

# PART 1: YOUR PRE-INTERVIEW TO-DO LIST



# DO YOUR RESEARCH

In order to get yourself interview-ready, you need to research and speak to your recruiter about these four things:



## 1. THE INDUSTRY

### WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW?

Any recent developments, trends and changes

### WHERE CAN I FIND THIS INFORMATION?

Search engines, news stories and company websites



## 3. THE HIRING MANAGER

### WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW?

Who they are, their role, their expertise and their career experience

### WHERE CAN I FIND THIS INFORMATION?

Their LinkedIn profile, search engines, the company websites, speaking appearances (try searching YouTube), and your recruiter



## 2. THE COMPANY

### WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW?

The company's history, products and services, mission, values and purpose, customers and its culture

### WHERE CAN I FIND THIS INFORMATION?

Their company websites, annual reports, marketing material, company social media accounts, employee social media activity, news stories, events and review sites



## 4. THE ROLE

### WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW?

As much as possible about this role and any previous work the team has completed

### WHERE CAN I FIND THIS INFORMATION?

The job description, company social media accounts, employee social media activity and company websites

# PLAN HOW YOU ARE GOING TO INTRODUCE YOURSELF

A key part of getting ready for your interview is preparing how you will introduce yourself and talk through your 'story' so far. So, how should you structure your introduction?

**1** Firstly, explain your relevant **educational and professional background**

**2** Next, discuss the **key skills and expertise** you have which directly relate to this opportunity, using measurable examples

**3** Finally, describe **what you are looking for** in your next role and why this role, at this organisation, appealed to you

I am a business management graduate with a master's in Digital Marketing. Since leaving university I have enjoyed a two-year marketing career within the sports industry.

During my time within this industry, I have been able to apply what I learnt during my master's, whilst building upon my digital marketing expertise even further. I believe that my digital marketing skills are best showcased by an email marketing campaign I recently led, which increased our conversion rate by 10%.

My previous organisation has helped me develop the digital skills I have today, however, I believe that for the sake of progressing my expertise further, it's time to move on. Therefore, I'm looking for a more challenging role within a fast-paced global organisation, where there is plenty of room for me to grow as a marketing professional; hence why I was so pleased to be invited to interview for this role.

## THINGS TO REMEMBER:

When talking through your CV, ensure you do so in chronological order – focusing on only the roles which are relevant to this job interview.

Keep your language simple, and where possible, use **action verbs** to better showcase your skills.

You can find more information about introducing yourself in a job interview [here](#).



# PRACTISE INTRODUCING **YOURSELF**

**1. YOUR RELEVANT EDUCATIONAL AND PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND**

**2. THE KEY SKILLS AND EXPERTISE YOU HAVE WHICH DIRECTLY RELATE TO THIS OPPORTUNITY.**  
**TIP: USE MEASURABLE EXAMPLES**

**3. WHAT YOU ARE LOOKING FOR IN YOUR NEXT ROLE AND WHY THIS ROLE, AT THIS ORGANISATION, APPEALED TO YOU**

# PREPARE YOUR ANSWERS TO THESE COMMON INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Once you've introduced yourself and spoken through your CV, you will likely be asked some common interview questions. Here are some that you should prepare for:



## 1. "WHY ARE YOU LOOKING TO LEAVE YOUR CURRENT JOB?"

- The interviewer will ask you this because they want to understand what motivates and fulfils you, and what type of company culture you are best suited to.
- Don't focus this answer on what you dislike about your current role or organisation; focus on the opportunities that you see in the position you've applied for, such as the opportunity to learn new skills, or develop your understanding in a new industry.

Find more advice on answering this question [here](#).

### For example:

"While I've learnt a great deal in my current role, I believe it is now time to make a change, because I'd like to expand on my skills and build on my experiences on a more consistent basis. I believe this opportunity may enable me to do that, as I've found from my research that your company has a commitment to lifelong learning for your staff."



## 2. "WHY SHOULD I HIRE YOU?"

- This is an opportunity to sell yourself; think about what benefits you will bring to the company if they take you on, rather than someone else.
- Identify three skills/experiences you're going to mention. This list should include 'hard skills' mentioned in the job description (i.e. technical abilities), as well as transferrable or 'soft skills', like communication and the ability to work as part of a team.
- Be informative, but succinct. Don't risk disengaging the interviewer with an overly long and poorly structured response.
- Rehearse, but also maintain some spontaneity. Be sure not to over-rehearse your response to such an extent that you come across as robotic when you give it.

Find more advice on answering this question [here](#).



## 3. "HOW WOULD YOUR FRIENDS DESCRIBE YOU?"

- By asking this question, the interviewer is trying to determine if your personality suits the role, team and company.
- What kind of personal attributes of yours would be useful for demonstrating your suitability for this role?

### For example:

You might be interviewing for a sales role, and you think your friends would describe you as friendly and a good listener. These would be good qualities to mention, as they demonstrate your ability to build rapport, including with potential and existing clients.

- Don't just think about traits that relate to the job description, think about how your friends would truly describe you – or, better, ask them. This will indicate to the interviewer how well you will get on with your potential colleagues.

Find more advice on answering this question [here](#).

# PREPARE YOUR ANSWERS TO THESE COMMON INTERVIEW QUESTIONS



## 4. “WHY DO YOU WANT THIS JOB?”

Structure your answer with these four key points:

1. Why you are passionate about the company?
2. Why you are passionate about the role?
3. How this opportunity would allow you to progress?
4. Reiterate how pleased you are to have been invited to the interview

Find more advice on answering this question [here](#).

## 5. “CAN YOU TELL ME ABOUT A TIME THAT YOU FAILED?”

- This will help the interviewer to assess how you deal with set-backs; do you take a step back and think about where you went wrong, or do you sweep it under the carpet and act like it never happened?
- Plan which example you are going to talk about – not something which is a thinly veiled success story, but is a genuine example of where you made an oversight or error in judgement.
- Some key points to remember: explain clearly how it happened, don't make excuses, don't blame others and show that you have learnt from the situation.

Find more advice on answering this question [here](#).


## 6. “WHAT ARE YOUR SALARY EXPECTATIONS?”


- Make sure you are aware of the industry standard for your role and level of experience before going into your interview. If you're unsure, consult our [Salary Guides](#) or ask your recruiter.
- Having this information will allow you to answer this question with a lot more conviction, and will put you in a much better position should you need to negotiate.

Find more advice on answering this question [here](#).

## 7. “ARE YOU INTERVIEWING WITH ANY OTHER COMPANIES?”

- The interviewer will ask you this for a range of reasons, whether that's to gain validation that you are genuinely interested in *this* role and their company, or to see how quickly they would need to act if they were to offer you the job.

 **Do:** Convey that this is your company of choice; pivot the conversation towards what you are looking for in your next role; keep it general; don't hide the fact you've already received a job offer if that's the case.

 **Don't:** List specific company names or the number of other jobs you've applied for, and don't exaggerate the scale of your job search or progress so far.

Find more advice on answering this question [here](#).



# PRACTISE YOUR ANSWERS TO THESE COMMON INTERVIEW QUESTIONS



1. "WHY ARE YOU LOOKING TO LEAVE YOUR CURRENT JOB?"



2. "WHY SHOULD I HIRE YOU?"



3. "HOW WOULD YOUR FRIENDS DESCRIBE YOU?"

# PRACTISE YOUR ANSWERS TO THESE COMMON INTERVIEW QUESTIONS



4. "WHY DO YOU WANT THIS JOB?"



5. "CAN YOU TELL ME ABOUT A TIME THAT YOU FAILED?"



6. "WHAT ARE YOUR SALARY EXPECTATIONS?"



7. "ARE YOU INTERVIEWING WITH ANY OTHER COMPANIES?"



# LEARN HOW TO USE THE STAR TECHNIQUE FOR SITUATIONAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

You may also be asked **situational** and **behavioural** interview questions that are about understanding how you work, and what your innate response to a particular situation would be. **For example:**

“Tell me about a time when you supported a colleague who was struggling.”

“Give me an example of a time when you’ve missed a deadline. How did you learn from it?”

“Tell me about a time when you saw that a colleague had made a mistake. What did you do?”

In order to answer this type of interview question successfully, you need to use the storytelling method called the **STAR technique**. This will keep your responses clear, focused and memorable. Let’s demonstrate this technique by using the example question “Can you think of a time where you used a problem-solving attitude?”



“Yes, whilst I was employed at X company, I was responsible for digitally promoting a portfolio of X products. One week, our online sales for a particular product were 25% lower than usual.”

“I was tasked with making changes to our digital marketing presence to rectify this dip in sales.”

“Therefore, I created banner adverts for these products to go on our homepage and email signatures. I also increased our social media activity promoting these products. I encouraged internal teams to “like and share” this activity. I then launched an email campaign to go out to a targeted list of customers for that product.”

“Consequently, by the following week, online sales for this product saw a 40% increase and have remained steady ever since.”

Learn more about the STAR technique [here](#).

# PRACTISE THE STAR TECHNIQUE: ANSWER ONE OF THE QUESTIONS BELOW

“Tell me about a time when you supported a colleague who was struggling.”

“Give me an example of a time when you’ve missed a deadline. How did you learn from it?”

“Tell me about a time when you saw that a colleague had made a mistake. What did you do?”



SET THE SITUATION



EXPLAIN YOUR TASK AND INVOLVEMENT



DESCRIBE YOUR ACTION

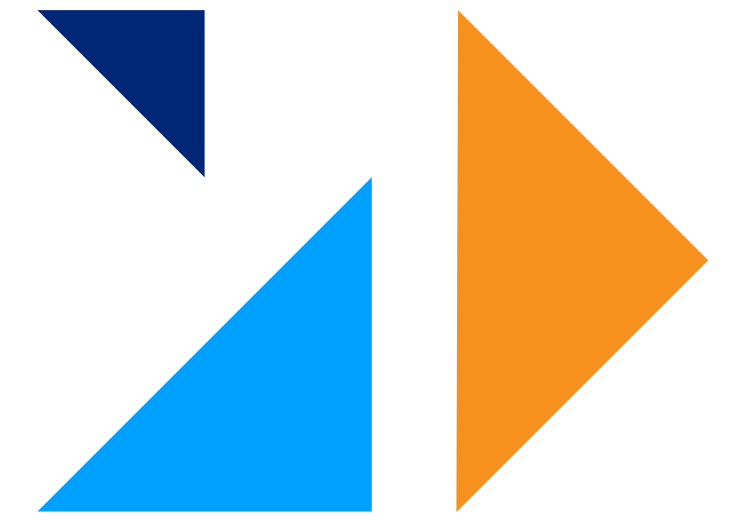


SHOW OFF THE RESULTS

# BE READY TO EXPLAIN ANY **GAPS ON YOUR CV**

It is common to have gaps on your CV, whether that's down to redundancy, travelling, illness, caring for a relative, looking after children, studying, and so on.

Whatever the circumstances, this is very common and explaining the gap in an interview doesn't need to be a source for stress or worry. But how can you explain these gaps to an interviewer in a manner that further sells you as a potential hire?



## REMEMBER THESE FIVE GENERAL PRINCIPLES:



When explaining how you've spent your time out of the workplace, try to demonstrate anything you've done that has been **productive or proactive** – such as learning a new skill, keeping up to date with the industry, or any voluntary work you undertook.



**Structure** your answer well. Briefly start by explaining why you were unemployed during that time, then go on to explain what you did, and lastly emphasise why you think this is the right opportunity for you.



Rather than going into specifics about the reason for your gap, focus your answer on how you used your time and **why you think you would be great in this role.**



Whatever the reason is, remember to be **open and honest** with your answer, without going into unnecessary detail.



Use **positive language** and don't apologise for taking a break or having a gap.

Learn more about explaining CV gaps in an interview by reading [this blog](#).

# PLAN THE QUESTIONS YOU'RE GOING TO ASK YOUR INTERVIEWER



When you are asked “Do you have any questions?”, it’s important to use this as an opportunity not only to determine if this truly is the perfect job role, company and team for you, but to demonstrate your creative thinking, curious mindset and genuine interest to your potential employer.

## FOCUS YOUR QUESTIONS ON THESE SIX AREAS:

### 1. THE ROLE

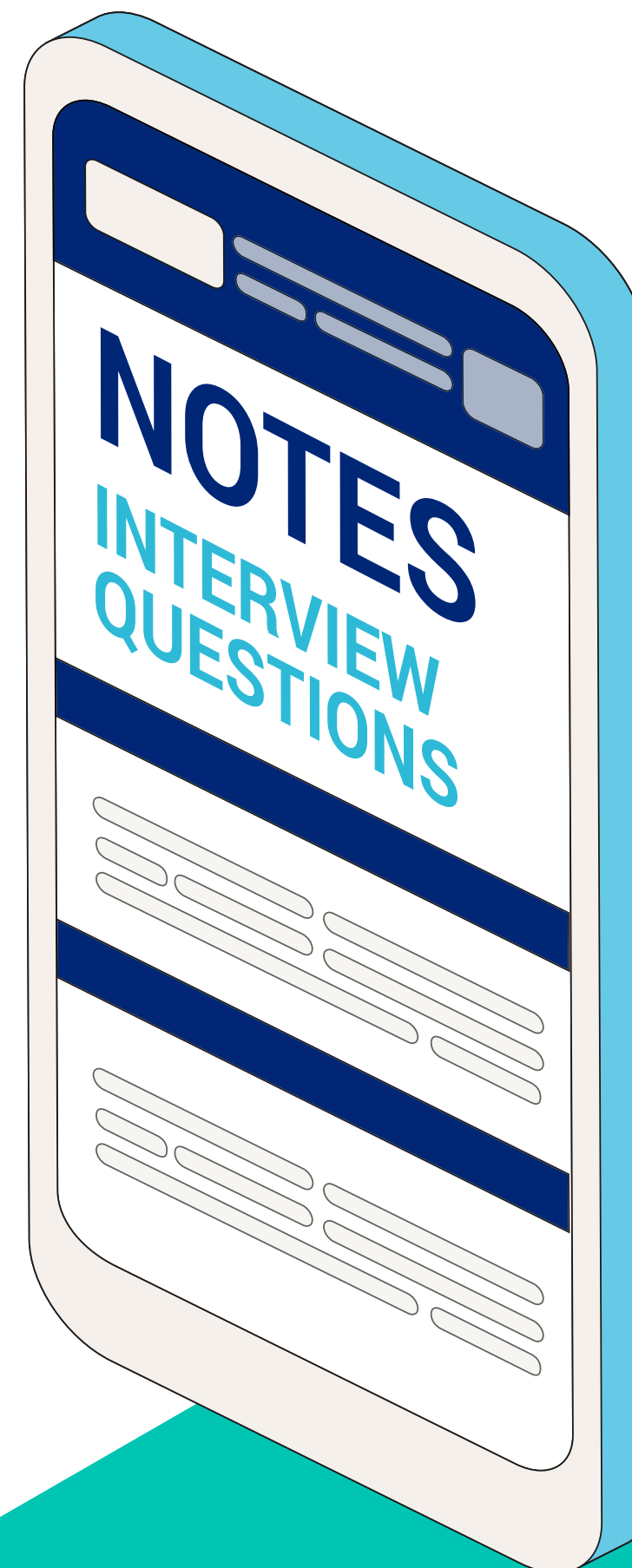
- Is this a new role? If not, how has it evolved?
- Is there scope for career progression?
- What does success look like in this job?
- What does a typical day look like?

### 2. THE TEAM

- Can you tell me more about the team?
- How does the team fit into the overall structure of the company?
- What constitutes success for the team?

### 3. THE HIRING MANAGER

- What’s your background?
- From your perspective, what’s it like to work here?
- What is your management style?



### 4. LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

- How often would my performance be reviewed?
- What training opportunities are available?

### 5. THE ORGANISATION

- What are the main challenges and opportunities the business faces?
- How long do employees usually remain with the business?
- How does your organisation live its purpose?

### 6. NEXT STEPS

- What is the next step in the hiring process?

# PLAN THE QUESTIONS YOU'RE GOING TO ASK THE INTERVIEWER

1. THE ROLE

3. THE HIRING MANAGER

5. THE ORGANISATION

2. THE TEAM

4. LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

6. NEXT STEPS

# YOU ARE ALMOST INTERVIEW-READY, WITH JUST SIX FINAL PREPARATIONS LEFT...

Ensure you're clear on these six practicalities:



## 1. WHAT TIME AND WHERE THE INTERVIEW WILL TAKE PLACE

If the interview is being conducted at the organisation's office, ensure you know how to get there and how long it will take.

If the interview is being conducted remotely, ensure you're clear on the technology used – and plan where you will sit, thinking carefully about what you'd like your background to be. Also ensure you inform anyone you live with about the interview, so as to avoid any noise disruption.



## 2. PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

Conduct mock interviews with a friend or family member. You could also use a free online AI tool, such as Google's Interview Warmup.



## 3. HOW LONG THE INTERVIEW WILL LAST

As a general rule of thumb, a face-to-face interview will last around 45 minutes to one hour.



## 4. WHAT FORMAT THE INTERVIEW WILL BE

Will it include tests, or meeting the team?



## 5. WHAT THE DRESS CODE IS

This is still important even if the interview is taking place remotely.



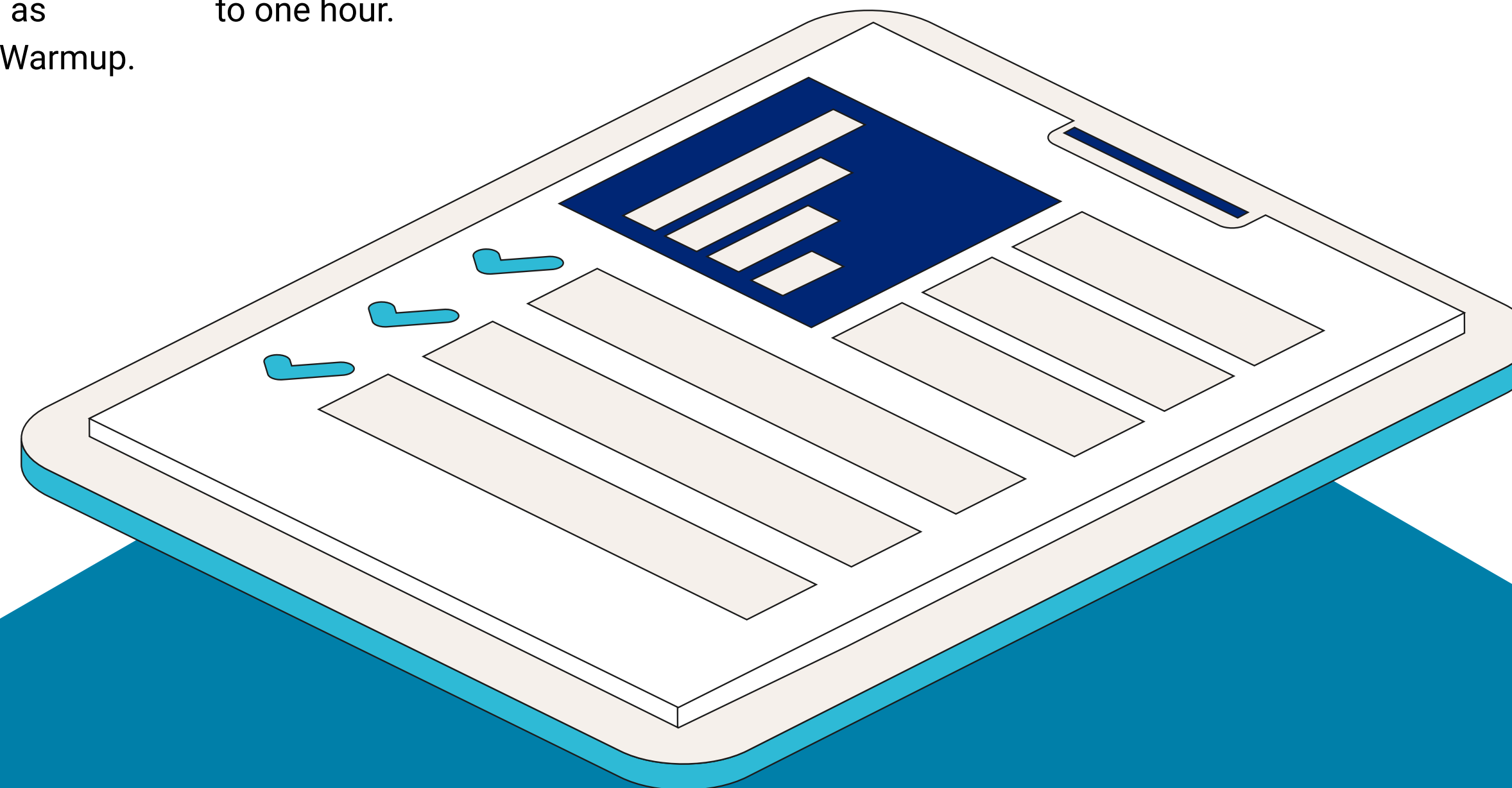
## 6. THE JOB DESCRIPTION

It's a great idea to print this out to have with you, just in case.

If your interview is face-to-face, you can have this in your bag for some final preparations on your way.

If your interview is remote, you can have this to hand so you can refer to it at any point.

**If you're feeling unsure about any of these points, your recruiter can help you.**



# IF YOU NEED TO ARRANGE TIME OFF FOR YOUR INTERVIEW, **CONSIDER THESE THREE THINGS**



## 1. TRY TO AVOID SCHEDULING THE INTERVIEW DURING WORKING HOURS, IF POSSIBLE

- First thing in the morning, during your lunch break, or even after work are the preferable times to arrange an interview
- If your interview is scheduled for a time that could be particularly difficult for you to attend, let your recruiter or the hiring manager know as early as possible
- Explain the situation and request some alternative dates and times



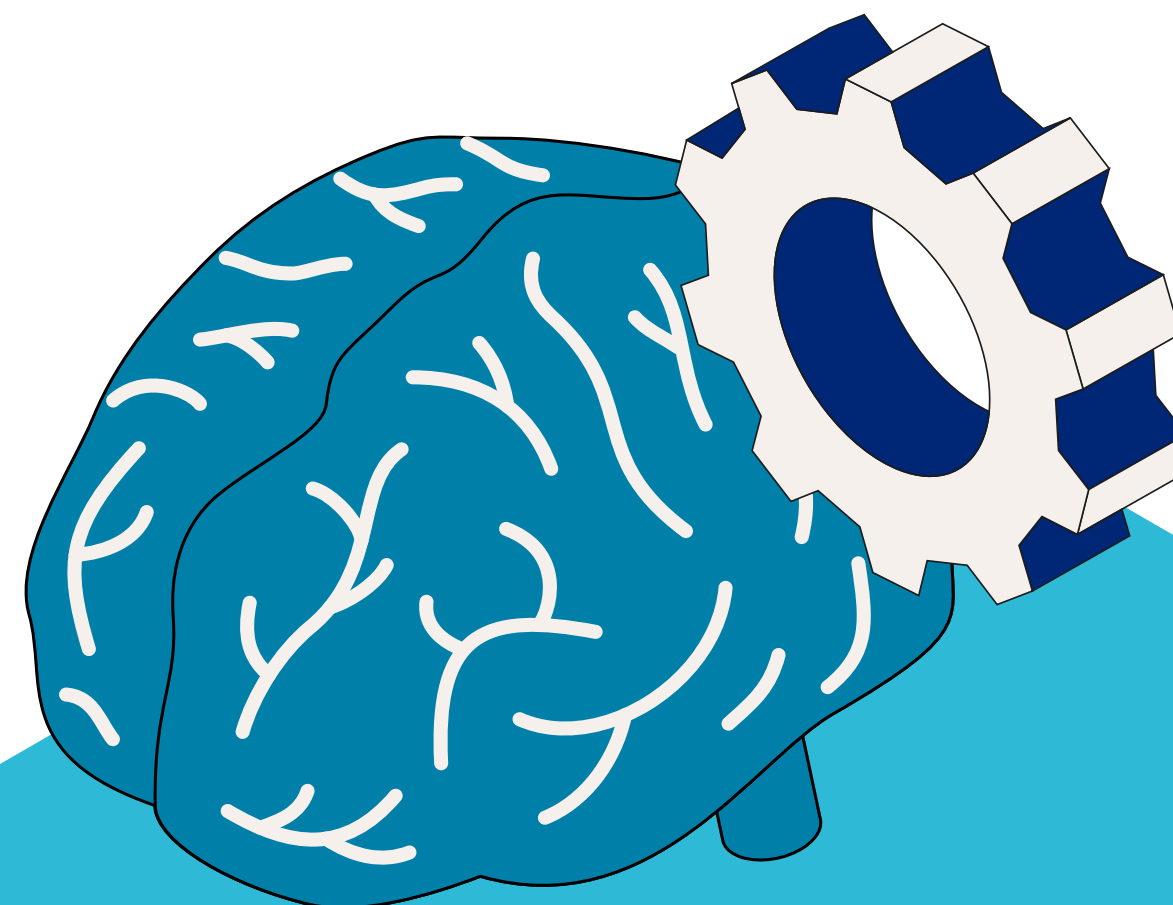
## 2. BOOK A DAY'S ANNUAL LEAVE ON THE DAY OF THE INTERVIEW

- Or if that's not possible, what about booking a half-day?
- This way, your anxieties will be significantly diminished, allowing you to focus solely on your interview



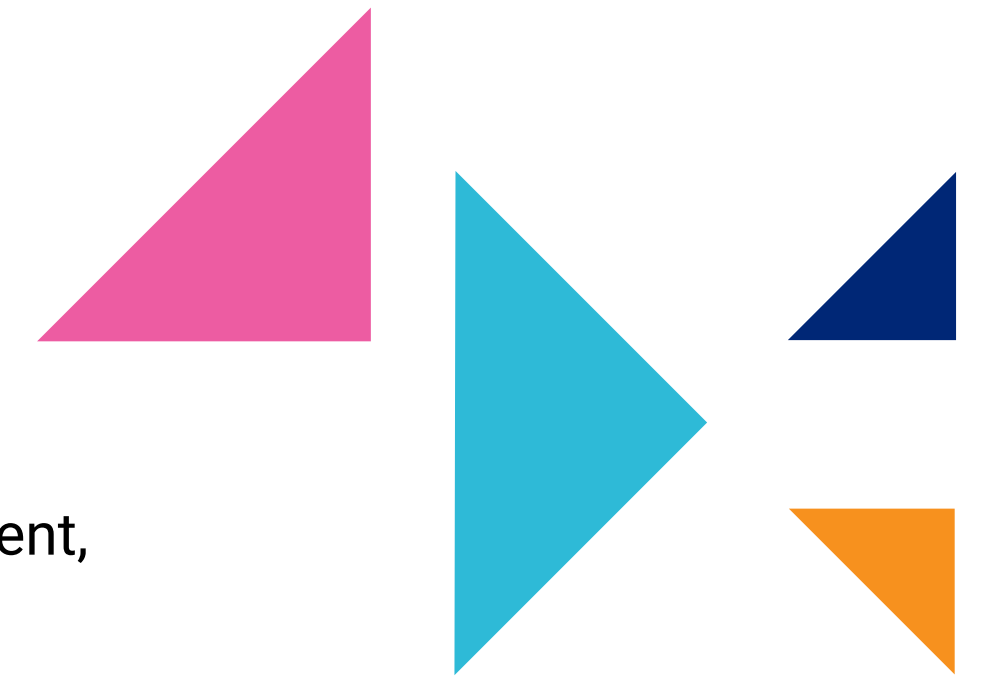
## 3. DON'T LIE OR SNEAK AROUND

- If you have been unable to move the interview to a time that fits around your current work commitments, it can understandably be tempting to manufacture a mythical doctor's appointment or even call in sick on the day
- But we do not recommend this; it is a very difficult situation to be in, but it's not worth getting caught out in a lie. If you are at last resort, then it's best to be vague and say that you have a personal appointment you must attend



Find more advice on arranging time off for a job interview [here](#).

# GET INTO A POSITIVE FRAME OF MIND BEFORE YOUR JOB INTERVIEW



This will allow you to perform at your very best, in the knowledge that you're as prepared as possible. It will also help you feel more confident, enabling you to really sell yourself and your skills in an authentic way to the interviewer.

Follow these five steps in the days before your interview to get into a positive mindset, and to calm any nerves you may be feeling:



## 1. REFRAME THE WAY YOU THINK

Check your language for phrases like “this is impossible” or “I can’t” and replace them with positive affirmations, such as “I can do this”.

An interview is merely a conversation with someone to get to know each other and to find out more about the job – there’s no need to build up the situation and cause yourself unnecessary stress or anxiety.



## 2. SPEAK TO YOUR RECRUITER AND SUPPORT GROUP

Do you have a friend or family member who is great at giving advice, or calming you down? Give them a quick call for some reassurance.

Remember, too, that your recruiter is an expert, and can answer questions about any worries or concerns you may have.



## 3. DON'T LET IMPOSTER SYNDROME GET THE BETTER OF YOU

Rather than telling yourself that your success to date has just been down to luck, remind yourself of your uniqueness and your worth.

Take that self-belief into your job interview.



## 4. PICTURE POSITIVE OUTCOMES

Negative thinking can send the best of us into a downward spiral of anxiety, and this is not the right mindset to be in before an interview. Give yourself a pep talk, believe in yourself and remember all that you have achieved so far in your life and career.

Now try to mentally visualise positive outcomes, whether that’s building rapport with the interviewer or delivering great answers that set you apart.



## 5. CHANGE YOUR PERCEPTION OF THE INTERVIEWER

It’s easy to be intimidated by an unknown, presumably senior person. But this doesn’t need to make you nervous; after all, if you’ve followed this guide’s advice, you will have already looked up your interviewer and found out more about them.

Realise that this person will have also been in your shoes once, so you don’t need to feel intimidated.



# LAST BUT NOT LEAST...

The evening before your interview is the time for you to wind down and relax your mind. You've done all you can by way of interview preparation, so now you need to ensure you go into the interview tomorrow with a fresh mind.

## THE NIGHT BEFORE YOUR INTERVIEW, YOU SHOULD:

- Make sure you have time to switch off from your preparation. You could do that by exercising, speaking to friends and family, or planning an activity or hobby for the evening
- Eat a nutritious meal
- Stay calm and keep things in perspective – if you need to revisit the steps for maintaining a positive mindset, then do
- Get a good night's sleep – make sure you avoid any phone or computer screens in the lead-up to going to sleep, and focus your attention on things that calm you down and distract your mind, such as reading or mindfulness

