

Tell me about yourself

This is one of the most common interview questions and it may often be referred to as your “elevator speech.” Your response should be a well thought out, brief summary of your skills, qualifications, and career interests. When asked as an opening question, your response can set the tone for the rest of the interview and capture the interest of the interviewer in your candidacy. You may also use your “elevator speech” at career fairs and networking events. The best way to prepare for this question is to develop a draft script and practice. Yes, write down your answer and review it with your career coach or a professional in the field.

Things to consider when drafting your introduction:

- What is the most important information for the interviewer to know about you? Be succinct! [Think about the job’s description and desired qualifications. Include your educational background, skills, and relevant internship or work experience.]
- Highlight strengths that you can bring to this job - your skills, experience, and personal traits (i.e.: I am an outgoing team player, with excellent time management and collaboration skills, who has recently completed an internship in case management with a local non-profit agency).
- Offer information about yourself - past educational and work related experiences and successes, (i.e.: I am a college senior studying business management, and have been named to the Dean’s List each semester, while participating on the Varsity Basketball Team. In addition, I spent my fall junior semester studying abroad in Europe.) It is not appropriate to share very personal information in response to this question (i.e.: marital status or health).
- Do not be afraid to list the type of work situation you are seeking - (i.e.: I am interested in your Information Technology Training Program, since you are known as a growing Fortune 500 company, and because I believe I can apply my technical expertise, project management experience, and education to assist the company in its continued success.)

Practice and practice! You will not be reading your response in an interview and you want your answer to be delivered naturally. Rehearse with a friend, record yourself, or practice in a mirror. You want to showcase yourself as a focused and self-assured candidate. Remember to smile, give a firm handshake, and maintain good posture and eye contact during the interview process.

The interviewer wants to see how you express yourself and will be evaluating your communication ability. Are you focused? Do you know how your skills relate to the job requirements? Does your introduction demonstrate confidence? Be prepared to provide examples and details (provide context, quantify, and qualify your achievements) later in the interview, to showcase how you developed the skills mentioned in your introduction.

Your ability to successfully discuss your qualifications will be a key component in assessing your potential employability with the company.

Additional guidelines can be found at:

Quintessential Careers http://www.quintcareers.com/elevator_speech_dos-donts.html