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Resume & Career · Book 3

Interview Mastery

Prepare well, answer with true short stories, and follow up like a pro — even for your very first interview

Total beginner · ages 15 and up

About 80 minutes

10 chapters with quizzes

Free

An interview is just a talk with a purpose. Let's get you ready — starting from zero!



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Interview Mastery

Prepare well, answer with true short stories, and follow up like a pro — even for your very first interview

Resume & Career, Book 3 · First edition, November 2026

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Published by ToolsKo Learn · toolsko.com/learn · admin@toolsko.com. Product facts checked November 22, 2026.

What you will learn

- What a job interview is, and the kinds you may face
- How to prepare before the day: research, stories and what to bring
- The T-A-L-A recipe (the STAR method) for answering with true stories
- How to answer common questions, including “Tell me about yourself” and salary
- How to do well in person and on video
- What to ask, how to follow up, and how to spot fake recruiters

This is **Book 3** of the **Resume & Career** series. Books 1 and 2 helped you write your resume and cover letter. They opened the door. This book helps you walk in.

Our honest promise

No book can promise you a job. Practice helps you feel calm and answer clearly. Everything you say must be true. This book is general information, not legal or financial advice. All names and examples are made up.

Age note

This series is for ages 15 and up. In the Philippines, ages 15–17 may work only in safe jobs, up to 8 hours a day and 40 hours a week, never between 10 pm and 6 am — and school comes first. Many jobs hire only 18 and up.

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What you need

Item	Why
Your resume and cover letter	The interviewer will ask about them
One job you applied for (or want)	You practice for a real job
A phone that can record video	To watch and improve your answers
About 20 minutes a day for 2 weeks	To prepare and practice step by step

How to use this book

1 **Practice out loud**

Every lesson ends with something to say, not just read.

2 **Check your learning**

Every chapter ends with takeaways, 3 quiz questions with answers, and a practice task.

THE INTERVIEW RULE IN ONE LINE

```
Prepare + tell true short stories + ask good questions + say thank you
```

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WHAT'S NEXT Your Next Learning Path

EXTRA Free ToolsKo Tools for This Book

EXTRA Words to Know (Glossary)

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CHAPTER 1

Why the Interview Matters So Much

Your resume gets you invited. The interview is where they decide.

Think of a basketball tryout. Your resume is the form you filled out to join. The interview is the day you step on the court. The coach wants to see how you move, how you listen and how you work with others. You don't need to be a star player. You need to show up ready and be yourself.

New word: job interview

A **job interview** is a meeting where an employer asks you questions to see if you fit a job — and you learn about the job too. It's like a first meeting with a new classmate for a group project: both of you check if you can work well together.

Many people feel nervous before an interview. That is normal, even for adults with years of work. Nervous just means you care. The cure is not luck — it is **practice**. When you have practiced your answers out loud, your mind has a path to follow even when your heart beats fast.

Interview myths

PICTURE 1 **Interview myths vs truths**

MYTH — What people think	TRUTH — What's really true
✗ "Only smart talkers pass."	✓ Calm, clear and true wins
✗ "Just wing it on the day."	✓ Practice makes you calm
✗ "There is one perfect answer."	✓ Your own true story is best
✗ "The employer has all the power."	✓ It's a two-way talk: you choose too

You don't need fancy words. You need to prepare, tell true short stories and listen well.

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Where the interview fits

PICTURE 2 **The hiring journey**



Most jobs follow these steps. The interview is the big middle step where the employer decides — and so do you.

The big idea of this book

An interview is a two-way talk. You show, with true short stories, that you can help — and you find out if the job is right for you. It is not a test with one right answer. It is a conversation you can prepare for.

A real-world example

Liza, 19, froze in her first interview. When asked "Tell me about yourself," she said, "Uh… I'm Liza, I'm from Laguna," and stopped. For her next one, she practiced three short true stories out loud every night for a week. In the interview, she told how she helped run her tita's food stall and served about 40 customers a day. The interviewer smiled and asked more. Same Liza — but now she had a plan.

QUICK RECAP

A job interview is a meeting where the employer checks if you fit the job, and you check if the job fits you. Feeling nervous is normal; practice is the cure. You don't need fancy words — just calm, clear, true answers. Big idea: a two-way talk where you show, with true short stories, that you can help.

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TRY IT NOW

Name your nerves

1. Write down the three things that worry you most about interviews.
2. Next to each one, write one small thing you could practice to feel better.
3. Keep the list. You will check it again on Day 14.

Key takeaways

- The interview is where they decide.
- Nervous is normal; practice helps.
- True and clear beats fancy.
- It's a two-way talk.

Quiz: 3 quick questions

1. What is a job interview?

A. A meeting to see if you fit a job, and if the job fits you
B. A school exam with one right answer
C. A contract you sign

2. What is the best cure for interview nerves?

A. Hoping for luck
B. Practicing your answers out loud
C. Skipping the interview

3. Which is TRUE about interviews?

A. Only smart talkers pass
B. There is one perfect answer
C. It's a two-way talk — you choose too

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Answers

1. **A. A meeting to see if you fit a job, and if the job fits you** — Both sides learn about each other.
2. **B. Practicing your answers out loud** — Practice gives your mind a path to follow.
3. **C. It's a two-way talk — you choose too** — You are also checking if the job is right for you.

PRACTICE TASK

Your "why this job" sentence

Pick one job you applied for. Say out loud: "I want this job because ___, and I can help because ___." Record it on your phone. This is your first practice answer.

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CHAPTER 2

Interview Basics: The Words and the Kinds

Before you practice, learn the words people use and the kinds of interviews you may meet.

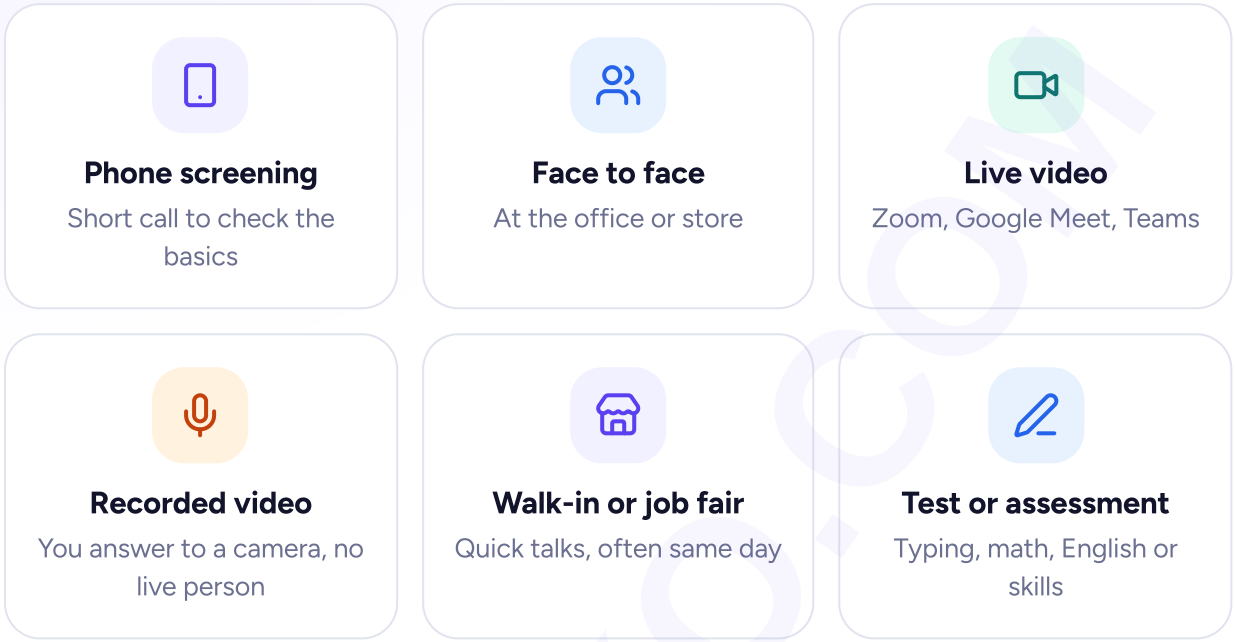
Words you will use

Word	What it means	Example
Interviewer	The person who asks the questions	The HR officer or store manager
HR	Human Resources: the team that hires and helps workers	"HR will call you for the next step."
Screening	A short first check to see if you meet the basics	A 10-minute phone call
Initial interview	The first real interview	Usually with HR
Final interview	The last interview before a decision	Often with the manager or owner
Panel interview	Two or more people interview you together	HR, a manager and a team lead
Behavioral question	A question about what you did before	"Tell me about a time you..."
Job offer	The employer says yes and tells you the pay and terms	A letter or email with your salary

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The kinds of interviews

PICTURE 3 **Six kinds of interviews**



You may meet one or several of these for one job. The same preparation works for all of them.

New word: one-way (recorded) interview

In a **one-way interview**, there is no live person. The screen shows a question, and you record your answer, often with a time limit. It's like leaving a voice message for a friend — you speak clearly because you can't see their face. Practice with your phone camera so it feels normal.

Most interviews have rounds

Many jobs have more than one round: a quick screening, an initial interview with HR, then a final interview with the manager. Each round is a small win. Prepare the same way for each, and don't be surprised if they ask some of the same questions again.

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New word: body language

Body language is what your face, hands and posture say without words. It's like a second voice. Sitting up, looking at the person and a small smile say "I'm ready and friendly," even before you answer.

QUICK RECAP

Learn the words: interviewer, HR, screening, initial interview, final interview, panel interview, behavioral question and job offer. Interviews can be by phone, face to face, live video, recorded video, at a job fair, or with a test. Many jobs have rounds. Body language is your second voice.

TRY IT NOW

Spot the kind

1. Look at one job post or invite you got.
2. Write which kind of interview it is, or guess from the details.
3. Write one thing you would prepare differently for that kind.

Key takeaways

- Learn the main interview words.
- There are six common kinds.
- Many jobs have more than one round.
- Body language is your second voice.

Quiz: 3 quick questions

1. What is a panel interview?

A. An interview by text message

B. Two or more people interview you together

C. A test about solar panels

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2. What is a behavioral question?

A. A question about what you did before, like "Tell me about a time..."
B. A question about your grades only
C. A question you should never answer

3. In a one-way recorded interview, who is watching live?

A. The CEO
B. Your family
C. No one — you record your answers

Answers

1. **B. Two or more people interview you together** — Look at and answer everyone, not just one person.
2. **A. A question about what you did before, like "Tell me about a time..."** — Your true past stories are the best answers.
3. **C. No one — you record your answers** — Practice with your phone camera so it feels normal.

PRACTICE TASK

Your interview notebook

Start a notebook or phone note called "Interview Prep." Write the six kinds of interviews and the eight words from the table. You will add your stories and answers in the next lessons.

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CHAPTER 3 · LESSON 1

Prepare Before the Day

Most of the work happens before you walk in. An hour of preparing can change everything.

You wouldn't go to a quiz bee without reviewing. An interview is the same. When you know the job, the company and your own stories, you can answer calmly instead of guessing.

PICTURE 4 **Five steps to prepare**



Read, study, pick, practice, plan. Now you walk in knowing what they need and what you will say.

New word: story bank

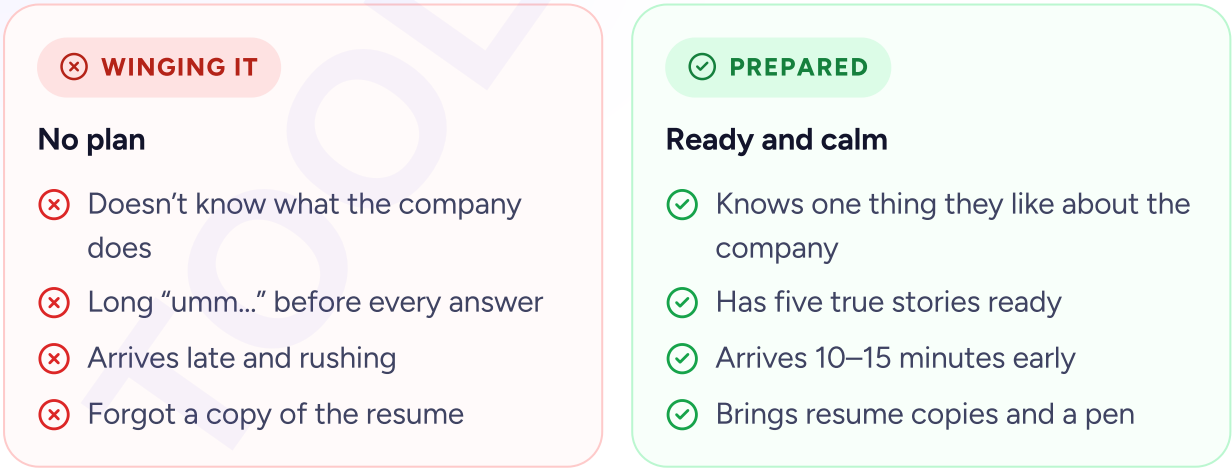
A **story bank** is a short list of true stories from your life that show your skills — like a piggy bank, but for examples. Each story is ready to "spend" when a question comes. Five or six good stories can answer most interview questions.

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Where to find your stories

Place	Story idea (made-up examples)	Skill it shows
Family business or chores	Helped run the family sari-sari store after school	Handling money, serving customers
School project	Led a group report when two members got sick	Leadership, problem solving
Org or club	Sold 150 fair tickets with a team in 2 weeks	Teamwork, selling
Part-time or summer job	Packed online orders during a sale rush	Speed, working under pressure
Something you learned yourself	Learned basic Canva in a weekend to make posters	Fast learning, initiative
A mistake you fixed	Gave wrong change once, then double-checked every time	Honesty, learning from mistakes

PICTURE 5 **Winging it vs prepared**



The prepared person isn't smarter. They just did their homework, so they can think clearly.

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Plan the day

Item	Tip
Clothes	Clean and neat, one step nicer than what workers wear there. Lay them out the night before.
Travel	Add a buffer. If the trip takes 45 minutes, add 30 minutes: for a 10:00 interview, leave by 8:45.
What to bring	Two printed resumes, a pen, a small notebook, a valid ID, and any papers they asked for.
Arrive	10–15 minutes early. Use the extra time to breathe and read your notes.

Made-up example times. Check the address and route the day before.

QUICK RECAP

Prepare in five steps: re-read the job post and circle the top needs, study the company, pick true stories from your story bank, practice out loud, and plan the day. Find stories in family duties, school, orgs, part-time jobs, things you learned and mistakes you fixed. Dress neatly, add a travel buffer, bring resume copies, and arrive 10–15 minutes early.

TRY IT NOW

Fill your story bank

1. Write five true stories, one line each, from the places in the table.
2. Next to each, write the skill it shows.
3. Circle the two stories that best match your target job.

Key takeaways

- Prepare before the day.
- Five true stories cover most questions.
- Know one thing you like about the company.

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- Plan clothes, travel and papers the night before.

Quiz: 3 quick questions

1. What is a story bank?

A. A bank that lends money for interviews
B. A short list of true stories that show your skills
C. A website of fake answers

2. Your trip takes 45 minutes and you add a 30-minute buffer. When should you leave for a 10:00 interview?

A. By 8:45
B. At 9:45
C. At 10:00

3. How early should you usually arrive for a face-to-face interview?

A. One hour late
B. Exactly on time, running
C. 10–15 minutes early

Answers

1. **B. A short list of true stories that show your skills** — Your stories are ready to use when a question comes.
2. **A. By 8:45** — 45 + 30 = 75 minutes. 10:00 minus 75 minutes is 8:45.
3. **C. 10–15 minutes early** — You have time to calm down without crowding the office.

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PRACTICE TASK

Your prep card

Make a prep card for one job: job title, company name, top 3 needs, one thing you like about the company, your two best stories, what you will wear, when you will leave, and what to bring.

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CHAPTER 4 · LESSON 2

The T-A-L-A Recipe: Answer With Stories

One simple recipe turns your true stories into clear, short answers.

Many interview questions start with "Tell me about a time when..." If you just say "I'm a team player," the interviewer has to trust you. If you tell a short true story, they can see it. A recipe keeps your story short and in order, like cooking sinigang step by step.

PICTURE 6 **T-A-L-A: the interview answer recipe**

T

Tell the situation

"During our school fair, our org had 2 weeks to sell tickets."

A

Assignment: your task

"I was asked to lead a team of 5 sellers."

L

Lead with what you did

"I split our class list, made a simple tracker, and checked in every day."

A

Add the result

"We sold 150 tickets — about 75 a week — our org's best yet."

PUT TOGETHER:

Say where and when, what you had to do, what you did, and how it turned out — with a number if you can.

"Tala" means star in Filipino. It is the Filipino twin of the famous STAR method: Situation, Task, Action, Result.

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New word: STAR method

The **STAR method** is a well-known way to answer “tell me about a time” questions: **S**ituation, **T**ask, **A**ction, **R**esult. Our T-A-L-A recipe follows the same order. Think of it like telling a short teleserye episode: the setting, the problem, what the hero did, and the ending.

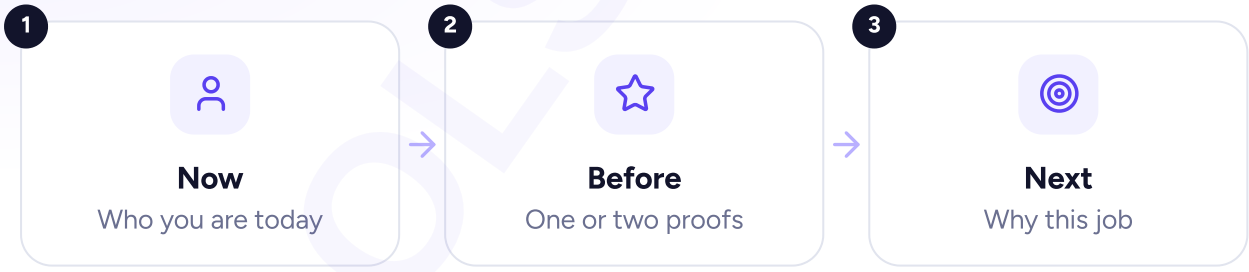
Spend most time on L

Keep the situation short — one or two sentences. Spend most of your answer on **what you did**. Say “I,” not just “we,” so they know your part. Then give the result, with a number if you can.

Your answer for “Tell me about yourself”

This is often the first question. It is not asking for your life story. Use a simple three-part path: now, before, next.

PICTURE 7 **Now, before, next**



“I’m a senior high graduate who loves helping customers (now). I helped run our family store for 2 years (before). That’s why I’m excited about this cashier job (next).”

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Example: Liza's answers

Question	What Liza said (made-up example)
Tell me about yourself.	I'm a recent senior high graduate from Laguna, and I enjoy serving people. For 2 years I helped at my tita's food stall, where I served about 40 customers a day and handled cash. I want to grow in customer service, and that's why I applied to be a crew member here.
Tell me about a time you worked under pressure.	T: During a town fiesta, our stall had triple the usual customers. A: My job was the cash box and orders. L: I wrote orders on a small board so no one waited twice, and I counted change out loud. A: We served everyone, and the cash matched to the peso that night.

Each answer takes about 1 minute to say. All names are made up.

About 1 to 2 minutes

Most good answers take **1 to 2 minutes**. At a normal speaking speed of about 130 words a minute, that is about 130 to 260 words. Shorter is often better. If they want more, they will ask — and that's a good sign.

QUICK RECAP

Use T-A-L-A (the STAR method): Tell the situation, Assignment (your task), Lead with what you did, Add the result. Keep the situation short, spend most time on your actions, say "I," and give a number if you can. For "Tell me about yourself," use now, before, next. Most answers take 1 to 2 minutes.

TRY IT NOW

Turn two stories into T-A-L-A

1. Take the two best stories from your story bank.
2. Write one line for each letter: T, A, L, A.
3. Say each one out loud and time it with a stopwatch.

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Key takeaways

- T-A-L-A = Situation, Task, Action, Result.
- Spend most time on what you did.
- Now, before, next for “Tell me about yourself.”
- About 1 to 2 minutes per answer.

Quiz: 3 quick questions

1. What does the L in T-A-L-A stand for?

A Lead with what you did
B Laugh a lot
C List all your grades

2. At about 130 words a minute, how many words is a 2-minute answer?

A About 60
B About 260
C About 1,000

3. What is the best shape for “Tell me about yourself”?

A Your whole life since birth
B Your favorite movies
C Now, before, next

Answers

1. **A. Lead with what you did** — Your actions are the heart of the story.
2. **B. About 260** — 130 × 2 = 260 words.
3. **C. Now, before, next** — It is short and ends with why you want this job.

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PRACTICE TASK

Record your first answers

Record your “Tell me about yourself” answer and one T-A-L-A story on your phone. Watch them once. Write one thing you did well and one thing to fix. Or use the ToolsKo “Tell Me About Yourself” Answer Builder, then say it in your own words.

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CHAPTER 5 · LESSON 3

Common Questions and How to Answer Them

Many interviews use the same questions. Prepare for them once, and you are ready for most.

You can't know every question. But some come up again and again in Philippine interviews. Prepare a short, true answer for each one, using your story bank.

Question	What they really want to know	How to answer
Tell me about yourself.	Can you speak clearly about you and this job?	Now, before, next — about 1 minute
Why did you apply for this job?	Do you know and care about this job?	One true reason about the job and one about the company
What are your strengths?	What can you do well for us?	Name one strength and prove it with a story
What is your weakness?	Are you honest, and do you grow?	A real but small weakness, plus what you do to improve
Can you work under pressure?	Will you stay calm when it's busy?	A short T-A-L-A story about a busy time
Why should we hire you?	How are you different?	Match their top need with your best proof
What is your expected salary?	Do your needs fit our budget?	A researched range (see below)
Do you have questions for us?	Are you truly interested?	Never say "no." Ask one or two good questions

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PICTURE 8 **Weak answers vs strong answers**

WEAK

Empty words

- "I'm hardworking and passionate."
- "My weakness is I'm a perfectionist."
- "I need the money."
- "No questions, I'm okay."

STRONG

True and specific

- "I worked 6 days a week at our store for 2 years."
- "I used to be shy on the phone, so I practice calls."
- "I want to grow in customer service here."
- "What does a great first month look like?"

Strong answers are true, short and specific. They show, with an example, instead of just telling.

New word: weakness

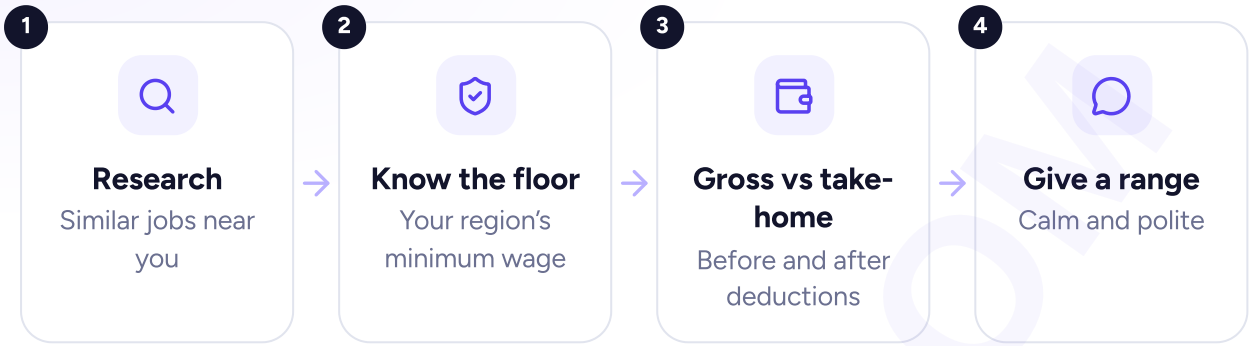
A **weakness** is something you are still learning to do well. Everyone has one — like a basketball player who is great at passing but still practicing free throws. A good answer names a real, small weakness that won't stop you doing the job, and what you are doing to get better.

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The expected salary question

PICTURE 9 **Four steps to answer "expected salary"**



Know what similar jobs pay, know the legal floor, know the difference between gross and take-home, then give a calm range.

New words: gross pay and take-home pay

Gross pay is your pay before deductions. **Take-home pay** (net pay) is what is left after SSS, PhilHealth, Pag-IBIG and tax, if any. It's like a whole pizza versus the slices left after sharing. In the Philippines, "expected salary" usually means the gross monthly amount — ask if you are not sure.

Know the legal floor

Every region has its own minimum wage. In Metro Manila, the daily minimum for most non-farm workers went from ₱695 to **₱755** when Wage Order NCR-28 took effect in late September 2026. Other regions are different, so check your regional wage board or DOLE. A good answer sounds like: "Based on similar jobs, I'm hoping for ₱18,000 to ₱20,000 a month, but I'm open to the full package." (Made-up range.) This is general information, not financial advice.

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QUICK RECAP

Prepare short, true answers to the common questions: tell me about yourself, why this job, strengths, weakness, working under pressure, why hire you, expected salary, and your questions. Strong answers are specific and use stories. For salary: research similar jobs, know your region's minimum wage, know gross vs take-home pay, and give a calm range.

TRY IT NOW

Answer three common questions

1. Write one short answer each for strengths, weakness and why this job.
2. Add a story or example to each.
3. Say them out loud and cut any sentence that isn't needed.

Key takeaways

- Prepare for the common questions.
- Show with a story, don't just tell.
- Name a real, small weakness and how you improve.
- Research salary and give a range.

Quiz: 3 quick questions

1. The interviewer asks, "Do you have questions for us?" What is the best reply?

A "No, I'm okay."
B One or two thoughtful questions about the job
C "How many days off do I get?" only

2. What is take-home pay?

A Your pay after deductions like SSS, PhilHealth, Pag-IBIG and tax
B Your pay before any deductions
C Money you take home from the office

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3. Which weakness answer is best?

A "I have no weaknesses."

B "I am always late."

C "I used to be shy on the phone, so I practice calls every week."

Answers

1. **B. One or two thoughtful questions about the job** — Good questions show real interest.
2. **A. Your pay after deductions like SSS, PhilHealth, Pag-IBIG and tax** — Gross is before; take-home (net) is after.
3. **C. "I used to be shy on the phone, so I practice calls every week."** — It is real, small, and shows you are improving.

PRACTICE TASK

Your answer sheet

Write short answers for all eight questions in the table. Use the ToolsKo Take-Home Pay Calculator to see what a salary range means after deductions, then pick your range.

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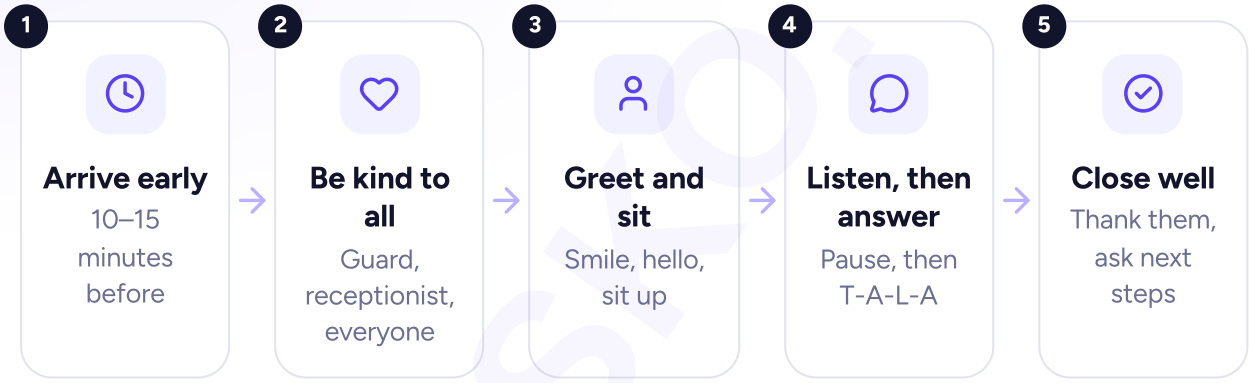
CHAPTER 6 · LESSON 4

On the Day: In Person and on Video

How you show up matters too. Small habits help you look calm, even when you feel nervous.

Face to face

PICTURE 10 **Your interview day, step by step**



Early, kind, friendly, thoughtful, thankful. Every step tells them what kind of worker you will be.

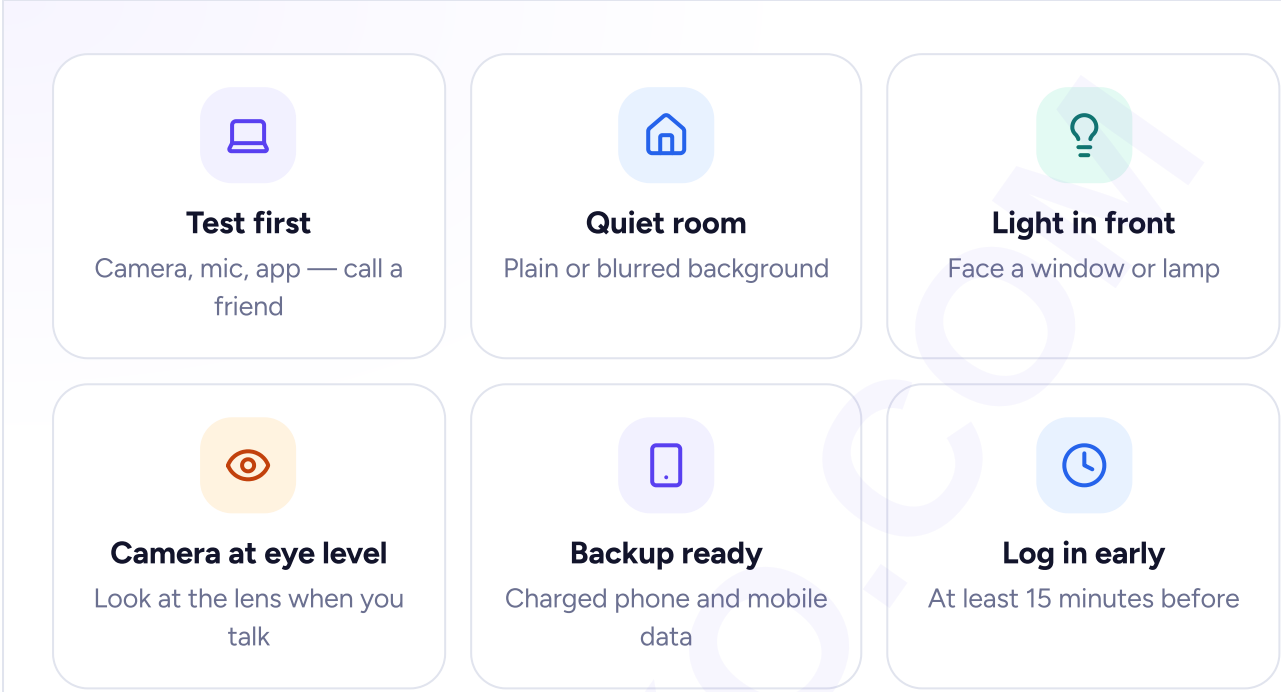
It's okay to pause

If a question surprises you, it's okay to say, "That's a good question. May I take a moment to think?" A short pause is much better than a rushed answer. If you don't understand a question, ask them to repeat it. That shows you listen carefully.

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Video interviews

PICTURE 11 **Six checks for a video interview**



Most video problems are fixed the day before. Test everything, set up your space, and log in early.

New word: lag

Lag is the small delay on a video call when the sound or picture arrives late. It's like talking to someone across a big room — your words take a moment to reach them. Pause for a second after the interviewer stops talking, so you don't talk over each other.

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Do	Don't
Dress neatly from head to toe	Wear a polo on top and sleep shorts below — you may need to stand
Silence your phone and close other tabs	Check messages during the call
Look at the camera when you speak	Look only at your own face on screen
Keep a glass of water and your notes nearby	Read long answers word for word
Tell family when your interview is	Take the call in a noisy kitchen

Body language counts

Sit up, keep your hands relaxed, nod when you listen, and smile when it fits. Look at each person in a panel. Your body says "I'm ready" even before your words do.

QUICK RECAP

Face to face: arrive 10–15 minutes early, be kind to everyone, greet with a smile, listen before you answer, and thank them at the end. It's okay to pause or ask them to repeat. On video: test your tech, use a quiet room with light in front, put the camera at eye level, have a backup phone and data, log in at least 15 minutes early, and pause for lag.

TRY IT NOW

Do a practice video call

1. Set up your space using the six checks.
2. Call a friend or family member on the app the employer uses.
3. Ask them how you look and sound, and fix one thing.

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Key takeaways

- Early, kind and calm.
- Pause before you answer.
- Test your video setup the day before.
- Body language is your second voice.

Quiz: 3 quick questions

1. How early should you log in to a video interview?

A. At least 15 minutes early
B. Exactly on the minute
C. 5 minutes late

2. Where should the light be in a video interview?

A. Behind you
B. In front of you
C. No light at all

3. A question confuses you. What should you do?

A. Answer anything fast
B. Stay silent for a long time
C. Ask them to repeat it, or say you need a moment to think

Answers

1. **A. At least 15 minutes early** — You have time to fix any tech problem.
2. **B. In front of you** — Light in front shows your face clearly.
3. **C. Ask them to repeat it, or say you need a moment to think** — It shows you listen carefully.

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PRACTICE TASK

A full mock interview

Ask someone to be your interviewer. Give them 10 questions from Chapter 5. At about 2 minutes each, that's about 20 minutes. Record it with the ToolsKo Webcam Recorder, then watch it and write three things to improve.

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CHAPTER 7 · LESSON 5

Ask Good Questions, Follow Up and Stay Safe

The end of the interview matters. So do the days after it.

Questions you can ask them

At the end, most interviewers ask, "Do you have questions for us?" This is your turn to learn if the job fits you. Prepare two or three questions. Pick the ones they haven't answered yet.

- What does a normal day in this job look like?
- What does a great first month look like for someone in this role?
- What do you like most about working here?
- What are the next steps, and when can I expect to hear from you?

Pay and benefits: timing

It's fine to ask about pay, schedule and benefits — they matter. Many people wait until the interviewer brings them up, or until the final interview or job offer. Always get the final pay, schedule and start date **in writing** before you say yes.

Say thank you

New word: thank-you email

A **thank-you email** is a short note you send after an interview to thank the interviewer. It's like saying "salamat po" after someone helps you — polite, warm and quick. Send it within **24 hours** if you can (JobStreet says 24–48 hours). Spell their name right and keep it short.

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A SHORT THANK-YOU EMAIL

```
Subject: Thank you — Crew Member interview, Liza Ramos

Dear Ms. Cruz,

Thank you for meeting me today about the Crew Member job. I enjoyed
learning about your team and the new branch. I'm even more excited to
help serve your customers.

Please let me know if you need anything else from me.

Sincerely,
Liza Ramos · 09XX XXX XXXX
```

If they gave you a date, wait for it. If not, and you hear nothing after about a week, send one short, polite follow-up. If the answer is no, thank them and ask if they have any tips for you. Every interview is practice for the next one.

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Stay safe

PICTURE 12 **Interview safety traffic light**



Normal

Questions about your skills, school, past work, schedule and why you want the job. Interviews at an office, a public place or on a known video app, in daytime.

Be careful

Very personal questions, like your age, religion or whether you plan to have kids. Employers may not require your age or birth date in applications (RA 10911). You can politely bring the talk back to your skills.

Stop

Asked to pay a fee, send your OTP or bank details, buy a "starter kit," meet at night or in a hotel room, or carry a package. Leave, refuse and report it.

Green is a normal interview. Yellow means pause and protect your privacy. Red means it is a scam or unsafe — walk away.

Fake recruiters are real

In 2026, DOLE and DMW warned about a growing number of fake job offers online. Real employers don't make you pay to apply or to be interviewed, and they never need your OTP. Check job offers with your city or town **PESO**, look for jobs on DOLE's **PhilJobNet**, and for jobs abroad, check that the agency is licensed by **DMW**. If you are under 18, bring a parent or guardian's okay and never go alone to an unknown place.

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QUICK RECAP

Prepare two or three questions to ask, like what a normal day looks like and what the next steps are. Ask about pay and benefits at the right time, and get the final offer in writing. Send a short thank-you email within 24 hours, and follow up once after about a week. Green is normal, yellow means protect your privacy, red means walk away: never pay, never share your OTP.

TRY IT NOW

Write your after-interview kit

1. Write three questions you will ask at your next interview.
2. Write a thank-you email template with blanks for the name and job.
3. Save your PESO's contact details in your phone.

Key takeaways

- Always have questions to ask.
- Thank them within 24 hours.
- Get the offer in writing.
- Never pay to apply or be interviewed.

Quiz: 3 quick questions

1. When should you send a thank-you email?

A. After one month
B. Within 24 hours if you can
C. Never

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2. An “interviewer” asks you to pay ₱2,000 for a “training kit” before you start. What is this?

A A red flag — likely a scam

B A normal step

C A great deal

3. Where can you check if a job offer is real?

A A random comment section

B The recruiter’s own friend

C Your city or town PESO, or DOLE’s PhilJobNet

Answers

1. **B. Within 24 hours if you can** — A quick, short note is polite and memorable.
2. **A. A red flag — likely a scam** — Real employers don’t make you pay to get hired.
3. **C. Your city or town PESO, or DOLE’s PhilJobNet** — Use official channels.

PRACTICE TASK

Your follow-up plan

Make a simple tracker: company, job, interview date, interviewer’s name, thank-you sent (yes or no), follow-up date and result. Use the ToolsKo Thank-You Email After Interview Generator for your first draft, then edit it in your own words.

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CHAPTER 8

Your 14-Day Interview Plan

About 20 minutes a day for two weeks — about 4 hours 40 minutes in all. By day 14, you will be ready for real interviews.

Start any day, even if you don't have an interview yet. If you are under 18 or still in school, use the plan for part-time, school or org interviews.

PICTURE 13 **The 14-day interview plan**



Research, build stories, answer the common questions, practice for real, then get ready for the day.

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Day	Task (about 20 minutes)	Done?
1	Pick one target job. Re-read the post and circle the top 3 needs.	☐
2	Study the company. Write one thing you like about it.	☐
3	Write five true stories for your story bank.	☐
4	Turn your two best stories into T-A-L-A answers.	☐
5	Write and record your “Tell me about yourself” (now, before, next).	☐
6	Turn two more stories into T-A-L-A. Time each one.	☐
7	Write answers for strengths, weakness and why this job.	☐
8	Research salary and know your take-home range.	☐
9	Write three questions you will ask them.	☐
10	Do a video practice call. Check light, sound and background.	☐
11	Do a full mock interview with a friend or family member.	☐
12	Watch your recording. Fix three things.	☐
13	Plan the day: clothes, route, buffer and what to bring.	☐
14	Write your thank-you email template and follow-up tracker.	☐

Bonus exercises

1 **Mirror minute**

Say one answer to a mirror every morning while you get ready. One minute a day adds up.

2 **Swap roles**

Be the interviewer for a friend. You will see what makes an answer clear.

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3 **Grow your story bank**

After every project, task or busy day, add one new story with a number.

4 **Review your list**

Look at the three worries you wrote in Chapter 1. Check which ones feel smaller now.

Practice, not perfect

You don't need perfect answers. You need answers that are true, short and practiced. Every interview — even one that ends in "no" — makes the next one easier.

QUICK RECAP

Days 1–3: choose a job, study the company and build your story bank. Days 4–6: T-A-L-A answers and "Tell me about yourself." Days 7–9: common questions, salary range and your questions. Days 10–12: video practice and mock interviews. Days 13–14: plan the day and prepare your thank-you and follow-up.

TRY IT NOW

Start today

1. Copy the 14-day table.
2. Do Day 1 now.
3. Set a daily reminder on your phone.

Key takeaways

- Research and stories first.
- Then answers and questions.
- Practice with a real person.
- Plan the day and the follow-up.

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Quiz: 3 quick questions

1. What do you do on Day 5?

A Buy new shoes
B Write and record your “Tell me about yourself”
C Apply to 50 jobs

2. 20 minutes a day for 14 days is about how long in all?

A About 4 hours 40 minutes
B About 20 minutes
C About 14 hours

3. Your first mock interview went badly. What should you do?

A Give up on interviews
B Never record yourself again
C Fix three things and practice again

Answers

1. **B. Write and record your “Tell me about yourself”** — It is often the first question, so it comes early.
2. **A. About 4 hours 40 minutes** — 20 × 14 = 280 minutes, about 4 hours 40 minutes.
3. **C. Fix three things and practice again** — Practice, not perfect.

PRACTICE TASK

Complete the 14 days

Follow the plan and tick each box. On day 14, write your best story, your salary range, your three questions, and the one thing you improved the most.

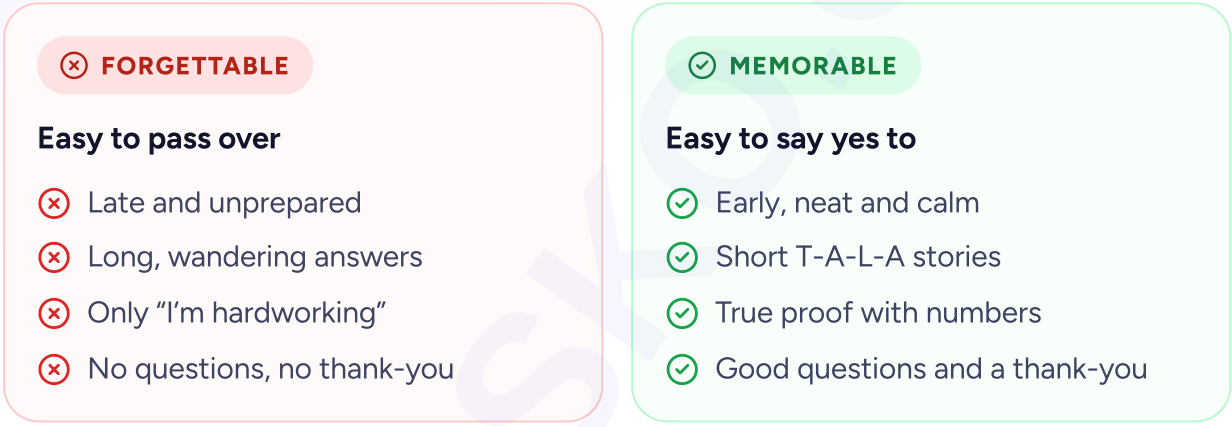
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CHAPTER 9

Common Interview Mistakes (and Easy Fixes)

Most interviews go wrong for small, fixable reasons. Check yourself against this list.

PICTURE 14 Forgettable interview vs memorable interview



The difference is rarely talent. It is preparation, true stories and good manners.

Now check yourself against this table.

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Mistake	Why it hurts	Easy fix
Arriving late	Looks like you won't be on time for work	Add a 30-minute buffer; arrive 10–15 minutes early
Not knowing the company	Looks like you applied to anything	Learn one true thing you like about them
Long, wandering answers	The point gets lost	Use T-A-L-A; aim for 1 to 2 minutes
Only telling, not showing	"Hardworking" means little alone	Give a true story with a number
Speaking badly of a past boss or school	Makes them wonder what you'll say about them	Stay polite; talk about what you learned
Making things up	They may check, and it can cost you the job	Say only true things; it's okay to say "I'm still learning that"
Phone ringing or checking messages	Looks like you don't care	Silence it before you walk in
Bad video setup	They can't see or hear you	Test tech the day before; log in 15 minutes early
Saying "no questions"	Looks uninterested	Prepare two or three questions
No thank-you or follow-up	Easy to forget you	Send a short thank-you within 24 hours

The replay test

After each interview, write down every question you remember and how you answered. Circle one answer you would change. Practice the better version. In a few interviews, your answers will be much stronger.

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QUICK RECAP

Common mistakes: arriving late, not knowing the company, long answers, only telling, speaking badly of others, making things up, phone distractions, bad video setup, saying “no questions,” and no thank-you. Each has an easy fix. Do the replay test after every interview to keep getting better.

TRY IT NOW

Check yourself

1. Tick every mistake you might make.
2. Write the fix next to each one.
3. Practice the fix in your next mock interview.

Key takeaways

- Be early and prepared.
- Short stories beat long speeches.
- Only true things.
- Do the replay test.

Quiz: 3 quick questions

1. The interviewer asks about your old boss, who was unfair. What is best?

A Stay polite and talk about what you learned
B Say everything bad about them
C Refuse to answer

2. They ask about a skill you don’t have yet. What should you do?

A Pretend you are an expert
B Say honestly you’re still learning it, and how you learn fast
C Change the topic to movies

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3. What is the replay test?

A Watching a movie twice

B Asking for a second interview

C Writing down the questions after an interview and improving one answer

Answers

1. **A. Stay polite and talk about what you learned** — Being polite shows you will respect this team too.
2. **B. Say honestly you're still learning it, and how you learn fast** — Honesty plus a plan to learn is a strong answer.
3. **C. Writing down the questions after an interview and improving one answer** — Each interview makes the next one better.

PRACTICE TASK

Your interview rules

Write 5 personal interview rules (for example, "Early by 15 minutes", "T-A-L-A", "Only true stories", "Two questions ready", "Thank-you in 24 hours"). Keep them on your phone and read them before every interview.

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CHAPTER 10

Real-Life Examples: Interviews That Worked

These five example stories are based on common Filipino situations (names are made up). Look for the habits, not the details.

L

Liza, 19
Senior high graduate, Laguna

THE PROBLEM

Froze at “Tell me about yourself” in her first interview.

WHAT LIZA TYPED

```
Built a story bank, practiced now-before-next out loud every night for a week, and told how she served about 40 customers a day at her tita’s food stall.
```

THE RESULT

Passed her next interview for a fast-food crew job.

Lesson: Practice out loud gives your mind a path to follow.

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M

Marco, 22
Fresh graduate, Iloilo

THE PROBLEM

Gave long, wandering answers in a panel interview.

WHAT MARCO TYPED

```
Rewrote his stories with T-A-L-A and timed each one at about 1 to 2 minutes with a stopwatch.
```

THE RESULT

In his next panel, two interviewers nodded and asked follow-up questions — and he got a final interview.

Lesson: Short stories in order are easy to follow.

G

Grace, 24
Call center applicant, Quezon City

THE PROBLEM

Her video kept freezing during a live online interview.

WHAT GRACE TYPED

```
For the next one, she tested the app with a friend, sat near the router, logged in 15 minutes early, and kept her phone charged with mobile data as backup.
```

THE RESULT

When the internet dropped for a minute, she rejoined fast from her phone and finished calmly.

Lesson: Test your setup and keep a backup ready.

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M

Mang Rudy, 45
Career shifter, Bulacan

THE PROBLEM

Worried about being asked about his age when moving from tricycle driving to a delivery rider job.

WHAT MANG RUDY TYPED

```
Prepared stories about 20 years of safe driving and knowing every street in town, and politely steered personal questions back to his skills.
```

THE RESULT

Got the job and now trains new riders on local routes.

Lesson: Focus on what you can do; your experience is a strength.

B

Bea, 18
Job seeker, Cagayan de Oro

THE PROBLEM

A chat “recruiter” offered an interview at a hotel at night and asked for a ₱1,500 “medical fee” first.

WHAT BEA TYPED

```
Refused to pay, didn’t go, blocked the account, told her parents, and checked jobs with her city PESO instead.
```

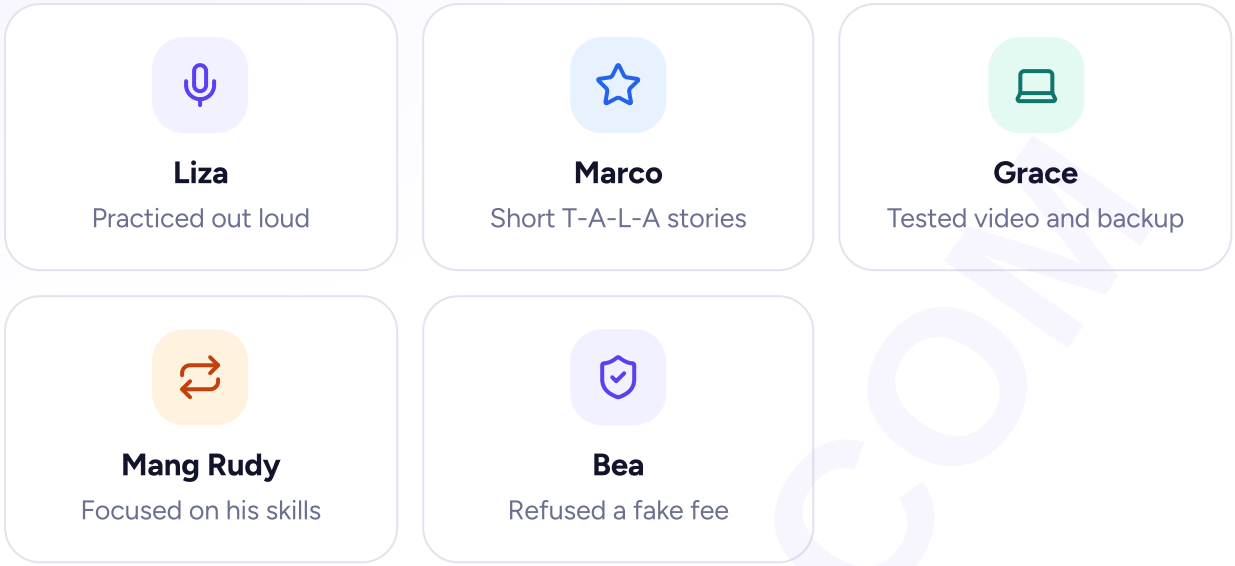
THE RESULT

Kept her money and got a real interview at a PESO job fair.

Lesson: Never pay to be interviewed. Use official channels.

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PICTURE 15 **Five interviews**



Different lives, same habits: practice out loud, keep stories short, test your setup, focus on skills, and stay safe.

What these stories have in common

They prepared, practiced out loud, told only true stories, kept answers short, and stayed safe. None of them was a perfect speaker. They were ready and honest.

QUICK RECAP

Liza practiced out loud and passed; Marco used short T-A-L-A stories; Grace tested her video setup and had a backup; Mang Rudy focused on his skills and experience; and Bea refused a fake fee and used official channels.

TRY IT NOW

Your first step

1. Pick the story most like your situation.
2. Copy one habit from it this week.
3. Write how it went after 7 days.

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Key takeaways

- Practice out loud.
- Keep stories short and true.
- Test your setup.
- Never pay to be interviewed.

Quiz: 3 quick questions

1. What helped Marco in his panel interview?

A Talking longer
B Short T-A-L-A stories, timed at 1 to 2 minutes
C Wearing a bright color

2. What did Grace do when her internet dropped?

A Rejoined fast from her charged phone
B Gave up
C Sent an angry message

3. Why did Bea refuse the "recruiter"?

A The hotel was too far
B She didn't like the chat font
C It asked for a fee and a night meeting at a hotel — scam signs

Answers

1. **B. Short T-A-L-A stories, timed at 1 to 2 minutes** — Short stories in order are easy to follow.
2. **A. Rejoined fast from her charged phone** — A backup plan kept her calm.
3. **C. It asked for a fee and a night meeting at a hotel — scam signs** — Real employers don't charge you or meet you in unsafe places.

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PRACTICE TASK

Your interview story card

Write your own story card: the job you want, your “Tell me about yourself” in three lines, your best T-A-L-A story, two questions you will ask, and one safety rule you will always follow.

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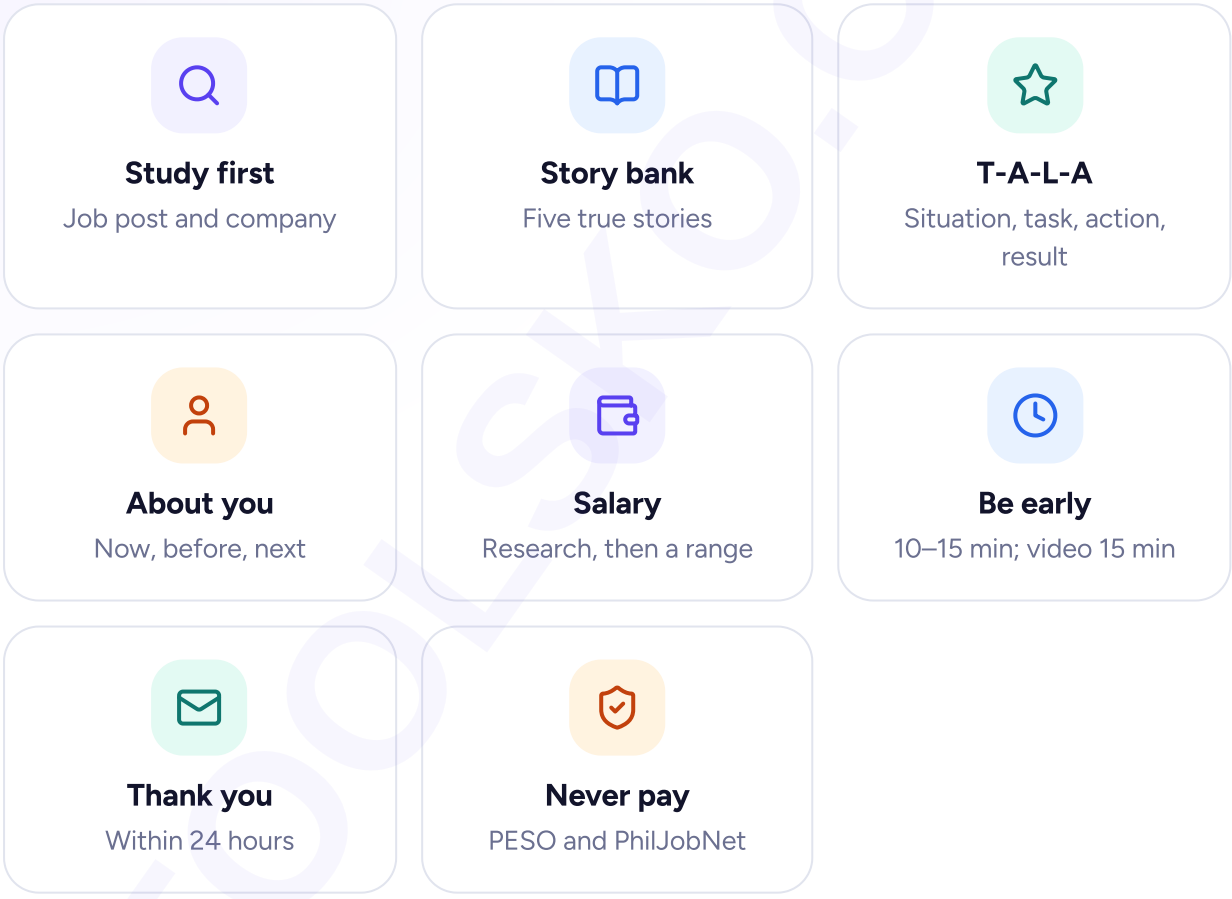
THE END

Quick Summary

Everything important, on one page.

The whole book on one page. Read it the night before every interview.

PICTURE 16 **Cheat sheet: interviews in 8 cards**



Eight habits that turn a scary interview into a calm, honest talk.

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Remember	In one line
The big rule	An interview is a two-way talk: show with true short stories that you can help, and check if the job fits you.
Prepare	Re-read the post, study the company, fill your story bank, practice aloud, plan the day.
Recipe	T-A-L-A: Tell the situation, Assignment, Lead with what you did, Add the result.
First question	“Tell me about yourself”: now, before, next — about 1 minute.
Salary	Research similar jobs, know the minimum wage and take-home pay, give a calm range.
On the day	Early, kind, calm; pause before you answer; test video and log in 15 minutes early.
After	Ask good questions, send a thank-you within 24 hours, follow up once, never pay to apply.

You can do a great interview

You know the kinds of interviews, how to prepare, how to answer with T-A-L-A, how to handle common questions and salary, how to do well in person and on video, and how to follow up and stay safe. Do your first mock interview this week.

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WHAT'S NEXT

Your Next Learning Path

You finished Book 3. Here is where to go from here.

This is **Book 3** of the **Resume & Career** series. Here is your path:

PICTURE 17 **Your Resume & Career path**



Your resume, cover letter and interview skills are ready. Next, build a profile recruiters can find.

What to do next

Next step	Why
Finish the 14-day plan	A story bank, practiced answers and a plan for the day.
Review Books 1 and 2	Make sure your resume and cover letter match the stories you tell.
Read Book 4	LinkedIn Optimization: a profile recruiters find and trust (LinkedIn needs age 16+).
Grow your skills	The Digital Skills series (Canva, Excel, Google Sheets) adds skills employers ask for.

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One last tip

Keep your story bank in your phone and add to it every month. The best interview answers come from real life — and you are living new stories every day.

Free ToolsKo tools for this book

Put what you learned to work. These tools are free on toolsko.com, need no sign-up, and most work right in your browser.

"Tell Me About Yourself" Interview Answer Builder

Build your now-before-next answer, then say it in your own words.

toolsko.com/tell-me-about-yourself-answer-generator

Thank-You Email After Interview Generator

Write your thank-you email fast after the interview.

toolsko.com/thank-you-email-after-interview

Free Resume Builder (ATS-Friendly, Word & PDF)

Bring a clean resume that matches your stories.

toolsko.com/resume-builder

Cover Letter Generator (Modern, for Any Job)

Make sure your letter and your interview tell the same story.

toolsko.com/cover-letter-generator

Webcam & Microphone Recorder

Record mock interviews and watch yourself improve.

toolsko.com/webcam-recorder

Microphone Test & Recorder

Check your mic before a video interview.

toolsko.com/microphone-test

Online Stopwatch

Time your answers at about 1 to 2 minutes.

toolsko.com/stopwatch

Philippines Take-Home Pay Calculator

See what a salary range means after deductions.

toolsko.com/sweldo-calculator

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Job Offer Comparison Calculator (Take-Home Pay)
Compare two job offers side by side.
toolsko.com/job-offer-comparison-calculator

Commute Cost Calculator (Daily, Monthly, Yearly Fare)
Know what the daily trip to a job will cost.
toolsko.com/commute-cost-calculator

Pomodoro Focus Timer
Practice in short, focused sessions every day.
toolsko.com/pomodoro-timer

Words to know

Job interview	A meeting where an employer checks if you fit a job, and you check if the job fits you.
Interviewer	The person who asks the questions in an interview.
Screening	A short first check, often a phone call, to see if you meet the basics.
Initial interview	The first real interview, often with HR.
Final interview	The last interview before the employer decides, often with a manager.
Panel interview	An interview where two or more people ask you questions together.
One-way interview	A recorded video interview where you answer questions on screen with no live person.

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Behavioral question	A question about what you did before, like “Tell me about a time when…”.
STAR method	A way to answer with a story: Situation, Task, Action, Result.
T-A-L-A	This book’s Filipino twin of STAR: Tell the situation, Assignment, Lead with what you did, Add the result.
Story bank	A short list of true stories from your life that show your skills.
Weakness	Something you are still learning to do well.
Gross pay	Your pay before deductions.
Take-home pay	Your pay after deductions like SSS, PhilHealth, Pag-IBIG and tax (also called net pay).
Body language	What your face, hands and posture say without words.
Job offer	When an employer says yes and tells you the pay, schedule and start date.

Where the facts come from

1. How to use the STAR method for your job interview, with examples (JobStreet Philippines, updated August 2023)
2. The most common job interview questions (JobStreet Philippines, updated August 2022)
3. Virtual interview: meaning and how to prepare for it (JobStreet Philippines, updated May 2026)
4. How to answer the salary expectation question (JobStreet Philippines, updated April 2022)
5. Boost your interview chances with a thank-you note (SHRM, October 2024)

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6. P60 NCR wage hike takes effect: Wage Order NCR-28 (The Philippine Star, September 27, 2026)
7. DOLE warns public vs bogus job offers (SunStar, January 17, 2026)
8. DMW warns OFWs, overseas jobseekers against illegal recruiters, traffickers (Daily Tribune, July 21, 2026)
9. Republic Act No. 10911: Anti-Age Discrimination in Employment Act (Senate Legislative Issuances Library)
10. PhilJobNet: the Philippines' official job-matching portal (DOLE)

Laws, wage rates, hiring habits and website advice were checked on November 22, 2026. Rules, rates and habits change, so always follow the employer's instructions and check with DOLE, your PESO or your regional wage board before you rely on them. All names, schools, businesses and numbers in the examples are made up. ToolsKo is not connected to any company, job site, school or government agency named in this book. This book is general information, not legal or financial advice, and it cannot promise you a job. Written by ToolsKo Learn · toolsko.com/learn

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RESUME & CAREER

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Book 2	Cover Letter Mastery
Book 3	**Interview Mastery — this book**
Book 4	LinkedIn Optimization

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