

Interview Prep Guide

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Last updated - Nov 2024

Interview Preparation Guide

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Interview Preparation Guide

tl;dr

- This is aimed at mid-career engineers (4-6 YoE) who have enough experience to get an interview, but their interview abilities have atrophied.
- You have to develop and keep skills sharp to move up and stay on top of the talent pyramid. So you need to be a part of organizations that develop and keep skills sharp.
- Interview success doesn't correlate with job success, but to get jobs that will help you succeed, you need to be successful at the interview.
- Aim to interview (real or mock: [Interviewing.io](https://www.interviewing.io)) every 2-3 months to gauge your progress.
- Overall how you should focus your efforts
 - **40% Technical stories:** Technical ability is expected after working in tech for a while. You need to be able to sell yourself and your career highlights. Know the [Amazon STAR](#) format, and keep answers short to allow time for follow-up questions.
 - **25% [NeetCode](#):**
 - Use 15 mins to make a pseudo solution, then another 15 minutes to compare yours with the actual solution and your test understanding.
 - Review two problems from the previous day, then work through two new problems.
 - Use LLMs to confirm understandings and know if you're on track.
 - **25% [System Design Playlist - YouTube](#)**
 - Same for coding problems, but because of how large the problems can be, give yourself 30 minutes and only aim for one review and one new problem a day.
 - **10% [Rock the Behavioral Interview \(LeetCode\)](#):** Similar to technical stories, but this more about being aware and ready for them as needed i.e. "Tell me about a time".
 - Write out answers common questions and get feedback
 - Record yourself answering the questions based on feedback
 - Listen to yourself answering the questions the night before interviewing
 - Have reverse questions ([viraptor/reverse-interview](https://www.viraptor.com/reverse-interview)) ready for when you're asked.

Applying

Job Search Queries

- Use auto fill when possible: [JobFill](#)
- Google
 - `site:lever.co | site:greenhouse.io | site:level.co | site:dover.com "<position title>"`
 - Tools > Time > Past 24 hours or Past week
- LinkedIn

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- Search for “we’re hiring” or “dm for referral.”
- Ask: “Hey! I came across your post for referrals at (COMPANY). My experiences and skills in (XYZ) would be a great fit. I’d love to connect and be referred!”

LinkedIn Direct Messages

- Get LinkedIn premium
 - Ask someone that works there for a free 6 month premium pass
 - Buy it
- Update your profile
 - Add a nice headshot
 - Add an attractive but neutral banner
 - Add relevant skills
 - Update positions
- Templates
 - Hiring manager
 - Hey <name>, I’m interested in an open role in <company> with <product/team>. I am a <title and YoE> with <technology experience>. I’d love to connect and share about how I could contribute.
 - Referral
 - Hey <name>, hope you’re doing well. I’m a <title and YoE> looking to apply at <company>. Would you be willing to look at my resume or refer me? Thanks!
 - LinkedIn Inmail
 - Hey <name>, Thanks for connecting. I’m interested in the open role at <company> for <position> in <location>. Based on my <title and experience> I believe I’m a good fit for this role. I have <technology experience>. Could you look at my resume or connect with me and others to discuss the position more? I’d love to learn about the team and share about how I could contribute. Looking forward to hearing from you.
Best, <name>
- On the call
 - Have simple time ranges: Mon-Fri 1p-4p
 - Sync schedules [Online Appointment Scheduling with Google Calendar](#)
 - Keep it conversational with 2 - 3 prepared topics
- Without LinkedIn premium
 - Go to the LinkedIn profile of the person you want to reach
 - Scroll down to “Interests” and click on “Groups”
 - Join a group they’re a part of
 - Once you’re in the group, go to “Members” and select “See all”
 - Find the person and click “Message”

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Referrals

- [Repher](#)
- [ReferralHub](#)
- [Get Job Referrals to Top Tech Companies - Exponent](#)

Resume Tips

- Remove start and end months for positions, only have the years
- Remove school graduation dates
- Limit work to last the 10 years and/or 4 professional positions
- It's okay to stretch the truth but don't lie
- Avoid internships unless they're notable (e.g. FAANG, SpaceX, etc) or an established program (e.g. Army Congressional Fellowship, U.S. Digital Corps Fellowship, etc)
- Know your resume inside out, everything written on it can be questioned
- Anyone in the process can ask a technical question, always be ready to talk about any item at a high level
- Use tried and true formats: [Tech CV/Resume Samples - Computer Science](#)

Compensation

Comparisons

- [H1B Salary Database](#)
- [Levels.fyi](#)
- [Salaries | Candor](#)
- [Software engineer salary \(2024\) | Wellfound](#)

Negotiations

- [Salary negotiation | Candor](#)
- [How Not to Bomb Your Offer Negotiation - haseeb qureshi](#)
- [Ten Rules for Negotiating a Job Offer - haseeb qureshi](#)
- [Salary Negotiation | Kalzumeus Software](#)

Final Round

Night Prior

- Don't do brain work after lunch

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- After lunch review company culture/values and position details/expectations for about two hours
- Review technical story and behavioral question recordings for about two hours, along with a simple warm-up: [Interview Warmup - Grow with Google](#)
- Leave study area for the rest of the evening and prepare everything (clothes, bag, etc) for the next day

On-Site

- Take some time before leaving to get in the right mind set: [Coding Interview Meditation](#)
- Business cards and/or LinkedIn profile QR code on phone case
- Physical notebook w/pen
- Laptop and accessories; it might not be needed, but it's clutch if it is
- Whiteboarding: Retractable dry erase markers, microfiber towel

Virtual

- Day before
 - Make sure the meeting time is correct for your time zone
 - Computer: Appropriate desktop icons, wallpaper, and browser bookmarks
 - Software: Up to date, settings are correct (camera, audio input/output)
 - Space: Desk is clear, background isn't distracting, face is well lit
- Day of
 - Get ready normally as if it were in-person: shower, groom, get dressed
 - 15 mins prior: stretch, vocal warm-up, hydrate, put phone on airplane mode
 - 10 mins prior: Make cohabitants know, close off the space
 - 5 mins prior: Join the call, check audio/video, open apps/sites required for the interview