GET HIRED IN GLOBAL TECH

ENGLISH FOR TECH INTERVIEWS

GENERAL • BEHAVIOURAL • TECHNICAL

By Speak Tech English

WHO THIS BOOK IS FOR

You already speak English at an intermediate level or higher.
This isn't a beginner's textbook - it's designed to take your English skills from good to great, especially in interview settings.

You're preparing for English-speaking interviews.
Maybe you're applying for global roles where English is the shared language, or for positions in fully native environments, like joining a small team in the UK office.

You work in tech or a closely related field.
The examples in this book focus on roles like software engineers, data professionals, product managers/owners, etc... However, many of the skills are transferable to other business roles.

You want to improve your communication and soft skills.
This book won't teach you technical skills like algorithms or system design. We focus on soft skills, communication strategies, and cultural awareness you need to succeed in English-speaking interviews.

Your interview responses lack structure.
For every common interview question, we show you how to organise your ideas into clear frameworks so your skills and experience are easy for interviewers to understand.

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UNIT 2: GENERAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

SELF-INTRODUCTION

The real secret to the 'Tell me about yourself?' response is that it's your chance to take control of future questions. You can set up the topics you want to highlight later.

That's why it's worth preparing this answer carefully. A strong response not only gives a great first impression but also gives you more control over where the interview goes next.

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Task answers can be found from page 107

AFTER THIS CHAPTER, YOU WILL HAVE...

- ✓ A clear and engaging **2-3 minute** self introduction
- ✓ A confident and natural way to greet the interviewer
- ✓ A career summary that focuses on **achievements**, not just repsonsibilities
- ✓ Your unique selling point (USP) that will make you **stand out** from other candidates
- ✓ Accurate use of **verb tenses** to clearly show your career timeline (past, current, future)

SELF INTRODUCTION

Interviewers often form their first impression within the first few minutes, or maybe even seconds.

As a non-native speaker, investing time in mastering your self-introduction offers the highest return on investment.

Not only does it create a strong first impression, but it also gives you a strategic advantage. By choosing which skills or experiences to emphasise, you can guide the rest of the conversation toward areas where you stand out. It's also the one question you can be 100% sure you'll have to answer!

Let's go over some frequently asked questions, before diving into each part of the pitch in more detail.

How long should my pitch be?
A good self-introduction should be 1-2 minutes long. For more senior or experienced candidates, a maximum of 3 minutes. Any longer, and the interviewer may lose interest!

Should I give lots of detail?
No, save details for follow-up questions. Your introduction is like a movie trailer - give just enough information to spark interest. Leave space for the interviewer to ask about the parts they want to hear more about.

Should I talk about my hobbies?
It depends. Assess the vibe of the interview and how relaxed it feels. If it seems right, keep it short. Something like: "Outside of work, I love to be outside. I live near the mountains and usually spend my weekends hiking or cycling."

ANSWER STRUCTURE

Start Strong
Begin with a polite and natural greeting.

Background Summary
A high-level summary of who you are, followed by a brief summary of your current role and career path before this.

Tech Stack and Work Style
Core technical skills and how you like to work.

Motivation
Why this role/team/company?

Start Strong — Background Summary — Tech Stack Work Style — Motivation

Begin your pitch with a polite and natural greeting.
Why? Apart from being polite, it shows confidence and gives you a moment to compose yourself before you begin your full answer.

The interviewer will probably begin with asking a question like:

INTERVIEWERS QUESTION	HOW TO RESPOND
Tell me about yourself....	Absolutely, I'll start with a brief introduction.
Walk me through your resume.	Yes, let me give you a quick overview of my background
Can you introduce yourself?	Sure - I'd be happy to.
Nice to meet you.	It's great to meet you, too. Thanks for setting this up.

Give a high level summary of your career
To start, clearly state your job title, how long you've been in the role, and the types of industries or fields you've worked in.

Talk about your current position
Next, describe your current or most recent position. Don't just list your responsibilities, but focus on your achievements.
If possible, include measurable results. For example, instead of "I was responsible for writing tests", say "I wrote automated tests *that reduced manual QA time by 40%*."

Briefly summarise previous jobs
If you've held several positions, there's no need to list every position and responsibility - focus on those most relevant to the new role.

Students or graduates
Your background summary should state your degree or area of study, and then move into relevant experience such as internships, academic projects or even personal or open-source projects.

EXAMPLE SUMMARIES

I'm a Product Manager **with** 5 years of experience **in** B2B SaaS platforms

Most recently, I worked at XYZ **where I** led the redesign of the customer onboarding experience, reducing churn by 18%**.**

My background combines software engineering **and** user experience.

My time at company ABC **taught me how to** work in a fast-paced, dynamic environment.

COMMON MISTAKES

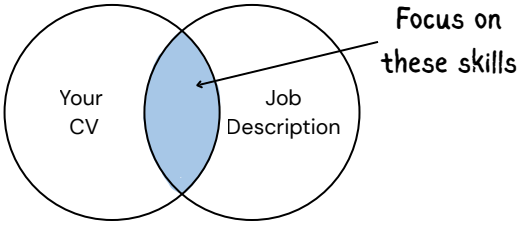
- Spending too much time describing what the company does
- Getting lost in technical details
- Listing lots of responsibilities, without showing any impact

How to talk about your tech stack

Focus on your strongest tools, and those most relevant to the job you're applying to.

Your tech stack involves:

- Programming languages
- Frameworks/libraries
- Tools
- Platforms
- Methodologies



Examples: Python, JavaScript, Django, Git, Tableau, Notion, AWS, Agile, CI/CD, Jira, Confluence

How to show your working style

This is your chance to show how you like to work and what motivates you day to day.

Be specific. Mention things like what kind of tasks you enjoy or how you prefer to collaborate.

If possible, you should find your **USP** (unique selling point) and highlight what really sets you apart from other candidates. This could be a specific combination of skills, a unique experience, or a strength that's especially valuable to this team or company.

GO DEEPER

Finding your USP is covered fully in **Unit 2: Strengths and Weaknesses →**

EXAMPLE PHRASES

Tech Stack

I have a **strong foundation in** both backend and frontend development.

I work mainly with Python and SQL, and **I've recently been** studying for an AWS cert.

I'm **comfortable working across** the stack, from designing APIs to building UI components.

Work Style

I really enjoy solving tricky backend challenges.

I work well in environments where I can collaborate closely with other teams.

I value clear communication and regular feedback.

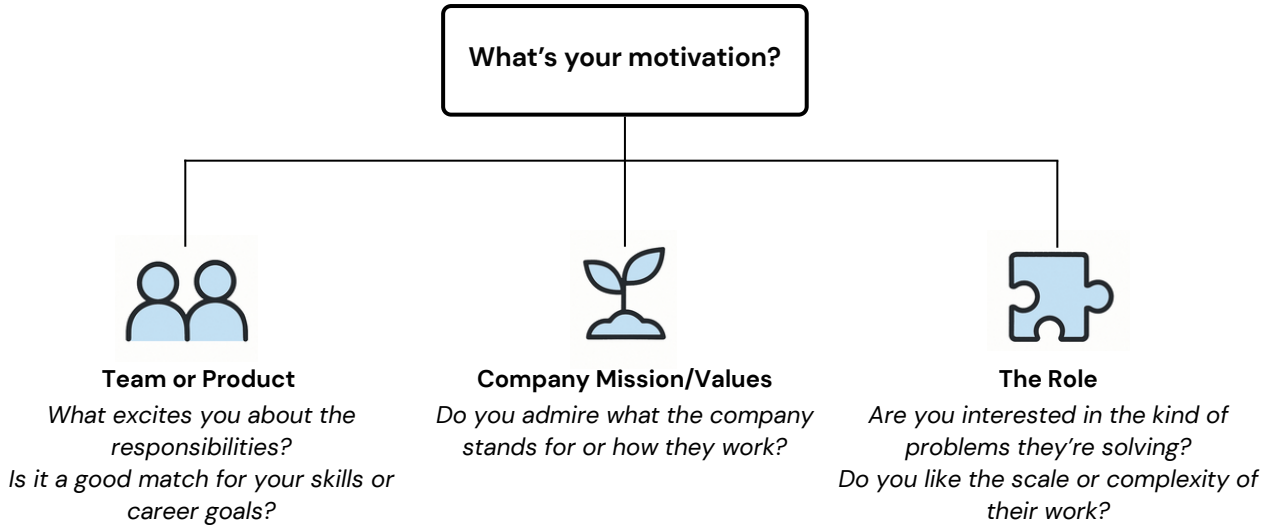
Start Strong | Background Summary | Tech Stack Work Style | **Motivation**

The final part of your self-introduction should *briefly* explain why you're interested in ***this*** *specific opportunity*. It shows the interviewer that you've done your research and that there's a good match between your goals and what the company offers.

You don't need to go into too much detail here, just one or two sentences is enough. This question often comes up later in the interview ("Why do you want to work here?"), so keep it short for now and be ready to expand if they follow up.

GO DEEPER

This is covered fully in **Unit 2: Why This Company? →**



EXAMPLE MOTIVATIONS

I'm drawn to the fact that you're solving a real user problem at scale.

I'm ready to be part of a fast-paced dynamic startup environment, like yours.

I've been looking for a role where I can take more ownership **and this opportunity really stood out.**

Now that we've covered each section of the self-introduction in detail, let's look at how this looks put together. Keep in mind that this is a simplified example. A real interview pitch would usually include more depth and context to the specific role.

MODEL ANSWER: SELF INTRODUCTION

Hi, I'm Natalia, thanks for speaking with me today.	← Start strong
I'm a full-stack developer with around 4 years of experience, mainly in React and Node.js. *Most recently I was at a SaaS company where I led the front-end development for a real-time dashboard used by over 5,000 users.* *Before that, I was part of a smaller startup team where I built several internal tools from scratch. That experience taught me how to move fast and own features end to end.*	← Background
I really enjoy turning complex problems into clean, user-focused interfaces and collaborating with team mates to deliver features that make a real impact.	← Work Style
What interested me about this position was your work in real-time analytics, which I'd love to contribute to. *I'm looking forward to learning more about this role and your team.*	← Motivation

IMPORTANT TIP!

It may seem minor, but smiling as you speak can make a big difference! It helps your tone sound more friendly and displays confidence and calmness.

💬 LANGUAGE FOCUS

What tenses should I be using in my self-introduction?
Using the correct verb tense is very important in your self-introduction as it helps the listener understand your **career timeline**. It makes it clear what you are doing now, what you did in the past, and what you want to do in the future.

VERB TENSE	WHEN TO USE	EXAMPLES
Present simple	• Greeting or opening • Stating your current role • Describing skills and tools • Explaining work style	*Thanks for having me.* *I'm a backend engineer.* *I use Python and AWS.* *I enjoy mentoring others.*
Past simple	• Talking about previous jobs • Explaining education • Describing what attracted you to the role	*I worked at PayPal for 3 years.* *I studied at UCL.* *What attracted me was your mission.*
Present Perfect	• Highlighting achievements	*I've worked across startups and enterprises.*
Present Perfect Continuous	• Describing how long you've been in your current role	*I've been working as a data engineer at Revolut for 5 years.*
Present Continuous	• Explaining what you're working on right now	*I'm currently leading a cloud migration.*
Future (will / going to)	• Sharing your motivations	*Joining your company will give me the chance to work on large-scale systems.*

TASKS

TASK 2A
Below are example sentences from an interview self-introduction.

Match each sentence to the correct **verb tense**.

An example has been completed for you.

SENTENCE	VERB TENSE
I've worked on mobile apps and backend systems.	*Present Simple*
I studied economics at university.	*Past simple*
I use tools like Tableau and SQL in my daily work.	*Present Perfect*
I've been working at Meta for 3 years.	*Future Simple*
I'm currently building a data migration pipeline.	*Present Continuous*
Joining your team will allow me to grow as a product manager.	*Present Perfect Continuous*

TASK 2B

Read the self-introduction, paying attention to the timeline of events.

"I'm a frontend developer with 4 years of experience in EdTech. I've been working at Duolingo since early 2022, where I focus on accessibility features. Before that, I worked at a small startup called LinguaLab for two years. During that time, I learned to use React and Typescript in production environments. I studied computer science at the University of Milan and graduated in 2018. I'm especially excited about this role because it would allow me to contribute to a product with global impact."

Part 1

Put these events in the correct order, 1 being the earliest and 5 the most recent

___ Started working at Duolingo

___ Studied at the University of Milan

___ Started working at LinguaLab

___ Working on accessibility features

___ Learned React and Typescript

Part 2

True or False? Justify your answer by referring to the verb tense.
One example has been completed for you.

1. They still work at LinguaLab.
   False, 'worked' is past simple tense & shows the action has been completed.
2. They currently work as a frontend developer.
   _____
3. They still work at Duolingo now.
   _____
4. At their previous job, they worked on accessibility features.
   _____

BUILD YOUR INTERVIEW RESPONSE

Draft self-introduction

Use the below structure to form your self-introduction by filling in the gaps with your details.

Or, if you want to make it more personalised, mix and match sentence structures taught in this unit to create your own structure.

Hi, thanks for speaking with me today.

I'm [name], a [role] with [X] years of experience in [field].

I currently work at [company] where I focus on [project or responsibility].
During my time here, I have [achievement or impact].

I mainly work with [tools], and I really enjoy [work style or special interests].

What drew me to this role was [reason] — especially your work on [specific project/product].

I'm looking forward to learning more about [specific team/project/company].

WHAT INTERVIEWERS WANT

- They don't need your whole life story - just what's relevant to the role
- Focus on what you *achieved*, not just what you *did*
- Show interest in *this* specific company

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