

A TRICHY PLUS CAREER BOOKLET

Interview Questions.

THE 100 MOST-ASKED HR QUESTIONS

Sample answers, structure notes, and the mental model behind each one.
For freshers preparing for their first job.

MADE FOR

Final year students

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01

THE MINDSET

Before the Interview: The Mindset

An HR interview is not a test of memory. It is a test of coherence: how well your story about yourself lines up with the role, and how calmly you can speak about yourself for 30 minutes.

The single biggest mistake freshers make is memorising answers. Interviewers can smell it in 15 seconds. Use this booklet as a mirror, not a script. Read a question, then close the book and answer aloud in your own words. If you get stuck, glance at the sample answer for the structure, not the exact sentences. Then answer again from scratch.

THE STAR FRAMEWORK

The most-tested interview skill in the world

For every situational question: **S**ituation, **T**ask, **A**ction, **R**esult. 20 seconds on Situation, 10 on Task, 40 on Action, 15 on Result. Total answer: about 90 seconds. Never longer. That is the number one interview upgrade a fresher can make in one day.

90s

IDEAL LENGTH OF ANY
INTERVIEW ANSWER

7

SECONDS A RECRUITER
TAKES TO FORM A
FIRST IMPRESSION

3

ANECDOTES YOU NEED
TO PREPARE, READY TO
REUSE

100

QUESTIONS COVERED
IN THIS BOOKLET

02

CHAPTER ONE

About You (Q1–15)

The opening block. Nine out of ten interviews start with the same three questions. Getting these three right sets the tone for the rest of the hour. Practise them aloud until they sound natural, not rehearsed.

Q001 Tell me about yourself.**SAMPLE ANSWER**

I am Priya, a final-year B.Com student at St Joseph's College, Trichy. I chose commerce because I have always liked seeing how businesses work, from a small kirana store to a listed company. Beyond academics, I have completed internships at two local CA firms where I worked on GST filings and audit support. Outside work, I run a small Instagram page reviewing books on personal finance, which has taught me to explain complex ideas simply. I am looking for a role where I can start in operations or analysis and grow into a business-partnering position.

WHY IT WORKS

Structure: Who I am. Why this field. Proof (internships or projects). What I do beyond studies. What I am looking for. Under 90 seconds. Ends with a lead-in for their next question.

Q002 Walk me through your resume.**SAMPLE ANSWER**

Sure. I will go top to bottom. My education so far in 30 seconds. My most relevant internship was at ABC Firm, where I worked on... 45 seconds, focus on outcomes not tasks. In projects, my final year work on inventory forecasting let me apply Excel and basic SQL to a real dataset. And I have been active in the college's Commerce Club as event lead. I would be happy to go deeper into any of these.

WHY IT WORKS

Do not read the resume. Highlight two things the interviewer would most want to hear. Invite them to ask deeper.

Q003 Why did you choose this field?**SAMPLE ANSWER**

In my second year I attended a talk by a supply chain manager at TVS. She described her day and I realised the parts of my B.Com I enjoyed most, operations, logistics, numbers with a real-world context, all lived in that one job. Since then I have done two internships in operations-adjacent roles to test whether I still liked it. I did.

WHY IT WORKS

Show a moment of realisation, real or reasonable, not a vague 'I always wanted to'. Interviewers value evidence of thinking.

Q004 What are your strengths?**SAMPLE ANSWER**

Three things. First, I am structured, I plan the week on Sundays and stick to it. Second, I write clearly, which has helped in every internship because I could make senior colleagues' work easier by summarising things well. Third, I stay calm under pressure, I coordinated a 400-student college fest last year and no one saw me panic, even when the sponsor pulled out two days before.

WHY IT WORKS

Three max. Each strength gets a one-line proof. Vague adjectives without proof land like cliches.

Q005 What are your weaknesses?

SAMPLE ANSWER

I tend to over-prepare. Early in my internship I would spend a whole evening polishing a report that my manager wanted in two hours. I have fixed this by writing a rough version first, sharing it early, and then improving based on feedback, so I ship faster and the final version is actually closer to what they wanted. I am still working on it, but the shift has been visible.

WHY IT WORKS

A real weakness plus how you noticed it plus what you are doing about it. Never say 'I work too hard'. Red flag for lack of self-awareness.

Q006 Where do you see yourself in five years?

SAMPLE ANSWER

Realistically, in five years I want to have gone deep in one function first, probably operations analytics, become the person my team goes to for that skill, and then start managing a small team. Beyond that, I would like to have completed a professional certification like CFA or an operations qualification. But my honest priority right now is picking a first job where the learning is steep, more than the title on day one.

WHY IT WORKS

Show direction, not a fantasy title. Signal commitment. End with humility.

Q007 Why should we hire you?

SAMPLE ANSWER

Three reasons. One, my two internships mean I understand the day-to-day of this kind of role, I will not need three months to figure out basic tools. Two, I have deliberately picked projects that involved data and stakeholders, which matches what your JD describes. Three, I am from Trichy and looking to build my career here, you will not have retention issues around relocation. I know you will meet many candidates today. I think what sets me apart is that I already speak your language.

WHY IT WORKS

A fit argument, not self-praise. Tie each reason to what the company actually needs.

Q008 What motivates you?

SAMPLE ANSWER

Solving a problem that felt stuck. In my last internship, invoices were being cleared late because a step in the process was not documented. I mapped it, wrote a one-pager, and the average delay dropped from 6 days to 3. Seeing that small change actually work is the feeling I chase. Salary and titles matter, but that feeling is what makes me stay late.

WHY IT WORKS

Specific, story-shaped, quietly ambitious. Beats 'I am a self-starter'.

Q009 What are your hobbies?

SAMPLE ANSWER

I write short book reviews on Instagram, mostly Indian non-fiction. It has forced me to actually finish books, and to think about how to say something in 200 words. I also play badminton every weekend with a group from college. It is how I switch off and how I have made most of my closest friends.

WHY IT WORKS

Two hobbies is enough. Something that shows discipline plus something social is a strong combo.

Q010 What is your biggest achievement?

SAMPLE ANSWER

Coordinating our college fest last year. I was in a team of six but I ended up owning sponsorships. I cold-called 40 local businesses, closed sponsorships from 8, and we finished with a Rs. 60,000 surplus for the college, a first in five years. The fest ran without financial stress, which meant the creative team could focus on the event itself. It taught me that consistency in outreach beats talent.

WHY IT WORKS

End with a lesson learned. Never end an achievement story with just the outcome.

Q011 How do you handle failure?

SAMPLE ANSWER

In my first internship I misread a client's instructions and sent out a report with the wrong quarter's data. My manager was furious. I owned it in front of the team, worked till 11 PM to redo it, and personally called the client the next morning to apologise before resending. What changed after that: I now repeat back complex instructions before I start, and send a checkpoint at 50 percent completion. I have made new mistakes since, but not that one.

WHY IT WORKS

Real failure, ownership, action, permanent change. Never say 'I do not fail'. Instant red flag.

Q012 Describe yourself in three words.

SAMPLE ANSWER

Structured, calm, curious. Structured, I plan and stick to it. Calm, I have been the person people call in a crisis both at college and in my internships. Curious, I read outside my field, which is why I understand basic marketing even though I am a commerce student.

WHY IT WORKS

Three words plus one line of proof each. The words should match the job's demands.

Q013 What do you do outside academics?

SAMPLE ANSWER

Two things I make time for every week: badminton on Sundays with the same group for two years, and writing a weekly newsletter with a friend where we summarise one business news story for our juniors. The newsletter has around 200 subscribers now. Both of those have taught me consistency, which honestly no class ever did.

WHY IT WORKS

Consistency signals character. Numbers add credibility.

Q014 What kind of environment do you work best in?

SAMPLE ANSWER

One where I know what success looks like by end of month, and then I am mostly left alone to figure out how. Weekly check-ins are enough for me. I do best when I can see how my work connects to the customer or the business outcome, it is motivating. And I like being on a team where feedback is direct, even when it stings, because I would rather know now than six months later.

WHY IT WORKS

Answers three unspoken questions: management preference, feedback style, team fit. Nail all three in one answer.

Q015 Are you willing to relocate?

SAMPLE ANSWER

Yes, within India, and I have spoken with my family about it. Chennai, Bangalore or Hyderabad specifically would be easy. If it is a smaller city, I would want to visit once before joining. For international relocation, I would need to plan for it, I could not do it in the first year, but in year two or three, absolutely yes.

WHY IT WORKS

Say yes if you mean it. Say no if you do not. Never lie here. It will surface in the offer stage and burn the offer.

03

CHAPTER TWO

Motivation and Company Fit (Q16–35)

The block where interviewers separate the specific from the desperate. Every answer here should feel like it belongs to their company and their role, not a generic template you would send anywhere.

Q016 Why do you want to work for us?

SAMPLE ANSWER

I have followed your company because of your work in a specific product or vertical. What stood out for me is a specific fact, a recent launch, a culture post you read, an employee interview. I want to be somewhere the work is technical enough to keep me learning, but where I can also see how it reaches a real user. From the role description you posted, that is exactly what this position offers.

WHY IT WORKS

Cite one specific thing you researched. Vague flattery ('great culture') is the number one killer.

Q017 Why do you want to leave your current college?

SAMPLE ANSWER

College has given me the foundation and the pace of studying is genuinely enjoyable, but at this point I want to be in a working environment where the feedback loop is faster and the stakes are real. That is a different kind of learning I cannot get in a classroom.

WHY IT WORKS

For freshers: replace 'leave' with 'graduate into work'. Never criticise college or professors. Very small industry.

Q018 What do you know about our company?

SAMPLE ANSWER

Trichy Plus is a training and placement institute founded in 1998 in Tiruchirappalli. Its focus is enhancing employability skills for UG and PG students across streams: aptitude, reasoning, communication and interview preparation. It runs training programmes with autonomous colleges like St Joseph's, and its trainers cover CAT, banking, SSC and general placement prep. What appeals to me is the mission around student outcomes rather than just certificates.

WHY IT WORKS

Do this level of research for every company you interview with. Two minutes on LinkedIn plus website is enough.

Q019 What excites you about this role?

SAMPLE ANSWER

Two things. The first is the mix of analytical work and stakeholder interaction, pure numbers roles bore me over time. The second is that the JD mentions the person owning this role will build the reporting layer from scratch. I would rather build something imperfect from zero than maintain something someone else designed.

WHY IT WORKS

Show that you read the JD carefully. Pick two concrete things from it.

Q020 What do you know about our industry?**SAMPLE ANSWER**

The training and placement industry in India has been shifting from generic content to college-embedded programmes, because employability, not just certification, is what students actually need. Companies like TCS with the NQT and IBPS with its exam pattern have created a very structured skill expectation. Institutes that partner directly with colleges to build those skills have a natural advantage.

WHY IT WORKS

Show industry-level thinking. Even 3 or 4 sentences signal you do not just want any job.

Q021 How did you hear about us?**SAMPLE ANSWER**

Through my college's placement cell. Then I looked you up on LinkedIn and read a few employee posts before I applied.

WHY IT WORKS

Simple, honest, shows you did homework.

Q022 What do you expect from this job?**SAMPLE ANSWER**

In the first six months, a steep learning curve and a manager who tells me when I am doing something wrong. In the first year, ownership of one part of the workflow end to end. In the first two years, exposure to at least two functions so I understand how the business fits together.

WHY IT WORKS

Show time-bounded expectations. Do not say 'growth'. That is meaningless.

Q023 Would you take this job even if you got a better offer tomorrow?**SAMPLE ANSWER**

Depends on 'better'. If it is just more money, yes I would still take this if the work and the team here are the right fit for me long term. If the other offer is genuinely a stronger match for what I want to do, I would be honest with you about it. I would rather have that conversation now than start on the wrong foot.

WHY IT WORKS

Refuse to give a fake absolute answer. Honesty here impresses more than compliance.

Q024 What made you apply today?**SAMPLE ANSWER**

I saw the posting three days ago, spent one evening researching the company and the team, and then wrote a specific cover letter for it. I did not want to do a mass application. I wanted this one to be considered on its own merit.

WHY IT WORKS

Signals selectivity and effort.

Q025 Do you have any offers already?**SAMPLE ANSWER**

I have applied to a few companies. I have one active process, final round with a specific type of company. I will be honest with you about my timeline if it comes to a decision.

WHY IT WORKS

Never lie. Never brag. Being one of several serious candidates makes you more attractive, not less.

Q026 What if we said no today?**SAMPLE ANSWER**

I would ask you for one piece of feedback on where I fell short so I can address it in my next interview. Then I would apply to Trichy Plus again the next time you have a relevant opening, it would not change my interest in the company.

WHY IT WORKS

Grace under rejection equals maturity. This answer often gets people reconsidered.

Q027 How does this role fit into your long-term plan?**SAMPLE ANSWER**

My long-term plan is to build a career in operations analytics for consumer businesses. This role is a strong first chapter because it gives me exposure to both the analytics side via the reporting work and the operations side via the process-improvement projects listed in the JD. Two to three years here and I will be in a much stronger position for that career.

WHY IT WORKS

Frame the role as a chapter in your plan. Shows both commitment and self-awareness.

Q028 What kind of manager do you want?**SAMPLE ANSWER**

Someone who is direct, who blocks time to teach me the first few months, and who trusts me with real work after that. I do not need daily check-ins but I do need clarity on what success looks like. And when I mess up, I would rather hear it in a 10-minute one-on-one than in a group meeting.

WHY IT WORKS

Self-awareness about your work style without sounding demanding.

Q029 How do you feel about working long hours?**SAMPLE ANSWER**

I have done long weeks in college fests and in internships, I can do them when the work needs it. What I do not want is long hours as a permanent expectation because I have seen it burn people out. If there is a launch or a deadline, I will be there. If it is every week, that is a conversation.

WHY IT WORKS

Honest without being negative. Nobody wants a candidate who says 'I love working 90 hours a week'.

Q030 How would your friends describe you?

SAMPLE ANSWER

Reliable, if I say I will be there, I will be there. A bit intense when I am on a project. Quiet in a big group, chatty in a small one. And apparently the one who always has snacks in her bag.

WHY IT WORKS

Add one small human detail. Makes you memorable in a day of 40 interviews.

Q031 What company values matter to you?

SAMPLE ANSWER

Two. First, transparency, I want to know why decisions are made, not just what they are. Second, ownership, I want to be somewhere people say 'I will fix it' instead of pointing at other teams. Everything else I can adapt to.

WHY IT WORKS

Pick two. Concrete over abstract.

Q032 What made you choose this company over others?

SAMPLE ANSWER

The specific work in a vertical, the team's public writing, and the interview process so far has felt more considered than others. Small things like the interviewer being on time and asking follow-up questions signal a lot about how the company operates.

WHY IT WORKS

Include the interview experience itself as a signal. Flatters, but honestly.

Q033 How committed will you be to this role?

SAMPLE ANSWER

Very. I do not apply lightly and I do not switch jobs lightly. My plan is to be here for at least three years, ideally more. I am looking for depth in one place, not variety.

WHY IT WORKS

Only say numbers you can honour. If you are going for higher studies in 2 years, do not say 5.

Q034 Do you want to eventually start your own business?

SAMPLE ANSWER

Maybe, but not for a decade. Right now what I want is to learn how one is actually run, the operations, the finance, the people side, from the inside. That is what this job gives me. If I ever start something, it will be after I have earned the experience.

WHY IT WORKS

Interviewers ask this to check flight risk. Show that a job with them serves the entrepreneur dream, not competes with it.

Q035 Why this city or location?**SAMPLE ANSWER**

I have grown up here, my family is here, and I know how to be productive here. That stability matters early in a career. Also, the Trichy market is growing in your industry and I would rather be part of building it than move to a saturated city.

WHY IT WORKS

Location commitment reduces hiring risk. Bank on it.

04

CHAPTER THREE

Behavioural and Situational (Q36–65)

The STAR block. Every answer here is a story with a beginning, middle and end. Prepare three or four core anecdotes from your life and you will be able to answer 20 different behavioural questions by reframing the same stories.

Q036 Tell me about a time you led a team.**SAMPLE ANSWER**

In my third year I led a five-person team that ran the college's blood donation drive. My job was not the medical side, I coordinated logistics with the hospital, permissions with the college, and social media. We had 180 registrations vs a target of 150. What I learned: leading peers is 80 percent follow-up. Nothing gets done unless you are the one calling to confirm at 9 PM.

Q037 Tell me about a time you failed.**SAMPLE ANSWER**

In my first internship I estimated a task at 2 days that took 5. I had not asked enough clarifying questions upfront and had to redo the analysis when the manager corrected my assumptions on day 3. Since then I ask 3 questions before starting anything, and send a scope document by end of day 1 for anything over a day of work.

Q038 Tell me about a conflict with a teammate.**SAMPLE ANSWER**

During our final year project, one teammate was not doing his share. Instead of complaining to the guide, I asked him for coffee, and it turned out he was dealing with a family situation. We redistributed the load quietly, he came back strong in the last month, and we submitted on time. Lesson: assume there is a story before assuming there is a problem.

Q039 Tell me about a difficult decision you made.**SAMPLE ANSWER**

I was offered a paid internship in the summer that would have paid me Rs. 15,000 a month, and a strategy internship that paid nothing. I chose the unpaid one because the work would teach me more. My parents disagreed, but I made a case that it was a one-summer investment. That internship became the reference I use in every application today.

Q040 Tell me about a time you had to learn something quickly.**SAMPLE ANSWER**

My internship needed Power BI and I had never used it. I gave myself the first weekend to do a full YouTube course, spent Monday to Wednesday building a small dashboard on sample data, and by Thursday I was building live dashboards for the manager. Lesson: crash-learning works if you have a real deliverable at the end.

Q041 Tell me about a time you disagreed with your manager.**SAMPLE ANSWER**

My manager wanted to send a report to the client before a data check. I flagged that one of the pivot fields might be wrong. He was in a hurry. I offered to do the check in 20 minutes instead of arguing about it. It turned out to be wrong. We caught it before it went out. He thanked me. Disagree by offering to verify, not by refusing.

Q042 Tell me about a time you went above and beyond.**SAMPLE ANSWER**

During the college fest, our audio team missed the venue setup. I went to a nearby electronics rental shop at 6 AM, negotiated a same-day rental, and got the system installed by 10 AM. The event started on time. Nobody knew. That is when I learned that a lot of leadership is just making problems disappear quietly.

Q043 Tell me about a time you had to make an unpopular decision.**SAMPLE ANSWER**

As event lead, I removed a friend from the core team because she was not showing up. It was hard because we have been close since Class 11. I explained the reason privately, took the emotional hit, and the event ran better. Our friendship survived because I was honest instead of passive-aggressive.

Q044 Tell me about a time you worked under pressure.**SAMPLE ANSWER**

Two days before the fest, our main sponsor withdrew. I had to raise Rs. 40,000 in 36 hours. I made a list of every alumnus I knew, sent a WhatsApp draft to 20 of them, and got Rs. 55,000 in commitments by the next evening. Pressure clarifies priorities. Slow days are more dangerous than crisis days for me.

Q045 Tell me about a mistake and what you learned.**SAMPLE ANSWER**

I once sent an email meant for internal review to the full client list because I had not checked the To field. It was embarrassing. I sent a correction within 15 minutes owning the error. I now use the 30-second rule: after clicking send, I re-open the sent folder and check the recipient list. Simple, boring, works.

Q046 Tell me about a time you helped someone else succeed.**SAMPLE ANSWER**

A junior in my department was struggling with statistics. I spent two Sundays walking her through it, made her a two-page cheat sheet, and she cleared the exam. She told me it made her stay in the course. I got more from teaching her than from studying myself, because I had to actually understand it to explain it.

Q047 Tell me about a time you took initiative.**SAMPLE ANSWER**

In my internship the daily standup was chaotic, no agenda, no notes. I offered to type notes at the end of each standup and share them by 6 PM. Within two weeks the whole team was doing it, and my manager mentioned it in my exit review. Small process changes are usually invisible until they are not there.

Q048 Tell me about a project you are most proud of.**SAMPLE ANSWER**

My final year project was a demand forecasting model for a local pharmacy chain. I collected 8 months of their sales data, built a simple regression in Excel, and got their stockout rate to reduce from 12 percent to 4 percent over one month of testing. It was not sophisticated, but it worked, and it was real. I am proud of the real part.

Q049 Tell me about a time you missed a deadline.**SAMPLE ANSWER**

I once missed a client deadline by 24 hours because I underestimated how long approvals would take. I called the client myself, explained without excuses, delivered the next morning, and offered to do the next report a day earlier as compensation. They said yes. Since then I add a 20 percent buffer on any deliverable involving other people.

Q050 Tell me about a time you gave someone difficult feedback.**SAMPLE ANSWER**

During our group project, a teammate's slide design was making our deck look unprofessional. I told him privately, showed him one specific example, and offered to sit with him for 30 minutes to fix it together. He was defensive at first, but agreed. The final deck won us the department prize. Give feedback with a fix, not a complaint.

Q051 Tell me about a time you had to persuade someone.**SAMPLE ANSWER**

My parents wanted me to pursue CA after B.Com. I wanted to go into corporate operations. Over three months, I set up meetings for them with two of my mentors who worked in industry, showed them my internship offer letter, and modelled the salary trajectories for both paths. They agreed. Persuasion is 90 percent giving people the same data you have.

Q052 How do you handle stress?**SAMPLE ANSWER**

In the moment, I list what I actually control on paper. Half the stress usually disappears when I realise the list is shorter than the panic. Long term, I exercise three times a week and I stop opening my laptop after 10 PM. Discipline about switch-off is what has kept me from burning out.

Q053 How do you prioritise your work?**SAMPLE ANSWER**

I plan on Sunday for the week and every morning for the day. Two categories: what is urgent and what is important. Urgent gets slotted first, then I protect two hours a day for the important-but-not-urgent, usually learning or planning. Everything else fills the gaps.

Q054 How do you handle criticism?**SAMPLE ANSWER**

I take notes. Literally. It stops me from getting defensive because I am busy writing. Then I sit with it for 24 hours before responding. Most criticism has a valid core even when the delivery is poor, I want to catch that core.

Q055 What would your last manager say about you?**SAMPLE ANSWER**

That I am dependable and that I ask a lot of clarifying questions. She would probably also say I need to be more assertive in meetings, that was in my exit review, and it is something I have been working on since.

Q056 How do you make decisions?**SAMPLE ANSWER**

For small decisions, fast, I trust the first instinct if the downside is small. For big decisions, I write down the criteria before I look at the options, so I do not reverse-engineer the criteria to match what I already want. That habit has saved me from a few bad choices.

Q057 Give an example of working in a diverse team.**SAMPLE ANSWER**

In my last project, my four teammates were from four different states, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Bihar and Assam. Communication style was very different across the room. We agreed early to use English in all meetings and to over-communicate rather than assume. It made every meeting slightly slower, but zero misunderstandings by the end.

Q058 How do you handle repetitive work?**SAMPLE ANSWER**

I try to automate it. My last internship had a weekly report that took 4 hours manually. I built a template with formulas that cut it to 40 minutes. If it cannot be automated, I batch it, do all my repetitive tasks in one 90-minute block instead of scattering them through the day.

Q059 What role do you play in a team?**SAMPLE ANSWER**

I am the one who writes the summary at the end of the meeting so we all leave with the same understanding. I am not usually the loudest voice, but I am the one who makes sure the decisions are captured, and I will follow up 48 hours later to check they happened.

Q060 Tell me about a time you had to speak in public.

SAMPLE ANSWER

I presented our final year project to a panel of 6 professors. I was nervous. What helped: I practised the opening 30 seconds out loud 20 times so my voice stayed steady for the start. After the first minute I was fine. Lesson: prepare the first minute cold, and let the rest follow.

Q061 Tell me about a time you had to say no.

SAMPLE ANSWER

A senior asked me to redo her assignment when I had my own submission due. I said, 'I cannot take it on this week, but I can look at yours next Sunday and give you edits.' She accepted. Saying no with a smaller yes is what stops guilt.

Q062 How do you deal with change?

SAMPLE ANSWER

I ask two questions first: what is actually changing, and what is staying the same. Most change is smaller than the announcement makes it feel. Then I identify the one or two habits I need to adjust and stop trying to adjust everything at once.

Q063 What is your leadership style?

SAMPLE ANSWER

I lead by example rather than by authority, I do the boring first task myself before asking anyone else to. I check in on people individually rather than in group settings. And I am quick to give credit publicly and criticism privately.

Q064 How do you learn something new?

SAMPLE ANSWER

I read one good overview to get the vocabulary, then I try to build something small immediately. If it is a tool, a dashboard. If it is a concept, an explanation for a friend. Reading without doing does not stick for me, I have stopped trying.

Q065 Tell me about a time your work was recognised.

SAMPLE ANSWER

In my internship I got a written email from the CEO thanking me for a small process fix I had suggested that saved the team about 2 hours a week. That email is still on my phone, not for the flattery, but because it reminded me that small improvements matter to people who can see the whole picture.

05

CHAPTER FOUR

The Curveballs (Q66–80)

The unexpected questions. These are not designed to test knowledge, they are designed to test your composure. Show your thinking out loud. Nobody expects a perfect answer. Everyone notices a panicked one.

Q066 If you were an animal, what would you be and why?**SAMPLE ANSWER**

An elephant. They are patient, they remember everything, and they work in coordinated groups. Not the flashiest answer, but honest to how I try to work.

Q067 Sell me this pen.**SAMPLE ANSWER**

I would first ask you three questions, do you take handwritten notes in meetings, do you sign documents daily, and what pen do you currently use. Depending on your answer, I would frame this pen against that. Selling starts with listening, not talking.

Q068 Tell me something interesting about yourself that is not on your resume.**SAMPLE ANSWER**

I have been learning to play the guitar since Class 11, only three chords for the first two years, and now I can play about 20 songs. It is the longest thing I have stuck with outside academics, and it taught me that consistency beats bursts.

Q069 What is the last book you read?**SAMPLE ANSWER**

'The Psychology of Money' by Morgan Housel. What stayed with me: most financial mistakes are not about maths, they are about behaviour. That reframed how I think about my own savings decisions.

Q070 How many footballs fit in this room?**SAMPLE ANSWER**

Let me estimate. The room is roughly 6m by 5m by 3m, so 90 cubic metres. A football is about 22 cm diameter, so roughly 0.011 cubic metres. Packing efficiency for spheres is around 65 percent. So around 90 times 0.65 divided by 0.011, or about 5,300. I would round to about 5,000. Happy to walk through my assumptions if any look off.

Q071 How do you explain a complex idea to a child?**SAMPLE ANSWER**

First I find something they already know that is similar. If I am explaining interest, I would compare it to a plant growing, you plant a small tree, wait, and every year it gets slightly bigger. Compound interest is just the tree growing new branches that then grow their own branches. Analogies before definitions.

Q072 What is a common belief in your field that you disagree with?**SAMPLE ANSWER**

That aptitude scores predict job performance well. From what I have seen, they predict who can pass a filter, but the correlation with actual work quality is weak. Motivation, communication and follow-through matter more, and none of those show up in a 60-minute test.

Q073 If you had Rs. 10 lakhs to invest in yourself over 3 years, what would you spend it on?**SAMPLE ANSWER**

Rs. 3 lakh on a professional certification. Rs. 2 lakh on travel, at least three trips, because they have changed how I think more than any book. Rs. 2 lakh on a laptop and tools. Rs. 3 lakh in an emergency fund and index funds so I do not panic-take a bad job when money gets tight.

Q074 What do you not like doing?**SAMPLE ANSWER**

Meetings without a clear agenda. Not because they are boring, but because they burn time without producing decisions. When I have been the organiser, I now send an agenda 24 hours in advance. When I have been the attendee, I ask for one politely.

Q075 Who is your role model?**SAMPLE ANSWER**

My grandfather. He ran a small provision store in Trichy for 40 years, remembered the credit history of about 300 customers by memory, and put three children through college on that. He did not teach me anything by lecturing, I learned by watching. He is the reason I care about small businesses.

Q076 What do people usually not notice about you?**SAMPLE ANSWER**

That I get nervous before every presentation. I look calm because I practise the first 60 seconds a lot, but I am always nervous. I mention it because I do not want to give the impression it comes naturally, I have just gotten better at hiding it.

Q077 If we hired you today, what is the first thing you would do on Monday?**SAMPLE ANSWER**

Ask my manager for a 20-minute intro coffee. I would want to know what a great first 30 days looks like from her side, so I can align with that instead of guessing. Then I would set up 15-minute intros with the two or three people I will be working with most.

Q078 What is your least favourite question in this interview?**SAMPLE ANSWER**

'Tell me about a time you failed', because the honest answers make you sound worse than the sanitised ones, and I am not always sure which the interviewer wants. I default to honest. I hope that is the right call.

Q079 If you could change one thing about your college, what would it be?**SAMPLE ANSWER**

More project-based assessments in place of the third rewritten exam. We had brilliant seniors who could clear exams but could not build a simple Excel model. The gap between 'graduate' and 'ready-to-work' is bigger than it needs to be, and it is an assessment design problem.

Q080 If you won a lakh right now, what would you do with it?**SAMPLE ANSWER**

Half into a fixed deposit for buffer, thirty thousand into a course I have been putting off, and twenty thousand to take my parents somewhere they have never been. Boring, but that is actually what I would do.

06

CHAPTER FIVE

Salary, Closing and Trap Questions (Q81–100)

The final block, and where most freshers lose points they had already won. Slow down. Do not give a number when a range works. Do not accept a lowball out of gratitude. And always, always have your own questions ready.

Q081 What are your salary expectations?**SAMPLE ANSWER**

Based on my research on similar roles in Trichy and Chennai, the range seems to be Rs. 3.5 to 5 lakhs CTC for a fresher in this function. I would be looking at that range. That said, if the learning and growth are strong, I am open to discussing the specific number. What is the range for this role from your side?

WHY IT WORKS

Give a researched range, not one number. End by turning it back. You learn their range without committing.

Q082 That is higher than we offer.**SAMPLE ANSWER**

That is fair. Can I ask what is included in the CTC you are offering, variable, benefits, training? Depending on the full picture I might be more flexible than the base number suggests.

WHY IT WORKS

Never say yes or no immediately. Ask for the full picture first.

Q083 What was your previous salary?**SAMPLE ANSWER**

My last internship stipend was Rs. 10,000 per month. That said, I would prefer the offer for this role to be based on the responsibilities and market rate rather than my last internship, because those are different roles.

WHY IT WORKS

Redirect from your past number to the market number.

Q084 Why are you willing to take a lower salary than your peers?**SAMPLE ANSWER**

Because at this stage, the team I am joining and the depth of work matter more to me than the number. I have done my numbers, the pay difference over three years is smaller than what a strong first job adds to lifetime earnings.

WHY IT WORKS

Reframe as a considered trade-off, not desperation.

Q085 How soon can you join?**SAMPLE ANSWER**

I can start within 3 weeks. I would want that time to close out my current commitments cleanly and make sure I arrive able to focus fully.

WHY IT WORKS

Never say 'immediately' unless you actually can. It signals desperation.

Q086 Are you interviewing with other companies?**SAMPLE ANSWER**

Yes, I am in the process with two others. I applied selectively, not broadly. If it helps you time your decision, I am expecting to hear back from them within 10 days.

WHY IT WORKS

Honest, quietly signals demand, helps them move faster.

Q087 If we hire you, what is the first thing you would improve?**SAMPLE ANSWER**

I do not know enough about your workflow yet to answer that with any authority. What I can commit to is that in my first 60 days I will be listening more than talking, and after that I will be ready with specific suggestions.

WHY IT WORKS

Never criticise the company's current state from outside. This answer shows humility AND ambition.

Q088 What is your biggest concern about this role?**SAMPLE ANSWER**

The reporting layer is a lot to build from scratch in the first year. I am confident I can, but I would want clarity on what support I will have from your data team, that is my one open question.

WHY IT WORKS

Show that you have engaged with the JD critically. Interviewers respect a candid concern.

Q089 What would make you turn down this offer?**SAMPLE ANSWER**

A significant mismatch on scope, if the role turned out to be much narrower than what we have discussed. Or if I could not get comfortable with my direct manager. Compensation is not usually the deciding factor for me.

WHY IT WORKS

Naming a real dealbreaker builds trust, does not lose you the offer.

Q090 How would you evaluate your success in the first 6 months?**SAMPLE ANSWER**

Three markers. One, my manager is comfortable delegating work to me without checking twice. Two, I have owned at least one deliverable end to end. Three, someone from another team has asked me for help, which means my work is visible enough to be useful to others.

WHY IT WORKS

Concrete markers beat vague 'growth'.

Q091 Do you have any questions for us?**SAMPLE ANSWER**

Three quick ones. What does a great first year in this role look like from your side? What are the biggest challenges the person in this role has faced historically? And, how would you describe the team culture during a difficult week, not a normal one?

WHY IT WORKS

Always have questions. 'No, I think you have covered everything' is a losing answer. Prepare 3 in advance.

Q092 Anything else you would like us to know?**SAMPLE ANSWER**

One thing. I might come across as quiet in the first 20 minutes of any new meeting. I take a while to warm up. Please do not read it as disinterest. Once I have the context, I am active.

WHY IT WORKS

Surfacing a self-aware quirk shows maturity.

Q093 How would you handle it if you did not like your team?**SAMPLE ANSWER**

First I would figure out whether it is the team or a specific person, those are different problems. If it is a person, I would try a direct one-on-one before escalating. If it is the whole team dynamic, I would give it three months of genuine effort before concluding, first impressions are unreliable.

WHY IT WORKS

Method beats platitude.

Q094 Would you rather be respected or liked?**SAMPLE ANSWER**

Respected. Liking is a bonus. If I have done the work well and been direct, most people also end up liking me, but the reverse is not true, and I have seen people confuse being liked with being valued.

Q095 What do you think of your college?**SAMPLE ANSWER**

It gave me a solid foundation and access to some very good peers. Not every course was strong, but I found ways to compensate by taking online courses in parallel. On the whole, I am grateful for the time here.

WHY IT WORKS

Never bash your college. Small industry, and it signals disloyalty.

Q096 How would you handle a low performance review?**SAMPLE ANSWER**

Take it seriously, ask specifically what would look like improvement, and check back in 30 days for a mid-point read. Reviews are useful when they are specific, I would push for that specificity instead of getting defensive.

WHY IT WORKS

Show that you separate the criticism from your identity.

Q097 What if I told you I do not think you are the right fit?**SAMPLE ANSWER**

I would ask what specifically made you feel that, because I might be able to address it now, or I might learn something useful for the next interview. I would not argue, you have spent time with me and you have context I do not.

WHY IT WORKS

Grace under direct rejection tests real character.

Q098 How do you feel about being managed by someone younger than you?**SAMPLE ANSWER**

Fine. Age is not the variable that matters, what matters is whether they know the domain better than I do. Some of the sharpest people I have learned from have been my age or younger. What I would want is clarity and honest feedback, regardless of who is giving it.

Q099 What is one thing you want us to remember about you after today?**SAMPLE ANSWER**

That I have thought about this role specifically, not just 'a job'. I have researched the company, prepared for the interview with intent, and I am asking questions you would expect from someone who wants exactly this role.

Q100 Is there anything I should have asked you but did not?**SAMPLE ANSWER**

One thing. You did not ask what I would want to be doing three years from now. My answer: leading a small team owning end-to-end reporting for a business unit. I mention it because I want you to know I am serious about staying long enough to earn that.

WHY IT WORKS

This question is a gift. Have one thing prepared to volunteer. It becomes the last thing they remember about you.

07

YOUR PERSONAL PLAN

Your Interview Story Bank

Print this section. Fill it in before every interview. It takes 20 minutes and it is the difference between a nervous ramble and a confident, focused answer.

Part 1: Your Core Story Bank

Prepare four stories from your life. Reuse them across 20 different behavioural questions by reframing what you emphasise. This is the shortcut no interviewer will tell you.

Story 1: A time I led something (project, team, event)

Situation, action, result, and what you learned. In 90 seconds spoken.

Story 2: A time I failed and what I fixed after

Real failure. Real ownership. Permanent behavioural change.

Story 3: A time I solved a problem no one asked me to

Bonus points if it saved time or money. Numbers add weight.

Story 4: A time I disagreed with someone and handled it well

Manager, teammate, professor. Show the method.

Part 2: Your Two-Minute Introduction

Write your Q1 answer fully. Read it aloud. Time it. If it is over 90 seconds, cut. Then memorise the arc, not the words.

Who I am (one sentence)

Name, college, degree, year.

Why this field (one line)

The moment or reason you chose it.

What I have done (one to two proofs)

Internships, projects, side pursuits.

What I do beyond studies (one thing)

Hobby, side pursuit, community role.

What I am looking for (one line)

Role type, industry, and honest fit criterion.

Part 3: The Three Questions I Will Ask

Always have three. Prepare in advance. Never say 'No, you have covered it'.

Question 1

Question 2

Question 3

BOOK A FREE MOCK INTERVIEW

Every Saturday, 20 minutes, no charge

We run free 20-minute mock interviews on our website every Saturday. Bring your filled workbook, we will run through six random questions and give you specific feedback on where you sounded weakest. This is the fastest way to catch verbal filler and rambling before it matters.

THE LAST WORD

Interviewers do not remember your answers. They remember how you made them feel.

Every question in this book has a right answer and a hundred wrong ones. But the student who walks in prepared, breathing steady, listening more than talking, and leaving space for the interviewer to steer, wins the interview even when their answers are only average. Preparation buys you calm. Calm wins the room.

“Opportunities don't happen. You create them.”

CHRIS GROSSER
