

# Interview Preparation Guide with Worksheet



***A note from El Paso County:***

Congratulations! You have been selected to interview at El Paso County. It’s an exciting, big moment, full of possibilities and maybe a little nerve-wracking too.

At El Paso County, we view interviews as a two-way conversation. Before your interview, we invite you to review our Interview Preparation Guide to help you feel better prepared and a little more at ease. The worksheet is designed to help you present your strengths with confidence, prepare thoughtful questions, and evaluate whether the role aligns with your goals. Our goal is to position you for success, so you can show up confident, prepared, and at your very best.

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## Pre-Interview Preparation



### Pre-Interview Checklist

- Be on time (arrive 10-15 minutes early)
- Bring several printed copies of your resume
- Pack a notepad and pen
- Greet the interviewer(s) professionally and confidently (if appropriate to the setting)
- Prepare questions to ask the interviewer(s)

## Understand the Role

### Review the job description.

Preparing for an interview primarily means taking time to thoughtfully consider your goals and qualifications relative to the position and employer. To accomplish this, consider performing research on the organization and carefully reviewing the job description to understand why you would be a good fit. Let's look at the steps to preparing for an interview.

During your prep work, you should use the posted job description as a guide. The job description is a list of the qualifications, qualities, and background the employer is looking for in an ideal candidate. The more you can align yourself with these details, the more the employer will be able to see that you are qualified. The job description may also give you ideas about questions the employer may ask throughout the interview.

### Put This Into Action

Look through the job description.

- Highlight keywords and core responsibilities.
- Match your skills and experiences to those expectations.

Write 1-2 sentences about why you're a strong fit and top strengths that match this role in the space below:

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## Research the Company, Department, and Role

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### Company Research Notes

#### Research the Company or Department

Researching the company and/or department you're applying to is an important part of preparing for an interview. Not only will it help provide context for your interview conversations, but it will also help you when preparing thoughtful questions for your interviewers.

#### Research the Role

It's important to read the job description carefully and make sure that you understand all the requirements and responsibilities that go along with it. This will not only prepare you with thoughtful, targeted questions about the position during the interview, but it will ensure that you're truly qualified and prepared to tackle the responsibilities if you get the job.

If possible, research similar positions and read reviews from individuals in those positions, so you can get an idea of what the day-to-day activities will be. During the interview, ask for clarification or details about the role, so you can be sure you're ready should you receive a job offer. Researching the role before an interview will also help you to decide whether the position is right for you.

### Put This Into Action

Research the company and department. Describe the following prompts based on your research.

#### Mission and values:

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#### Recent news or milestones:

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Culture/Tone:

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Now research the role. Describe the following prompts based on your research.

Similar job reviews or expectations:

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Follow-up questions to ask during the interview:

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## Know Your Why

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### Reflect on your motivation and qualifications

Before your interview, you should have a good understanding of why you want the job and why you're qualified. You should be prepared to explain your interest in the opportunity and why you're the best person for the role. One of the common lead-off interview questions is 'Tell me about yourself' or 'Why are you interested in this position?' Strong candidates connect their experience, values, and career goals to the organization's mission.

### Put This Into Action

Ask yourself the following questions:

- Why do you want this job?
- What value do you bring to the team?
- Why this department?
- Why this moment in your career?

Write your "Why This Role" statement:

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## Practice Communication

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### Body Language & Voice

It's important to make a positive and lasting impression during the interview process. You can do this by practicing a confident, strong speaking voice and friendly, open body language. While these might come naturally to you, you might also want to spend time practicing with trusted friends or family or in front of a mirror.

If you don't know the answer to a certain question, it is perfectly acceptable to pause for a moment and simply state, "Let me think about that for a moment." The employer will appreciate you taking the time to give them a thoughtful answer. Be sure to provide specific examples wherever possible. Taking time to prepare for an interview will ultimately help you feel more relaxed and confident during the process.

### Put This Into Action

- Practice open posture, eye contact, and a clear voice.
- Record yourself or rehearse with a friend.

## Create Questions for the Interviewer

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### Prepare 3 to 5 thoughtful questions to ask

Many employers feel confident about candidates who ask thoughtful questions about the company and the position. Consider taking time before the interview to prepare several questions for your interviewer(s) that show you've researched the company and are well-versed about the position.

Some examples of questions you could ask include:

- What does a typical day look like for a person in this position?
- Why do you enjoy working here?
- What qualities do your most successful employees have?
- I've really enjoyed learning more about this opportunity. What are the next steps in the hiring process?

### Put This Into Action

Use the space below to write three to five questions.

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## What to Wear

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### Plan and prepare your outfit

This might seem straightforward, but it's worth clarifying.

For your interview, we recommend dressing professionally. We want you to feel comfortable and authentic, but just the polished, professional version of you.

When in doubt, it's always better to be slightly overdressed than underdressed.

## Confirm Logistics

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### In-Person Interviews

Job interviews tend to be stressful for most people for many reasons, but getting to, or even into, the interview can be a challenge in itself. If your interview is in an unfamiliar area or even an entirely new city, it can be a source of anxiety to find your way around and make sure that you show up on time.

#### Put This Into Action

Consider doing the following:

- Save the directions
- Research alternative ways to get to the location
- Research the parking information
- Save the interview contact information
- Build in a time buffer

### Virtual/Spark Hire Interviews

Virtual interviews can bring their own stressors. Technology issues, unstable internet connections, unfamiliar platforms, or audio and video difficulties can all add pressure before the conversation even begins. Preparing these logistical details in advance can help reduce unnecessary stress and allow you to focus on presenting your best self.

#### Put This Into Action

Consider doing the following:

- Test your camera, microphone, and internet connection
- Choose a distraction-free, well-lit, professional space
- Close other applications and silence notifications
- Maintain eye contact by looking at the camera

#### Virtual Interviews

- Log-in 5-10 minutes early

#### Spark Hire Interviews

- Utilize the practice video
- Remain attentive, engaged, and show genuine enthusiasm.
- Speak naturally rather than reading scripted responses

# During the Interview

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## Highlight Key Metrics

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- List quantifiable results from your past roles

If you have metrics or stats to show your accomplishments or growth during your previous roles, they're a great help in selling yourself during the interview. For example, you may have increased sales by a certain percentage or increased social media engagement in your last position.

### Put This Into Action

In the section below, list your key metrics from your current or previous roles:

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## Describe Your Relatable Accomplishments

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- Reflect on past accomplishments that align closely with the responsibilities of the role you're applying for

Whatever accomplishments you have, don't be modest about sharing them during your interview. Your potential employer wants to know that you'll be the right fit and that you can deliver something to the company, so they need to know all the reasons that you can provide for them.

Think about projects you've led, challenges you've overcome, or initiatives you've contributed to that are relevant.

### Put This Into Action

In the section below, list and describe at least three accomplishments and how they relate to the role:

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3. 

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## Structure Your Answers with the STAR Method

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The STAR method helps you answer behavioral questions and keeps your responses clear, focused, and impactful. Using the STAR method will help you effectively communicate your experience, problem-solving skills, and how you approach different scenarios, all of which are valuable insights for the interview panel.

Component	Description
S – Situation	Set the stage. Describe the background or context. <i>What was the challenge/context?</i>
T – Task	Explain the challenge or goal you were working toward. <i>What were you responsible for?</i>
A – Action	Outline the specific steps you took to address the task. <i>What did you do?</i>
R – Result	Share the outcome or result of your actions, and what you learned. <i>What was the outcome?</i>

### Put This Into Action

**Prompt: Tell me about a time you handled a challenge at work.**

Situation:

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Task:

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Action:

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Result:

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**Prompt: Describe a time you worked with a difficult team member.**

Situation:

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Task:

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Action:

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Result:

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**Prompt: Share a success you're proud of.**

Situation:

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Task:

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Action:

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Result:

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## Close with Confidence

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End your interview with clarity and confidence. The steps below show professionalism and completion of the process.



### Closing Checklist

- Express appreciation for the opportunity
- Reaffirm your interest in the role
- Ask about next steps
- Send a thank you email within 24 hours\*

*\*In many cases, you may not get the panel members' emails. Thank You emails should be sent to HR or the Talent Acquisition Specialist to be forwarded to them.*

## Reflect

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Now that the interview process is complete, take a moment to reflect on your interview.

### Put This Into Action

Take a moment to reflect on the recommended questions below:

What questions felt strong, and where did you feel less confident?

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Did you clearly communicate your skills and experience?

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Were your examples specific and results-focused?

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Did you answer questions directly or did you ramble?

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Did you demonstrate confidence and professionalism?

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What would you improve next time?

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