

Suggestions for practice

Any time you spend practicing interview skills will also help with your general speaking skills. It is a good idea to find a person, or a small group of people, who are also interested in improving their interview skills. If you practice with them, you can get useful extra feedback.

- ◆ Have a particular job in mind. This could be a real job that you have applied for, or an advertised position which you would be interested in.
- ◆ Write a list of questions that the interviewer would be likely to ask you, as well as a list of questions that you could ask the interviewer.
- ◆ Try to role play an interview with someone or by taking both roles yourself. The best way to practice is to actually ask the questions which might arise in a real interview, and try to express the answers.

General advice

- ◆ Find out about yourself! Be ready to speak about your strengths – and provide specific examples to support your claims.

- ◆ Find out about the company you're applying to. Do your objectives and strengths match the needs of the company? If so, how?
- ◆ Draw on real experiences that you've had. Avoid standard answers.
- ◆ Go to lots of interviews - get lots of practice. Don't be afraid to sign up or apply for jobs you don't think you're qualified for. The more interviews you experience – and think carefully about afterwards – the more your confidence will increase.

Use the S.T.A.R. format

One of the pitfalls candidates often encounter is when they try to answer questions about their experiences in previous job placements. Candidates often just tell the interviewer briefly what they did and what skills they achieved as a result. Your answers should be more substantial and convincing and the STAR format will allow you to do this. When you give your answer, you should provide the following information:

- ◆ **Situation**
“I was worked as an intern at XYZ bank last summer”
- ◆ **Task**

“I was asked by the manager to help modify the database to improve data entry of all financial transactions.

- ◆ **Action**

“I noticed that the database has some outdated command prompts which rendered some functions of the database useless, so I wrote in some new command prompts to fix this. I was also able to include a new function which would allow users to input their data removing several unnecessary steps.

- ◆ **Result**

“Feedback from users proved to be very positive with over 95% in the survey saying they were very satisfied with the new database”

With an answer like the above, candidates can prove to the interviewer that they have relevant skills for the job. This is also much more convincing than simply just making a claim like “*This shows that I have good programming skills*” because you have actual proof of the results of your actions.

And now...

If you would like any help or advice, or just a chat about your progress, please get in touch

- **we are here to support your independent learning!** To contact us:

- Make an appointment to see an **adviser**. For details of advisers and their availability, please go to <https://ilang.cle.ust.hk/language-adviser-timetable/>.
- E-mail your questions to **iLANG** (icilang@ust.hk).
- Ask at the reception counter of the Language Commons — if the receptionist cannot help you directly, s/he will pass your query on to one of the advisers.

What else can you do?

- Browse the many physical (<https://ilang.cle.ust.hk/language-commons/#resources>) and online materials (<https://ilang.cle.ust.hk/resources-speaking/>) for Speaking.
- Join a Speaking activity or short course (<http://ilang.cle.ust.hk/speaking/>).
- Join HKUST Toastmasters - https://www.facebook.com/groups/HKU_STTMC/ - which meets on a regular basis for members to practice various skills useful in public speaking, including giving prepared as well as impromptu speeches, listening, and providing each other with feedback and

evaluation. Toastmasters adopts a "learn-by-doing" philosophy.

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