

## INTERVIEW ENGLISH

# Tell Me About Yourself

The answer that decides the rest of the interview

Level B1–B2 · 60 minutes · job interviews, speaking, business english, self-introduction

## 1. Lead-in

Talk with your partner or teacher. Two minutes, no notes.

1. What is the hardest question you have been asked in an interview?

2. "Tell me about yourself" is usually the first question. Why do you think interviewers ask it?

3. How long should the answer be? Guess in seconds.

## 2. Key language

Read the phrases. Mark the three you would actually say out loud.

| PHRASE                                              | WHEN TO USE IT                                                               |
|-----------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>I'm currently working as a...</b>                | Opening the Present part. Neutral, works everywhere.                         |
| <b>I've been in the role for about three years.</b> | Present perfect continuous for how long you have been somewhere.             |
| <b>Before that, I spent two years at...</b>         | Moving into the Past part without saying "after that" ten times.             |
| <b>What I enjoy most about it is...</b>             | Adding one line of motivation so you sound human, not like a document.       |
| <b>That's what led me to apply for this role.</b>   | The bridge into the Future part. The single most important line.             |
| <b>I'm looking to move into...</b>                  | Naming the direction you want without criticising your current employer.     |
| <b>Happy to go into more detail on any of that.</b> | Closing so the interviewer knows you have finished. Stops the awkward pause. |

## 3. Listening / reading

Two candidates answer the same question. Read or listen, then answer the questions below.

*A first-round interview for a logistics coordinator role. The interviewer asks the same opening question to two candidates.*

**Interviewer**

So, to start — tell me a bit about yourself.

**Candidate A**

Okay. So I was born in Da Nang, and I went to school there, and then I studied business administration at university, I graduated in 2019, and then my first job was at a small import company where I did data entry, and then after about a year I moved to another company, and there I was doing customer service, and then...

**Interviewer**

Thank you. And you?

**Candidate B**

Sure. I'm currently a logistics assistant at Minh Phu Trading, and I've been there just over two years. Day to day I handle shipment tracking and I'm the person our Korean suppliers email when something is late. Before that I spent a year in customer service, which is where I got comfortable delivering bad news politely. What I enjoy most is the problem-solving — a container is stuck and somebody has to fix it. I'm looking to move into coordination properly rather than assisting, and that's what led me to apply for this role. Happy to go into more detail on any of that.

## — 4. Comprehension

Answer in note form.

1. Where does Candidate A begin their answer?

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2. Where does Candidate B begin?

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3. Candidate B mentions customer service. Why is it relevant to a logistics job?

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4. What does Candidate B say to signal the answer is finished?

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5. Which candidate says why they want THIS job? Quote the line.

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## — 5. Language focus: the Present, Past, Future shape

A good answer has three parts: where you are NOW, one relevant thing from the PAST, and why you want THIS job (the FUTURE). Complete the sentences.

1. I'm \_\_\_\_\_ working as a shift supervisor at a hotel.
2. I've \_\_\_\_\_ in the role for about eighteen months.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ that, I spent two years teaching in a private school.
4. What I enjoy \_\_\_\_\_ about it is training new staff.
5. That's what \_\_\_\_\_ me to apply for this role.
6. I'm \_\_\_\_\_ to move into operations management.

## — 6. What goes where

Match each piece of information to the part of the answer it belongs in.

| INFORMATION                                                        | WHERE DOES IT GO?     |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Your job title and employer right now</b>                       | Leave it out entirely |
| <b>The city you were born in</b>                                   | FUTURE — last         |
| <b>A previous role that built a skill this job needs</b>           | PRESENT — first       |
| <b>Your university degree, when it is not relevant to the role</b> | Leave it out entirely |
| <b>Why you are applying for this particular job</b>                | PRESENT — first       |
| <b>Your marital status and age</b>                                 | PAST — second         |
| <b>One sentence about what you enjoy in the work</b>               | Leave it out entirely |

*The right-hand column is in the wrong order. Draw lines, or write the correct letter next to each.*

## — 7. Speaking task

Build and deliver your own answer. Your teacher will time you.

1. Write four or five bullet points only. Do not write the full answer as sentences — you will read it aloud and it will sound read.
2. PRESENT: your role now, how long, one thing you actually do, one thing you enjoy.
3. PAST: one earlier role, and the skill it gave you that this job needs. One only.
4. FUTURE: the direction you want, then the bridge line: "and that's what led me to apply for this role."
5. Deliver it. Target 60 to 90 seconds. Finish with "Happy to go into more detail on any of that."
6. Do it a second time, 15 seconds shorter, without the notes.

## — 8. Homework

Before the next lesson:

1. Find a real job advert you would actually apply for. Print it or save the link.
2. Rewrite your FUTURE part so it names something specific from that advert.

3. Record yourself on your phone, once, without stopping. Listen back and note where you went over 90 seconds.
4. Send the recording to your teacher.