Embrace the things that may not be immediately clear to you and feel free to think out loud. Your interviewers are there to understand your thinking and might even guide you if you're headed in the wrong direction.

Keep in the mind that you are allowed to ask clarifying questions. **Make sure that you've understood what exactly is being asked of you before you begin.**

Listen

If given a hint, really think about it. It doesn't mean that you've already failed, but rather emphasizes that the interviewer wants to see you succeed.

When the floor opens for you to ask questions about the company, make them unique, interesting, and genuine. Candidates are expected to ask questions, so consider what really intrigues you and be receptive to hearing the interviewer's answers.

Perform like you would on the job

Simply put, write clean code during your interviews. Consider it a trial run of the code you would write at work.

Be yourself

This interview is meant to see who you are, and how you solve. Don't pretend to be what you hope they like, because pretending for too long is exhausting. If this is what you want to do, if this is your passion—don't worry, there is a job out there for you.

Know how to prepare for any outcome

If all goes well and you get the job, *congratulations!* However, know that if you fail, you are not a bad software engineer. Hiring teams often take cultural fits into account when considering candidates; and many different factors go into these decisions—**even ones you simply cannot control**. Especially in instances of relocation, a greater challenge is often posed when competing with local candidates.

No matter the difficulty, IT job interviews are in place to better understand you as a programmer. While preparation is key, know that you're already imbued with the knowledge and mindset that companies want to know more about.