

Slide 1

IRA A. FULTON SCHOOLS OF ENGINEERING

Leading engineering discovery and innovative education for global impact on quality of life.

Interviewing

Fulton Engineering Career Center

FULTON SCHOOLS
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center

ASU Ira A. Fulton Schools of
Engineering
Arizona State University

Your Goal, at any interview

- **Make an impression that you are:**
 - **Confident**
 - **Competent**
 - **Enthusiastic**
 - **Someone that I/we can like and trust**

Interviewing – how's this work?

- Interview formats: phone, video, in-person
- Interview questions:
 - General
 - Behavioral
 - Technical
 - Critical thinking



Phone Interviews

- **Types:**
 - Screening interviews or “real” interviews
 - Technical, behavioral, coding
- **Formats:**
 - One person with you, or
 - Multiple people on line, or
 - Multiple people in one room
- **Treat this seriously and prepare: know your interviewers**



You have to “win” at every step of the process to advance to the next step.

Be ready to excel at the phone screen: get the details, look up interviewers on LinkedIn (“peek”)

Phone and Video Calls

- **DO know EXACTLY what time zone the call is in**
- **DO prepare for mechanical problems:**
 - Quiet area without interruptions
- **DO practice the details for a video call:**
 - Wear interview clothes
 - Check background behind you
 - Camera – look at it, not your screen or keyboard



Time Zone: this is a big issue for Arizona, due to the Day Light Saving time change 2/year in Arizona. Pay close attention to how your call is scheduled.

Best advice: be prepared for the call to happen an hour EARLIER or LATER than scheduled.

Goal: want this to appear as if you are there in the room with the interviewer(s).

Be ready for questions. Know your interviewer, look it up, use your network... and be ready for mechanical problems.

Mechanical problems: happen, but you do not want to be flustered by them. Being ready prevents this. What can you do to be ready in case of a problem?

May want to stand up for this – your voice projects differently when you are standing compared to when you are seated. Dress up and act like you are there.

Video: This is more complex interview setting, and more to go wrong. But this also allows you to make a strong positive impression to the hiring organization. It is very important that you set your camera correctly: most of the time, when you look at the screen, the camera “sees” you as looking down. You want to set up your hardware so that you are looking at the camera, and thus the person on the other end of the call. This may take some practice, or changes in your computer hardware. Check all of this with a friend before the call.

So, let’s presume that all has gone well, and the organization invites you to interview on site....

Let’s take a look at some do’s and don’ts...

On Site Interviews

- **DO all your homework:**
 - Get all travel details
 - Wear the right clothes
 - Be ready for long walks and tours
- **DON'T be surprised when it all changes, at the last minute 😊**



Expect 1 or more interviewers at each interview.

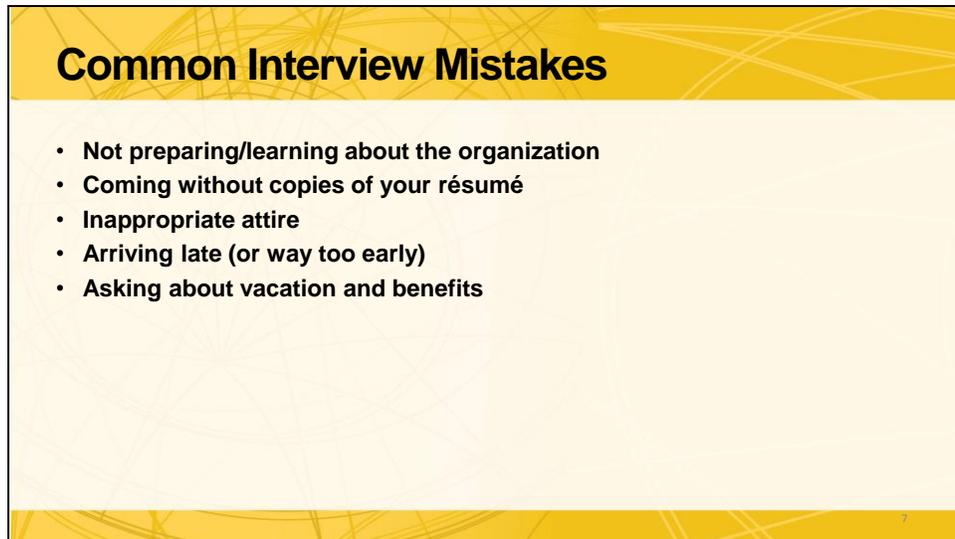
Get all the details – know exactly where you are going. At a large site, this may not be obvious. At a small office suite, may not be obvious either... Find out exactly where you are expected to check in for the interview, so that you are not flustered by many different lobbies and locations at the last minute.

Traffic in work day rush hour may change travel times drastically.

Arrive early – but not too early. 15 min OK; 1 hour, not OK. Stay in your car or go somewhere else if you arrive extremely early.

Use LinkedIn and your network to get information about your interviewer(s).

So for the interviews themselves, wherever and however they are conducted...some advice



Common Interview Mistakes

- **Not preparing/learning about the organization**
- **Coming without copies of your résumé**
- **Inappropriate attire**
- **Arriving late (or way too early)**
- **Asking about vacation and benefits**

Do your homework about the organization and interviewers.

Always have copies of your resume with you, and be ready to hand them to an interviewer.

Attire needs to be appropriate for the organization and location.

Absolutely do not be late. This makes a terrible impression.

Benefits and salary are not topics for an interview – they are appropriate for discussion when you receive an offer.

Turn your cellphone OFF!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Other Common Interview Mistakes

- **Talking too much, or not enough**
- **Badmouthing past employers and/or colleagues**
- **Not answering the interviewer's question**
- **Not asking questions of them**
- **Not asking about next steps at the end of the interview**

These items are mistakes in any interview.

Talking too much: be attentive to the interviewer. If your answers are too long, you may take up all the interview time and the interviewer will not be able to assess you against all of the criteria. If your answers are too short, you may give off an impression that you are “not really interested” or “not looking for this type of role”. Will cover in more detail in the next section. Employers want to know that you will be a good fit. Part of being a good fit is representing the organization well. Do not ever badmouth past employers, bosses, colleagues, etc. I don't care if your last boss was the most abusive jerk you've ever met. Do not badmouth that person to the interviewer. Be professional.

What kind of questions to ask? Use your research about the organization and industry and ask questions that are related to the industry, organization, or work of the group that you are interviewing in. This is an opportunity to demonstrate your enthusiasm about the job.

Interview Strategies

- **DO prepare**
- **DO use ~1 minute to answer the question**
- **DO practice answering technical questions on a white board**
- **DO answer the question directly, OR with something close – try to respond with what you do know, or have experienced**
- **DON'T end with "Does that answer your question?"**



Goal: Impress this person that you have the qualifications for this position, have performed in similar positions, and will contribute to the team quickly with minimum support. Goal is to advance to next step of hiring process.

Behavioral interviewing: practice answers. The goal: these are designed to allow you to show how you have performed in similar situations.

Technical questions: using white board: know the question. Ask for boundary conditions. Talk through it: describe the logic that you are using, how you are making decisions and selecting techniques, and how you might test the outcome, against any conditions you have or have identified.

All questions: relate what you do know. You want to show that you don't stop and stall out. Example: encountered an unsafe situation – you did not proceed, but you did find someone who could perform the task.

And ideally, your answers to any questions relate back to your resume. Tie your answer to some experience that is on your resume – so that the example reinforces how your experience and expertise ties to the position that you are interviewing for.

Be confident! Something about you has attracted them.

General Interview Preparation

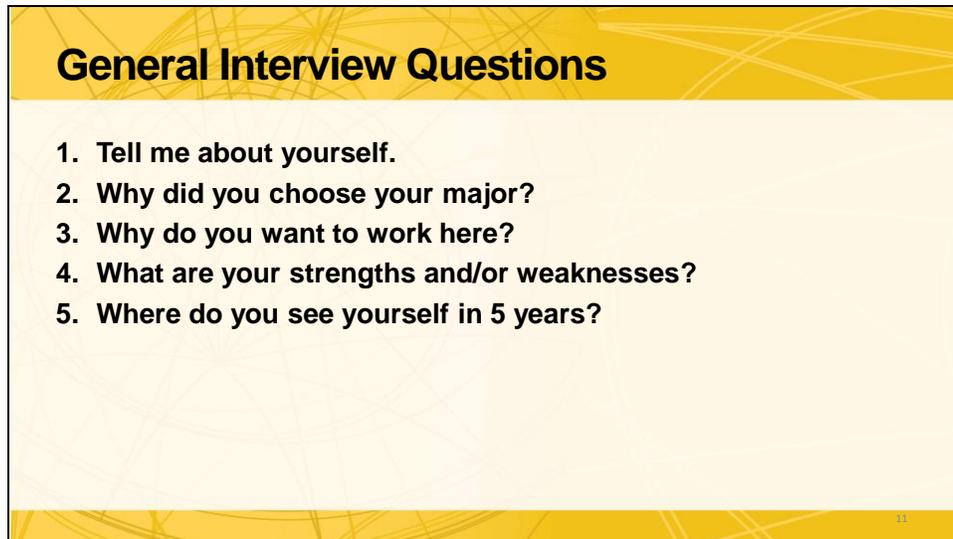
- **“General” interview questions are designed to:**
 - Let the applicant talk about a familiar subject
 - Assess communications skills
- **Keys for success:**
 - Prepared
 - Honest
 - Non-personal
 - RELEVANT

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These questions also test your “interviewmanship” – did you care enough to prepare?

Are you authentic in your answers? Too many students look up these answers on the web. They see ‘experts’ telling them to pick weaknesses that are actually strengths. Then everyone says they’re a perfectionist. Interviewers know you’re making this stuff up and you lose credibility.

You can make a strong or poor impression right at this point of any interview for any position. Be prepared to make a strong impression here – let’s look at the typical questions.



General Interview Questions

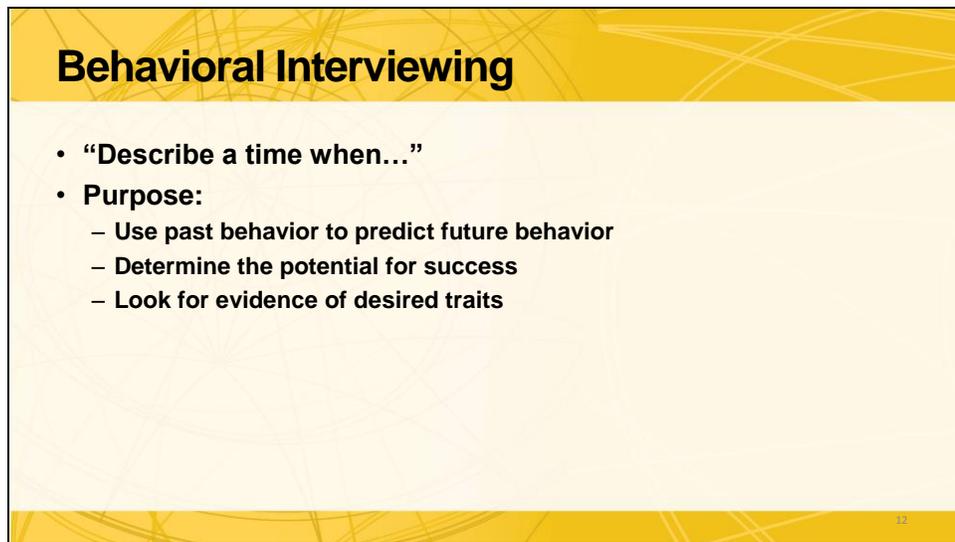
1. Tell me about yourself.
2. Why did you choose your major?
3. Why do you want to work here?
4. What are your strengths and/or weaknesses?
5. Where do you see yourself in 5 years?

Be crisp, professional, and prepared. This is a place to demonstrate confidence. Keep answers related to the position and the qualifications. Here are examples:

- The interviewer does not want to know the history of your family, you, and blah blah. Keep this focused and target information about how you have gotten to the point of being a professional ready to contribute. Avoid distracting information.
 - This is an opportunity to show your engagement in your profession outside the classroom, and your persistence in attaining your degree. This may be an opportunity to show how you overcame wrong turns on your way to your degree, and what you learned.
 - Your answer here displays your knowledge of the organization and perhaps the industry.
4. Strengths and weaknesses can be technical (Pspice, Solidworks, Aerodynamics) and non-technical job related (attention to detail, devil's advocate, informal leader).

When discussing an actual weakness of yours, give the interviewer examples of how you overcame the weakness or what you do to mitigate its effects. A good strategy is to identify a specific area of the job and how you will address your gap. For example, it's obvious that you have never worked in the semiconductor industry. Your plan to come up to speed is ---. You can describe how you did something similar when you went to work in __, or just acclimated yourself successfully to some other new circumstance.

5. In technical fields, it's hard to see 5 years into the future. After all, it's only around 10 years ago that the iPhone was introduced (!). Align your answer with any information about the company and the industry. Do not stray off path here – as in, “I plan to go back to school to complete a PhD”.

A presentation slide with a yellow header and footer. The header contains the title "Behavioral Interviewing" in bold black text. The main content area is white and contains a bulleted list. The footer is yellow and contains the number "12" in small text.

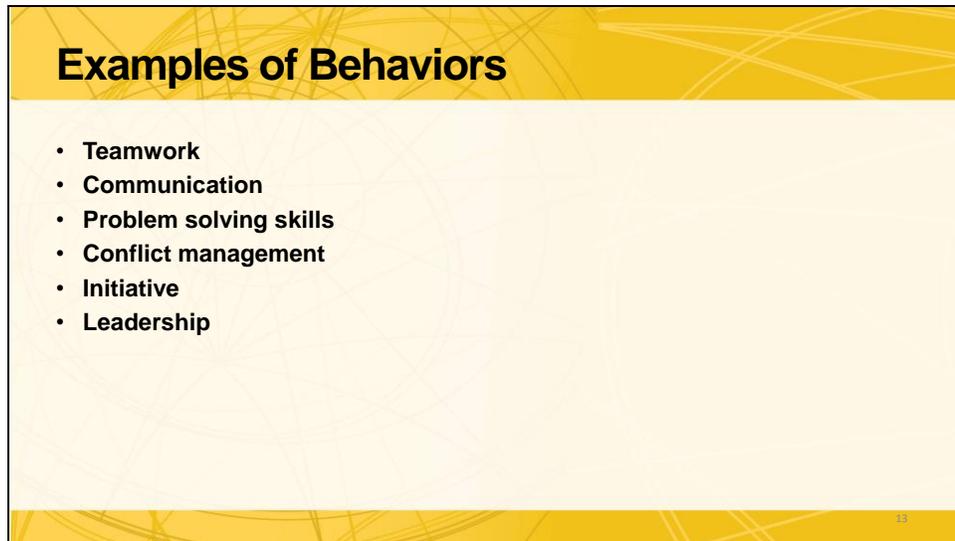
Behavioral Interviewing

- **“Describe a time when...”**
- **Purpose:**
 - Use past behavior to predict future behavior
 - Determine the potential for success
 - Look for evidence of desired traits

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Why are these questions used? Because research shows that past behavior is the best predictor for success. For example, people who have overcome barriers and persevered in the past will do so in the future, even in another setting.

These questions are actually great opportunities for students, because they allow you to describe your behaviors in settings other than professional work roles.



Examples of Behaviors

- **Teamwork**
- **Communication**
- **Problem solving skills**
- **Conflict management**
- **Initiative**
- **Leadership**

Students need to communicate clearly when answering these types of questions. For technical jobs, some hiring managers really need to see evidence of good communication when they interview candidates.

Even when students get questions that ask them about problem team members or difficult experiences, they need to refrain from badmouthing anyone and show how they overcame the problem or at the very least, learned from the experience.

It is ok to face difficulties, even to have failures, but it is not ok to have learned nothing in the process!!!

Interview Preparation Grid

Think about situations which match typical behavioral interviewing questions

Topic	Story #1	Story #2
Teamwork	Undergraduate research project	FSE 100 class project
Communication		
Problem Solving		
Conflict Management	Study time in residence hall	
Initiative		
Leadership		

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Think about situations which match typical behavioral interviewing questions

Create a matrix of typical questions and the situations you will use

Practice:

You may want to record (audio or video) yourself

Behavioral Questions: STAR Technique

- Use this outline:
 - **S**ituation or **T**ask
 - **A**ction
 - **R**esult
 - Positive outcome OR
 - What you learned from past mistakes
 - **RELEVANT** to the role

When using the STAR technique, it is important to remember the following:

- Situation: Provide some background for context, but don't go overboard. Remember what you were asked and don't get off track.
- Action: What was done? What did YOU do/contribute? Be clear about what you did, what you helped others to do, etc. Remember, the question is "... when **you** ...".
- Result: What was the outcome? Don't leave the interviewer hanging. They need to know the 'end' of the story.
- Relevant: best answers are relevant to the role, and/or relate to something on your resume. If you are not able to answer the question with a work experience or experience that is listed, be sure to "add more words" to orient the interviewer. For example, start the description of the situation with information to show that this is not part of an experience from your resume: "I have experience with overcoming a difficult co-worker. I don't have it listed on my resume, but when I was volunteering at ---, I worked with a --".

Interviewing Skills

STAR Technique Practice: Tell me about a time you demonstrated leadership at work.

S/T

- During my last semester of school, I completed an internship at XYZ Corp.
- I was the first intern the department had ever had, and they decided they wanted to continue with an official internship program.
- In order to successfully launch this program, my supervisor asked me to create and administer a training curriculum for the new, incoming interns.

Interviewing Skills

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- To complete this task, I outlined all the procedures the new interns would need to learn, such as.....
- Next, I created a three day training agenda covering these topics.
- Finally, I piloted it with four new interns.

Interviewing Skills

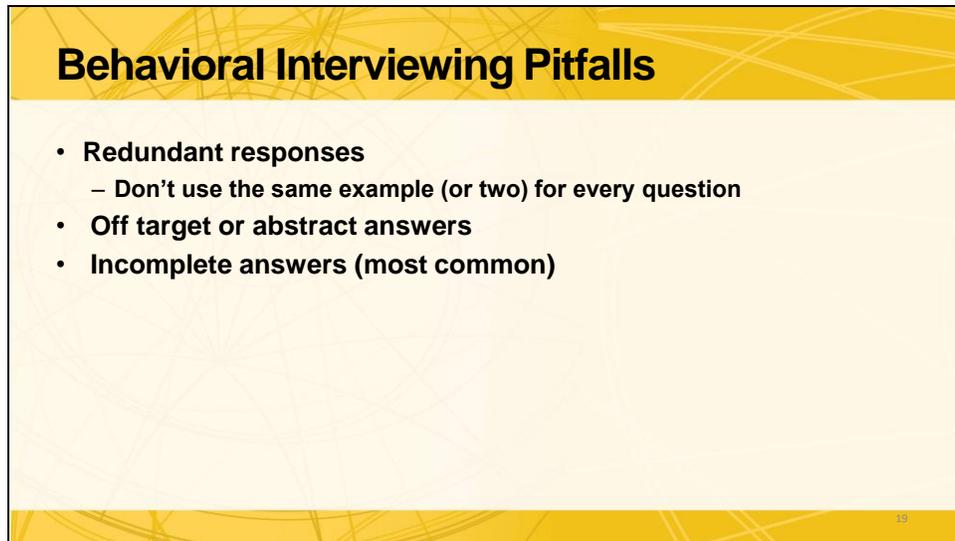
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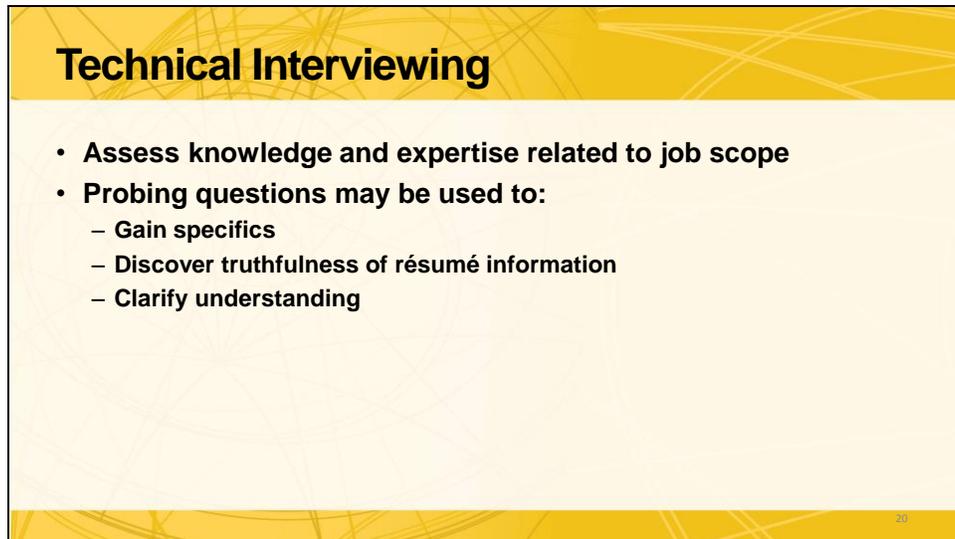
- The training was a huge success.
- On a survey completed after the training, all four interns rated the program a 10 out of 10 in the areas of usefulness and creativity.
- In addition, each intern rated my communication and leadership styles as "Excellent."

A slide titled "Behavioral Interviewing Pitfalls" with a yellow background and a pattern of thin, overlapping lines. The title is in bold black text. Below the title is a list of three bullet points: "Redundant responses" (with a sub-bullet "Don't use the same example (or two) for every question"), "Off target or abstract answers", and "Incomplete answers (most common)".

Behavioral Interviewing Pitfalls

- **Redundant responses**
 - Don't use the same example (or two) for every question
- **Off target or abstract answers**
- **Incomplete answers (most common)**

Students need to have multiple examples to share. Most examples should be professional and from past positions. However, students with less work experience can use examples from academic projects, volunteer work, etc. as long as they are relevant and answer the question that was asked.

A presentation slide with a yellow header and footer. The header contains the title "Technical Interviewing" in bold black text. The main content area is white and contains a bulleted list. The footer is yellow and contains the number "20" in small text.

Technical Interviewing

- **Assess knowledge and expertise related to job scope**
- **Probing questions may be used to:**
 - Gain specifics
 - Discover truthfulness of résumé information
 - Clarify understanding

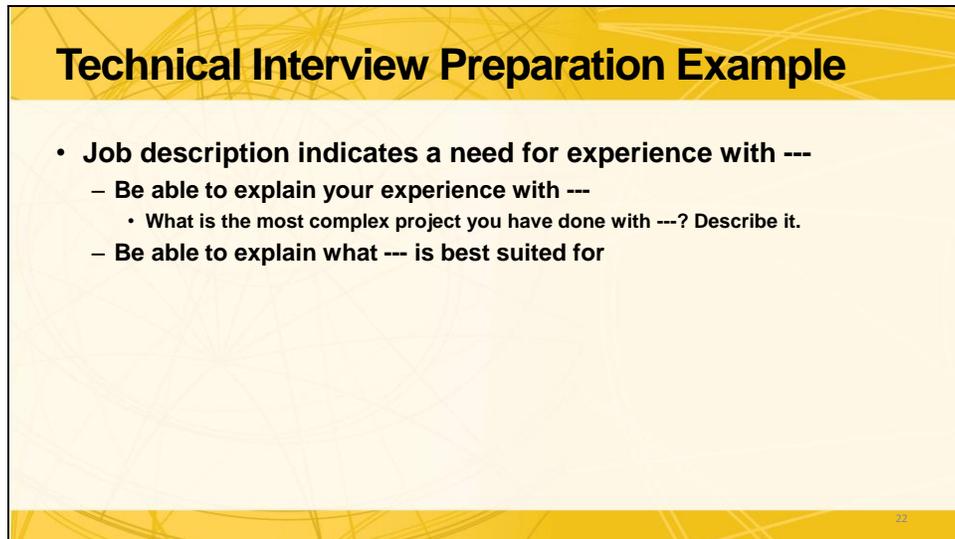
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Make sure you can provide sufficient detail to show interviewer that you do have the skills you indicated on your resume. Be honest. If you barely used a software program, don't list it on your resume.

Depending on the type of interview, you may need to explain technical concepts to both technical and non-technical people. Do NOT ignore one of these groups. Address both types of interviewer. This may mean you need to give a brief, general, non-technical overview followed by more complete details.

Technical Interview Preparation

- **Go through job description**
 - Find key words
 - Formulate your own questions related to those skills
 - Practice answering those questions
 - Be clear about your role in group projects

A presentation slide with a yellow header and footer. The header contains the title "Technical Interview Preparation Example" in bold black text. The main content area is white with a faint geometric pattern and contains a bulleted list of preparation tips. The footer is yellow and contains the number "22" in the bottom right corner.

Technical Interview Preparation Example

- **Job description indicates a need for experience with ---**
 - **Be able to explain your experience with ---**
 - **What is the most complex project you have done with ---? Describe it.**
 - **Be able to explain what --- is best suited for**

Students should be able to do this for any technical requirement of the job.

If you are asked about a skill you don't have or software you've never used, be honest. If you've used something similar (SPSS vs SAS for example), discuss what you have done, demonstrate both competency and an ability/willingness to learn quickly.

Only do this if the other skill and/or software is both related and relevant.

Critical Thinking Questions

- Evaluate critical thinking skills
- Assess how candidates deal with unexpected situations
- It is ok to think the problem through: you don't need to answer immediately

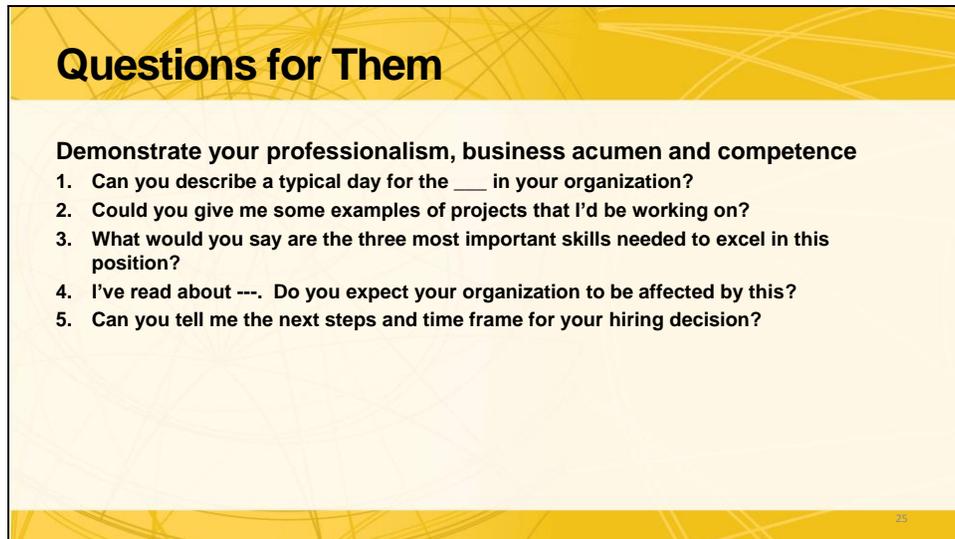
Examples of Critical Thinking Questions

- **Why are manhole covers round?**
- **If you have a refrigerator in a room and leave the door of the refrigerator open, what happens to the temperature of the room?**

Interviewers are far more interested in how you think, how you address problems with unknown variables, etc. than in whether or not you can immediately give them a 'correct' answer.

It is ok to take a minute to think in silence but as you answer the question, talk through your logic. If you need more info for a definitive answer, let the interviewer know that what would happen may depend on x, y, or z. Explain what might happen in each of those scenarios.

Take the refrigerator question for example, what happens depends on many factors including whether or not the refrigerator is plugged in.



Questions for Them

Demonstrate your professionalism, business acumen and competence

1. Can you describe a typical day for the ___ in your organization?
2. Could you give me some examples of projects that I'd be working on?
3. What would you say are the three most important skills needed to excel in this position?
4. I've read about ---. Do you expect your organization to be affected by this?
5. Can you tell me the next steps and time frame for your hiring decision?

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Write out questions in advance so

- You don't forget them when you're nervous
- It shows you prepared

Don't ask about salary, benefits, vacation.....but be prepared to discuss if the interviewer brings it up.

If the interviewer does not cover it, ask about next steps and timeframes for the interview process.

Next Steps: For You

- **Follow up with a brief “Thank You” email**
 - **Subject: Your Name/Posting # (or title of the position)**
 - **Briefly restate your interest in the role and your skills**
 - **Thank the interviewer**

Interviewing Help: Fulton Career Center website <https://career.engineering.asu.edu>

The screenshot shows the website for the Fulton Career Center at Arizona State University. The page features a navigation menu with links for 'HOME', 'FOR STUDENTS', 'FOR EMPLOYERS', 'FOR FAMILIES', 'EVENTS THEY SERVE', 'PRACTICE BOOK', and 'CONTACT US'. The main content area is titled 'Get ready for the Fulton Schools Career Fair' and includes information about three recruiting days: 'Master's and Ph.D. Student Recruiting Day' on Tuesday, February 20; 'Undergraduate Student Recruiting Day' on Wednesday, February 21; and 'Undergraduate, Master's and Ph.D. Student Recruiting Day' on Thursday, February 22. A 'watch now' section is also visible, along with a 'WHAT WE DO' section for 'Students & Alumni'. On the left side of the website, there is a sidebar with a 'watch now' section and a 'QUICK QUESTION?' section. Two callout boxes are overlaid on the left side of the screenshot: a green one labeled 'Career Center Guides' pointing to the sidebar, and a grey one labeled 'Career Spot Videos' pointing to the 'watch now' section.

Career Center Guides

Career Spot Videos

Get ready for the Fulton Schools Career Fair

Master's and Ph.D. Student Recruiting Day
Tempe campus
Tuesday, February 20

Undergraduate Student Recruiting Day
Tempe campus
Wednesday, February 21

Undergraduate, Master's and Ph.D. Student Recruiting Day
Polytechnic campus
Thursday, February 22

watch now

QUICK QUESTION?

WHAT WE DO
Students & Alumni
The Fulton Schools of Engineering Career Center is your personal resource from your first year through graduation.

CAREER CENTER NEWS ON INNER CIRCLE
Jobs and Internships - week of March 6
Jobs and Internships - week of February 26
Talk artificial intelligence with Intel, March 2

Interviewing Help: Online: Optimal Résumé

<https://app.joinhandshake.com/>

The screenshot displays the Handshake app interface for Arizona State University - Ira A. Fulton Schools of Engineering. The page is titled "Interviewing Help: Online: Optimal Résumé" and includes the URL "https://app.joinhandshake.com/". The interface is divided into several sections:

- Left Sidebar:** Contains navigation options such as "Profile Strength", "Profile Visibility", "Browse your job alerts", "ASU Interview Questions", "Interviewing Tips at Arizona State", and "Handshake Near Arizona State". A red circle highlights the "Interview Questions & Coaching" link at the bottom.
- Top Header:** Displays the ASU logo and contact information for the Ira A. Fulton Schools of Engineering.
- Main Content Area:** Features a "Select Interview Type" dropdown menu with options like "Behavioral Interview (23)", "Decision Making / Critical Thinking (16)", "Engineering (2)", "Final Interview (25)", "Hiring Manager Interview (25)", "Inappropriate Questions (15)", "Initial Face-to-Face Interview (23)", "Panel Interview (23)", "Resume Interview (23)", "Screening Interview (23)", and "Skills & Abilities (14)". Below this is a grid of interview questions, each with a "Play" button. A red circle highlights the "Interviewing Tips at Arizona State" link at the bottom of the grid.

Two red circles and arrows highlight the "Interview Questions & Coaching" link in the left sidebar and the "Interviewing Tips at Arizona State" link in the main content area, respectively.

1. Access Optimal Résumé from Handshake main page
2. Click on "Interview Questions & Coaching" at bottom of screen

Interviewing Help: Interview Practice Appointments

<https://career.engineering.asu.edu>

The screenshot displays the ASU Handshake Career Center interface. At the top, the navigation menu includes 'For You', 'Jobs', 'Events', 'Students', and 'Career Center -'. A dropdown menu is open under 'Career Center -', showing options: 'My School', 'Appointments', 'Resources', 'Mentoring', and 'Surveys'. The 'Appointments' option is highlighted with a red circle. Below the navigation, the 'Jobs & Events For You' section features a search bar with the placeholder 'Start your job search' and a text input field for 'Job Title, Employers, or Keywords'. Below the search bar are buttons for 'Full-Time Job', 'Part-Time Job', 'Internship', and 'On-Campus'. A 'Choose a Category' dropdown menu is open, listing: 'Fulton Schools of Engineering-Students & Alumni', 'Thunderbird School of Global Management- Students & Alumni', 'ASU- Students', 'ASU Online- Students', and 'ASU- Alumni'. The 'Fulton Schools of Engineering-Students & Alumni' option is highlighted with a red circle. On the right side, the 'Choose an Appointment Type' section lists several options, including 'All ASU- National Service / Peace Corps Prep', 'Fulton Schools 30 Minute Resume Review or 1 Topic - Undergraduate', 'Fulton Schools Résumé First Review - Undergraduate', 'Fulton Schools Résumé Review Follow-up - Undergraduate', and 'Fulton Schools Interview Practice - Undergraduate'. The 'Fulton Schools Interview Practice - Undergraduate' option is highlighted with a red circle.

Summary

- **Competent, Confident, Enthusiastic... how'd you do?**
- **Successful outcome:**
 - Depends on many elements
 - Be ready for things not to go your way – stay on track!
- **Initial outcome is not the end of your relationship with the organization**

Backup: Interview questions

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Engineering
Arizona State University

Common Behavioral Interviewing Questions

1. Tell me about a project or role that you've taken on that is outside your job description.
2. Tell me about a time when you went above and beyond at work without being asked.
3. Describe a time when you had trouble seeing eye to eye with a colleague. How did you handle the situation?
4. Give me an example of when you worked with a group or team of people to complete a project.

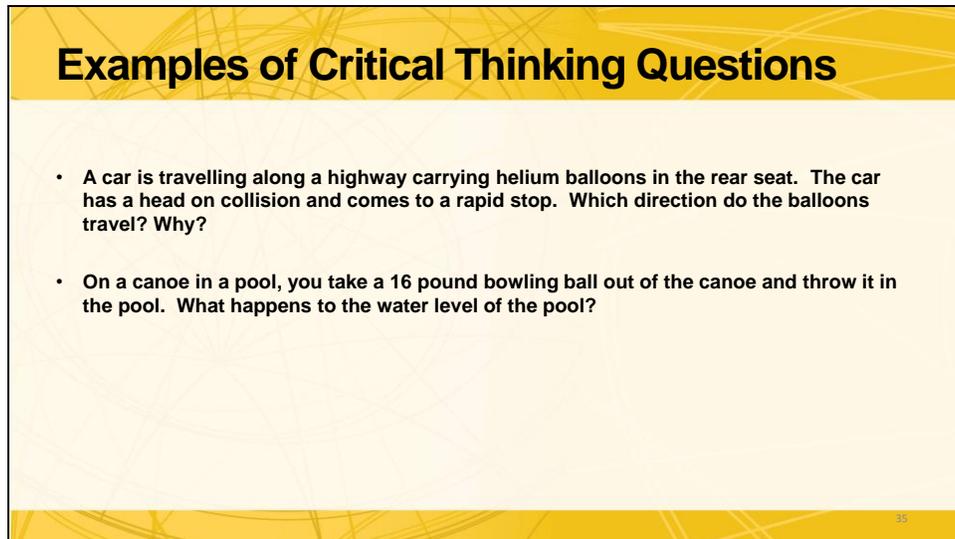
Common Behavioral Interviewing Questions

1. Tell me about a time that you received a significant amount of critical feedback. How did you handle the situation?
2. Talk about a time when you were faced with a difficult decision and describe how it turned out.
3. Give me an example of a time when you were forced to make an important decision without all of the necessary information.

Common Behavioral Interviewing Questions

- 1. Describe a time when you needed to persuade a person or group to do something they didn't want to do.**
- 2. Tell me about a time when you faced a lot of obstacles to achieving a goal.**
- 3. Talk about a stressful situation you've experienced. How did you handle it?**
- 4. Tell me about a time when you failed.**

Often negative examples show your business acumen and your resilience. It also shows you have reflected on these difficult times and gained an understanding of yourself and hopefully planned how to improve yourself.



Examples of Critical Thinking Questions

- A car is travelling along a highway carrying helium balloons in the rear seat. The car has a head on collision and comes to a rapid stop. Which direction do the balloons travel? Why?
- On a canoe in a pool, you take a 16 pound bowling ball out of the canoe and throw it in the pool. What happens to the water level of the pool?

Interviewers are far more interested in how you think, how you address problems with unknown variables, etc. than in whether or not you can immediately give them a 'correct' answer.

It is ok to take a minute to think in silence but as you answer the question, talk through your logic. If you need more info for a definitive answer, let the interviewer know that what would happen may depend on x , y , or z . Explain what might happen in each of those scenarios.