THE ADVANCED INTERVIEW PLAYBOOK

1. What Interviews Are Really Testing

Every interview, regardless of country, company or role, is trying to answer three questions:

1. **Can you do the job?**
   Skills, tools, domain knowledge, basic technical ability.

2. **Will you do the job well?**
   Attitude, reliability, ownership, work ethic, communication, problem-solving.

3. **Will you fit in here?**
   Team behaviour, values, style, stability, culture fit, professionalism.

Almost every question maps to one of these:

- "Tell me about yourself" → mainly **fit**

- "Describe a conflict you handled" → **behaviour**

- "Explain this concept" → **capability**

1.1 The real reasons candidates fail

Most candidates are not rejected for lack of skills; they are rejected for how they communicate:

- No **structure** → answers jump around, confuse the interviewer.

- No **proof** → vague claims like "I'm hardworking" with zero examples.

- **Over-explaining** → long stories, repeated points, low impact.

- **Lack of clarity** → cannot explain what they did or learnt.

- Weak **communication** → too fast, too soft, too nervous, too many fillers.

- **Misunderstanding the question** → answering something else.

- No **role alignment** → talking about everything except the job they applied for.

- Weak start + weak close → messy TMAY, no questions at the end.

1.2 Four qualities interviewers look for

1. **Clarity** – You know who you are, what you've done, and what you want.

2. **Relevance** – You connect your story to the job description.

3. **Proof** – Concrete examples, outcomes, responsibilities.

4. **Behaviour** – Calm, structured, responsible, collaborative.

Core rule: **Structure turns average answers into powerful answers.**

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2. The 10 Major Categories of Interview Questions

You will mostly face questions from these ten buckets:

1. Introductory (TMAY, "walk me through your CV")

2. Behavioural (past situations)

3. Situational (hypothetical future situations)

4. Technical / role-specific

5. Problem-solving

6. Analytical / case-style

7. Motivation ("Why this role/company?", "Where do you see yourself…?")

8. Strengths and weaknesses

9. Logistics and salary (notice period, location, CTC, etc.)

10. Closing questions ("Do you have any questions for us?")

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3. Mastering "Tell Me About Yourself" (TMAY)

Why the introduction matters

Your introduction sets the tone for the entire interview:

- Strong TMAY → interviewer relaxes, listens more, gives you benefit of doubt.

- Weak TMAY → interviewer becomes sceptical and starts searching for reasons to reject.

Common TMAY mistakes:

- Starting with personal background, family details, hobbies.

- Life story with no relevance.

- No clear professional identity.

- Zero proof.

- Ending with "I'm looking for a job anywhere".

3.1 TMAY Framework: PPPP

Present → Past → Proof → Purpose

Use this for "Tell me about yourself", "Introduce yourself", "Walk me through your background".

1. PRESENT – Who you are today (professional identity)

One clean, professional line. No personal details.

Examples:

- "I am an aspiring HR professional specialising in recruitment and HR operations."

- "I am a digital marketing trainee focusing on content strategy and performance analytics."

- "I am a trained data analyst with recent experience in Excel, SQL and Power BI dashboards."

- "I am a junior full-stack developer working with JavaScript, React and Node."

If your **first line** is weak, the interviewer immediately doubts your clarity.

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2. PAST – Relevant background only

Explain briefly how you reached this identity. Not your entire life.

Examples:

- "I recently completed structured HR training in sourcing, screening and interview coordination."

- "I started as a content writer, then moved into digital marketing and campaign execution."
- "I worked in customer service for three years, which built my communication and problem-solving skills."
- "After my BSc in Computer Science, I built small web projects using React and Node."

Your past should **support** your present, not distract from it.

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3. PROOF – Evidence of your skills

This is where most people fail. You must show what you actually did.

Examples by domain:

- **HR** – "I screened 30–50 profiles per week and coordinated interviews with hiring managers."
- **Digital Marketing** – "I improved engagement by 25–30% using a structured content calendar and basic SEO."
- **Data Analytics** – "I built dashboards in Excel/Power BI to track KPIs such as sales trends and customer segments."
- **Software Development** – "I built a full-stack web application with user authentication and role-based access."
- **AI/ML** – "I trained a supervised learning model that improved prediction accuracy on practice datasets."

Format: **I did X → which led to Y.**

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4. PURPOSE – Why this role, why now

Close with intention and direction.

Examples:

- "I'm now looking for an HR Assistant role where I can apply these skills in recruitment operations."
- "I'm seeking an entry-level data analyst role where I can contribute through dashboards and reporting."

- "I'm looking for a junior developer role where I can apply my full-stack skills on real products."
- "I'm aiming for a digital marketing position where I can own performance-driven campaigns."

This is where you stop sounding "desperate for any job" and start sounding **focused**.

Sample TMAY Answers (Combined PPPP)

Fresher – HR

"I am an aspiring HR professional specialising in recruitment and HR operations. Recently, I completed structured HR training where I worked on sourcing, screening and interview coordination. As part of my project, I screened around 40 profiles per week and supported hiring managers with scheduling. I am now looking for an HR Assistant role where I can apply these skills and grow in HR operations."

Working Professional – Digital Marketing

"I am a digital marketing executive with two years' experience in SEO, content planning and social media management. In my last role, I managed organic content and improved engagement by about 30% through better keyword targeting and consistent posting. I also handled basic reporting and competitor analysis. I'm now looking for a role where I can take more ownership of performance metrics and contribute to strategy execution."

Career Comeback – Data Analytics

"I am a trained data analyst with prior experience in Excel reporting and data cleaning. After a career break, I completed refresher training in Excel, SQL and Power BI and built dashboards to track sales and performance trends. I'm now seeking a data analyst role where I can apply my analytical skills to real-world datasets and support decision-making."

Career Switch – Customer Service → Data

"I started my career in customer service, where I handled daily customer queries, maintained records and prepared basic reports. Over time, I realised I enjoyed working with numbers and patterns, so I upskilled in Excel, SQL and Power BI and built sample dashboards on sales and

customer behaviour. I'm now looking for an entry-level data analyst role where I can combine my customer understanding with structured data analysis."

3.2 "Walk Me Through Your CV" – 3-Stage Framework

Do **not** read your CV line by line.

Use:

1. **Brief background summary** (1–2 sentences)
2. **Relevant highlights** (3–4 lines)
3. **Why you're applying for this job** (1–2 lines)

Example – HR:

"My background is in business and HR operations. Recently, I worked on sourcing, screening, interview scheduling and basic HR analytics such as tracking hiring turnaround time. Before that, I completed internships supporting recruitment coordination. I'm now looking for an HR Assistant role where I can contribute to efficient hiring processes."

Example – Data:

"My experience is mainly in data cleaning, Excel reporting and dashboard creation using Power BI. I've worked with sales and customer datasets and recently strengthened my SQL skills. I'm now exploring data analyst roles where I can support decision-making through clear reporting and analysis."

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4. Strengths and Weaknesses

4.1 Strengths – SPE Framework

Strength → Proof → Effect

Avoid generic rubbish like "I'm hardworking and honest".

Pick **2–3 strengths** and back them with evidence.

Example – HR

- Strength: "One of my strengths is structured communication."
  Proof: "During my recent HR project, I handled candidate follow-ups

and interview coordination."
Effect: "This reduced confusion and helped interviews run on time."

- Strength: "I'm also strong in sourcing and screening."
Proof: "I regularly handled 30–50 profiles per week."

Example – Data

- Strength: "My key strength is analytical thinking."
Proof: "I've built dashboards and cleaned datasets for multiple sample projects."
Effect: "This helped present clear performance trends to stakeholders."

4.2 Weaknesses – WIF Framework

Weakness → Impact → Fix

Rules:

- Choose a real weakness, not fake humility.

- Show that you understand why it matters.

- Show what you are doing to fix it.

Examples:

- "Earlier, I tended to speak too fast during discussions, which sometimes affected clarity. I noticed this during mock interviews, so I've been practising slower, structured speaking with short pauses. It has already made my communication clearer."

- "I used to give too much detail in explanations. Now I use frameworks like STAR to keep my answers concise and relevant."

- "I used to hesitate to ask for clarification, which occasionally caused rework. I now ask early questions to confirm expectations and have seen tasks finish smoother."

The point is to show **self-awareness + control**.

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5. Behavioural Questions – STAR-L Framework

Behavioural questions = **past situations**.

Companies use them because **past behaviour is the best predictor of future behaviour.**

Typical questions:

- "Tell me about a time you worked in a team."

- "Describe a time you worked under pressure."

- "Tell me about a conflict you managed."

- "Tell me about a time you failed and what you learnt."

Most candidates fail because:

- They ramble with no structure.

- They hide behind "we" instead of showing what **they** did.

- They give no clear result.

- They never talk about what they learnt.

5.1 STAR-L Structure

Situation → Task → Action → Result → Learning

1. **Situation** – Brief context (1–2 lines).

2. **Task** – What exactly was your responsibility?

3. **Action** – What you did, step by step. (Use action verbs.)

4. **Result** – What changed? Preferably with numbers.

5. **Learning** – What you learnt and how you will apply it in this company.

Example – Teamwork

"During my InternZity digital marketing project, our team had to create a content plan for a mock client.
My responsibility was to coordinate the content calendar between writers and designers.
I created a weekly tracker, scheduled short alignment calls and supported teammates when delays happened.
We completed the content plan two days early, and our campaign engagement improved by nearly 40%.

This experience taught me the value of clear communication and shared visibility, which I will bring into coordination work in your marketing team."

Example – Working under pressure

"During my internship, a client requested an urgent report that had to be delivered within 24 hours.
I was responsible for compiling and cleaning the dataset.
I listed the tasks, prioritised key fields, created a checklist and updated my team regularly to avoid confusion.
The report was completed on time, and the client appreciated both accuracy and speed.
I learnt how to stay calm under tight timelines and break work into smaller steps, which I will apply to time-sensitive tasks in this role."

Example – Failure / mistake

"In a previous role, I once missed a reporting deadline because I underestimated the time needed for data validation.
I was responsible for the final checks.
After that incident, I analysed where I went wrong, built a more detailed planning template, set earlier internal deadlines and started communicating risks sooner.
I haven't missed a deadline since, and reporting became more predictable.
This taught me responsibility and the importance of proactive planning—habits I will carry into this role."

STAR-L rules

- Keep answer **under 90 seconds**.

- Focus on **your actions**, not just "we".

- Use clear **action verbs**.

- Give a specific **result** (numbers if possible).

- Close with **learning + link to this role**.

Template:

"During my [project/role], [Situation].
I was responsible for [Task].
I did [Action A, B, C].

As a result, [Result].
This taught me [Learning], which I will apply in [new role/company] by [specific application]."

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6. Situational Questions – SAA Framework

Situational questions = **future / hypothetical** scenarios.

Common forms:

- "What would you do if you had three urgent tasks at the same time?"

- "How would you handle a disagreement with your manager?"

- "What would you do if a client is unhappy with your work?"

- "How would you handle a teammate who is not cooperating?"

There is no single "correct" answer. They are testing:

- Your **judgement**

- Your **maturity**

- Your ability to think in **steps**

- Your ability to stay **calm and professional**

6.1 SAA Structure

Situation → Action Plan → Assurance

1. **Situation** – Show you understand the scenario.

2. **Action Plan** – Step-by-step response.

3. **Assurance** – How you will ensure a stable, positive outcome.

Example – Multiple urgent tasks

"If I receive three urgent tasks with the same deadline, I would first clarify expectations with my manager to understand which tasks have the highest impact or external dependencies.
Then I'd list all three, estimate effort, and agree a clear priority order. I'd break each task into steps and start with the highest-impact one while keeping the others prepared.

I would update stakeholders regularly and ensure that the most critical tasks are completed first, with realistic timelines for the remaining work."

Example – Disagreement with manager

"If I disagree with my manager, I'd first listen fully to their reasoning instead of reacting immediately.
Then I'd explain my perspective calmly, share any data or examples supporting my view and ask if there's a middle-ground approach.
If we still choose a different direction, I would support the final decision and focus on delivering the best outcome for the team."

Role-link line (critical)

After any SAA or STAR-L answer, add a final role-link sentence:

- HR: "This matters because HR roles require calm coordination and clear communication with stakeholders."

- Marketing: "This is important because campaign success depends on quick, data-driven decisions and collaboration."

- Data: "This approach is vital in analytics roles where accuracy and clear communication directly impact decisions."

- Software: "This mindset is critical in development teams where stability, teamwork and deadlines matter."

- AI/ML: "This is essential when building and maintaining models that affect live business performance."

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7. Technical and Role-Specific Questions

7.1 What Technical Questions Really Check

Technical or domain questions are **not** only about definitions. They are checking:

1. **Conceptual clarity**
   Can you explain the idea in simple, non-textbook language?

2. **Practical understanding**
   Do you know how this shows up in real work?

3. **Ability to explain simply**
   Can you keep the interviewer's mind clear?

4. **Honesty when you do not know**
   Do you guess, or do you respond professionally?

5. **Thought process when unsure**
   Can you think aloud in a logical way?

6. **Willingness and ability to learn**
   Do you sound like someone who can pick up tools and concepts quickly?

7.2 Expectations by Background

Freshers

Companies expect:

- Fundamentals and basic concepts.

- Some projects or academic work.

- Curiosity and willingness to learn.

- Positive, humble attitude.

They do **not** expect:

- Deep mastery of ten tools.

- Perfect textbook answers.

Your job:
Explain concepts simply, give 1 example, and connect to your projects.

Working Professionals

Companies expect:

- Real examples from previous roles.

- Tools and systems you have actually used.

- Clear description of responsibilities.

- Some measurable outcomes.

You lose points if:

- You sound vague about what you did.

- You overuse lines like "I was involved in", "I was part of".

- You cannot explain how your work added value.

Your job:
Sound grounded in reality, not theory.

Career Comeback Candidates

Companies expect:

- Evidence that you refreshed your skills.

- Recent learning, projects or certifications.

- Connection between past experience and current tools.

- Confidence that you can re-enter smoothly.

Strong approach:
"I took a break for X. During this time I completed Y training and Z projects. Now I am ready to apply this in a structured role again."

7.3 Framework 1: C–E–A

Concept → Example → Application

Use this for almost any technical concept, tool, method or metric.

1. **Concept**
   Define it in your own words.

2. **Example**
   Give one simple, real-world example.

3. **Application**
   Show where you used it or where you would use it.

Examples:

- **Data Analytics – "What are SQL joins?"**

   o Concept: Joins combine data from two or more tables based on a related column.

   o Example: Joining a "customers" table with a "purchases" table to see what each customer bought.

   o Application: Used joins in a project to merge customer details with transaction data and analyse buying patterns.

- **HR – "What is end-to-end recruitment?"**

  - Concept: Handling the complete hiring cycle from requirement to onboarding.

  - Example: Requirements, sourcing, screening, interviews, offers, documentation, onboarding.

  - Application: Worked on sourcing, screening and interview coordination in an HR project.

- **Digital Marketing – "What is CTR?"**

  - Concept: Percentage of people who clicked your ad or link out of those who saw it.

  - Example: 1 000 impressions and 50 clicks gives a 5 per cent CTR.

  - Application: Used CTR to compare ad creatives and optimise campaigns.

- **Software – "What is an API?"**

  - Concept: A way for two systems or applications to communicate and share data.

  - Example: An app using a payment gateway such as Razorpay or Stripe.

  - Application: Used REST APIs to fetch user details from the backend and display them in the frontend.

- **AI / ML – "What is overfitting?"**

  - Concept: When a model learns training data too perfectly and performs poorly on new data.

  - Example: 99 per cent training accuracy but 60 per cent test accuracy.

  - Application: Used train–test split and regularisation to reduce overfitting.

Practice task:
Pick five concepts from your domain and write a three-line C–E–A answer for each.

7.4 Framework 2: 3W

What → Why → Where

Use this for tools, platforms, metrics and processes.

1. **What** – What is it?

2. **Why** – Why is it used or important?

3. **Where** – Where have you used it, or where would you?

Examples:

- **HR – ATS**

    o What: Applicant Tracking System, a tool to manage recruitment.

    o Why: Stores CVs, tracks candidates, streamlines shortlisting and communication.

    o Where: Practised ATS-style screening during HR training.

- **Digital Marketing – Google Analytics**

    o What: Tool to track website traffic and user behaviour.

    o Why: Helps understand sources, pages visited, time spent and drop-off.

    o Where: Used it to analyse page views, bounce rate and session duration.

- **Data Analytics – Dashboard**

    o What: Visual display of key metrics in one place.

    o Why: Helps managers see trends and make decisions quickly.

    o Where: Built Power BI dashboards to track sales and customer trends.

- **Software – Version Control**

    o What: System that records changes to code over time.

    o Why: Supports collaboration, rollback, and conflict management.

    o Where: Used Git and GitHub with branches, commits and pull requests.

- **AI / ML – Feature Engineering**
    - What: Selecting and transforming raw data into useful features.
    - Why: Improves pattern learning and model performance.
    - Where: Applied in classification tasks by encoding categories and creating new features.

Practice task:
Choose three tools you use. For each, write What, Why, Where in three short lines.

7.5 How to Answer When You Do Not Know

Most candidates fail here, not on questions they know.

Wrong behaviours:

- Guessing and hoping you are right.
- Giving a random, fake-sounding definition.
- Freezing or going silent.
- Saying "I do not know" and stopping.

Correct 3-step approach:

1. **Acknowledge honestly**
   "To be honest, I am not fully familiar with that concept yet."

2. **Connect to what you do know**
   "However, I have worked with X, which I believe is related, in this way…"

3. **Show how you would learn it**
   "If I had to use this from tomorrow, I would start with official documentation, follow a structured tutorial, then build a small test project to practise before using it in a live environment."

Example:

"I am not fully familiar with Snowflake yet. However, I have worked with SQL databases and basic data warehousing. If I had to work with Snowflake, I would start with the official documentation, take an

introductory course, and practise with sample datasets to understand storage and querying before using it in production."

This shows honesty, connection, and learning mindset.

7.6 Technical Micro Practice

1. Choose one technical or role-specific question from your domain.

2. Write a three-line **C−E−A** answer.

3. Say it aloud twice.

4. Check:

   o Is the concept clear?

   o Is the example simple?

   o Is the application specific?

Repeat for at least five questions.

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8. Problem-Solving and Analytical Questions

8.1 What These Questions Really Test

These are the "What would you do if…?" questions and mini case scenarios.

They test:

1. **Logical thinking**
   Do you go step by step or jump everywhere?

2. **Ability to break down vague problems**
   Can you turn a messy statement into smaller parts?

3. **Structured approach over exact answer**
   Your method matters more than a perfect solution.

4. **Comfort with basic numbers and trade offs**
   Can you think with percentages, trends and comparisons?

5. **Calmness with unfamiliar problems**
   Do you panic, or do you say "Let me break this down"?

You cannot memorise fixed answers here. You must learn to **think in structure.**

8.2 Framework: CBAO

Clarify → Break → Approach → Outcome

Write this as your default method for any scenario question.

C – Clarify the problem

Ask 1–3 smart, simple questions to understand what is really happening.

Examples:

- Website leads dropped
  – When did this start?
  – Is the drop across all channels or specific ones?
  – Any major changes recently?

- Attrition increased
  – Which teams or levels are affected most?
  – Is it mainly new joiners or experienced staff?
  – Any recent changes in policy, managers or workload?

Clarifying shows you do not rush blindly.

B – Break the problem into parts

Break big problems into logical components.

Examples:

- **HR – Recruitment funnel**
  Sourcing → Screening → Interview experience → Offer → Joining

- **Marketing funnel**
  Traffic → Engagement → Conversion → Retention

- **Data pipeline**
  Source → Extraction / ETL → Calculations → Dashboard / filters

- **Software performance**
  Frontend → Backend / APIs → Database → Infrastructure

This tells the interviewer you understand how systems work.

A – Approach each part

Suggest realistic actions for each component.

Examples:

- Compare last month vs this month data.

- Check for recent changes in campaigns or systems.

- Talk to people closest to the process.

- Run specific tests (forms, APIs, page speed, queries).

You move from theory to practical steps.

O – Outcome (what you would measure)

Optional but powerful.

Show how you will judge success:

- Improve conversion rate from 2 per cent to 4–5 per cent.

- Raise offer-to-joining ratio.

- Reduce response time from 10 minutes back towards 2 minutes.

- Align dashboard numbers with finance reports.

Talking in outcomes and metrics makes you sound business-minded.

8.3 Sample CBAO Answer – Marketing

Problem:
"Website leads have dropped by 40 per cent in the last month. What would you do?"

- Clarify:
  Ask if the drop is across all channels or specific ones. Ask when it started and whether any major changes were made to campaigns, design, budget or tracking.

- Break:
  Split into traffic, landing page experience, form or call to action, and tracking or CRM issues.

- Approach:
  Check analytics for traffic trends, review page load time and bounce

rate, manually test forms, and verify tracking tags and CRM integration.

- Outcome:
  Aim to identify where the drop is happening, then rebuild performance. Track sessions, conversion rate, form submissions and cost per lead.

Same structure works for HR, data, software, AI and operations. Only the details change.

8.4 Practice Template

Pick any problem from your domain and fill this:

- **Clarify:**
  2–3 questions you would ask.

- **Break:**
  3–5 components.

- **Approach:**
  1–3 actions for each component.

- **Outcome:**
  2–3 metrics or results you would watch.

Practise giving this answer out loud in 60–90 seconds.

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9. Motivation, Strengths, Weaknesses and Career Story

9.1 Why Motivation Questions Decide Offers

Motivation questions include:

- "Why do you want this role?"

- "Why this company?"

- "Why should we hire you?"

- "Where do you see yourself in 3–5 years?"

- "What motivates you?"

- "What kind of environment helps you perform?"

They help interviewers judge:

1. **Clarity of direction**
   Do you have a plan or are you just "open to anything"?

2. **Research about the company**
   Have you taken even 10 minutes to understand where you are applying?

3. **Alignment with the role**
   Does your story fit the job description?

4. **Long term thinking**
   Are you likely to stay, grow and take ownership?

Skill gets you **shortlisted**.
Alignment gets you **selected**.

9.2 Framework: RCP

Role → Company → Path
Use this for "Why this role?" and "Why this company?"

R – Role

Show what you enjoy doing in this kind of work.

Examples:

- HR: "I enjoy working with people, coordinating processes and improving the hiring experience."

- Marketing: "I enjoy creating content and analysing campaign performance."

- Data: "I enjoy solving problems using data and finding patterns."

- Software: "I enjoy building products and solving technical challenges."

- AI / ML: "I enjoy working with datasets, training models and improving accuracy."

C – Company

Show you did some research. Mention 1–2 specifics:

- Industry, product or mission.

- Culture, learning focus, growth.

- Something from website, LinkedIn or the interviewer.

P – Path

Connect the role to your future direction:

- Fresher: starting point to build expertise.

- Professional: step towards deeper responsibility or specialisation.

- Comeback: structured way to relaunch with updated skills.

- Switcher: first proper role in the new domain.

Example – HR Fresher

"HR interests me because I enjoy coordination, communication and supporting people processes. I like that your company focuses on structured recruitment and employee experience. This role aligns with my long term plan to grow in HR operations and later specialise in recruitment analytics."

9.3 Framework: 3P

Profile → Proof → Profile Fit
Use this for "Why should we hire you?"

1. **Profile** – One sentence identity.
   "I am a trained data analyst with experience in Excel, SQL and Power BI."

2. **Proof** – 2–3 skills with examples.
   "I have cleaned datasets, built dashboards and analysed trends for sales data."

3. **Profile Fit** – Why this matches the job.
   "Your role needs someone who can handle data cleaning and reporting, which are exactly the areas I have practised."

Build your own 3P for your domain.

9.4 Strengths and Weaknesses

You already know the structures:

- **SPE – Strength → Proof → Effect**

- **WIF – Weakness → Impact → Fix**

Now you must link them to the role.

Strength example – Data

"My strength is analytical thinking. I have applied this while building dashboards and cleaning messy datasets. This is directly useful for this analyst role where you need someone to find patterns and provide clear insights."

Weakness example – Software

"My weakness used to be taking too long because I focused too much on perfect code. I realised this affected deadlines, so I now follow agile practices, break work into smaller tasks and prioritise delivery before micro-optimising. This has improved my speed while keeping quality under control."

9.5 Career Story by Background

Your career story should answer:

- Who you are now.

- How you reached here.

- What you have done to prepare.

- Where you want to go.

- How this role fits.

Freshers

Focus on:

- Learning, projects, internships.

- Curiosity and growth mindset.

Professionals

Focus on:

- Impact, ownership, progression and learning.

Career Comeback

Focus on:

- Past experience.

- Short explanation of break.

- Upskilling and readiness to return.

Career Switchers

Focus on:

- Transferable skills.

- Reason for the switch.

- Learning and projects in the new domain.

Mini task:
Write 5–7 bullet points that tell your story logically from past to present to next step.

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10. Final HR Round and Closing

Even if technical goes well, many rejections happen in the last ten minutes.

10.1 Salary Expectations

Avoid both extremes:

- "Anything is fine."

- Unrealistic demand with no flexibility.

Use:

- Basic market research.

- A range, not one rigid number.

- Clear but flexible language.

Example for fresher:

"I am looking for a competitive entry level salary that matches the standard range for this role in the market. The main priority for me is the opportunity to learn, contribute and grow, and I am open to discussing the exact figure based on the overall package."

10.2 Notice Period and Availability

Be honest and realistic.

Examples:

- "I am available to join immediately."

- "I have a 30 day notice period, so I can join one month from the date of offer."

- "I am not currently working, but I would prefer 1–2 weeks to prepare before joining. I am flexible beyond that."

Never promise a date you cannot meet.

10.3 Location and Remote Preferences

Be clear with yourself before the interview.

Examples:

- "I am open to relocation and comfortable with office or hybrid as per company policy."

- "I prefer remote or hybrid but can visit the office when required."

- "Due to personal reasons I am currently looking for remote first roles, but I am fully committed to strong communication and performance."

10.4 "Do You Have Any Questions for Us?"

Never say "No questions."

Good questions include:

1. **Success and expectations**
   "What does success look like in this role in the first three months?"

2. **Performance and growth**
   "How is performance measured in this team? Are there specific metrics or review cycles?"

3. **Team and collaboration**
   "Could you tell me more about the team I would be working with and how they typically collaborate?"

4. **Next steps**
   "What are the next steps in the hiring process and the expected timeline for feedback?"

These questions show maturity and seriousness.

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11. Delivery: Voice, Tone, Body Language

Frameworks mean nothing if your delivery is weak.

- **Voice** – Clear, steady, moderate pace, minimal fillers.

- **Tone** – Calm, professional, not apologetic, not over-excited.

- **Body language** – Straight posture, relaxed shoulders, natural eye contact, minimal fidgeting.

- **Virtual** – Look at camera, neutral background, test mic and internet.

Remember: **Think → Breathe → Speak.**

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12. Mini Mock Interview – Self Practice Model

Use this format to practise at home or with a friend.

For each mock session:

1. **TMAY** – 45 to 60 seconds using PPPP.

2. **Behavioural** – One question with STAR-L.

3. **Situational** – One question with SAA.

4. **Motivation** – One question using RCP or 3P.

Record yourself. After each mock:

- Check clarity, pace, confidence and structure.

- Write one improvement for the next attempt.

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13. Summary

- Interview psychology.

- TMAY (Present, Past, Proof, Purpose).

- STAR-L for real experiences.

- SAA for situational answers.

- Technical answers with C–E–A and 3W.

- Professional way to say "I do not know."

- Problem solving with CBAO.

- Motivation frameworks RCP and 3P.

- Strength and weakness with SPE and WIF.

- Career story patterns for fresher, professional, comeback, switcher.

- Final HR round strategies.

- Communication basics: short sentences, calm tone, no fillers, professional body language.

- Mock interview format for real practice.

14. Interview Practice Plan

14.1 Build your core

Daily:

1. Say your TMAY out loud **twice a day**. Adjust wording until it is clear, sharp, and under 60 seconds.

2. Write **one STAR-L story per day**:

   - Day 1: Pressure

   - Day 2: Teamwork

   - Day 3: Conflict

   - Day 4: Mistake/failure

   - Day 5: Initiative

   - Day 6: Problem-solving

   - Day 7: Any domain-specific situation

3. Practise **one situational question per day** using **SAA**.

14.2 Simulate real interviews

Daily:

1. Do one **mini mock** (10–15 minutes):

   o   1 x TMAY.

   o   1 x behavioural (STAR-L).

   o   1 x situational (SAA).

   o   1 x motivation (RCP or 3P).

4. **Record yourself** at least one session. Record a 1-minute answer (TMAY or STAR-L) daily. Check:

   o   Clarity

   o   Structure

   o   Pace

   o   Fillers

   You are not memorising lines.
   You are **training structure**. Structure becomes your confidence.

2. Adjust one small thing each day:

   o   Slightly slower pace.

   o   Stronger proof line.

   o   Clearer link to the role.

   Small daily improvements compound into big shifts.

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8. Final Note

From this point, you are not just "available for a job".
You are a candidate who can **explain** value with structure and clarity.

Do not let this material stay in your notebook.
It must come into your **voice**.

- Practise.

- Record.

- Refine.

Use these frameworks in your InternZity sessions, mock interviews and real interviews until they feel natural.

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