STRETCHLEARN · WORKBOOK

Interview Skills — Workbook

This workbook accompanies the Interview Skills course and gives you the hands-on exercises, story-building worksheets, and checklists you need to turn framework knowledge into interview-ready performance. Complete each section after the corresponding module — the story bank and research protocol in particular should be finished before your next live interview. Every template is designed to be filled in with your own data; leave no field blank before you walk into the room.

Research, Positioning, and Pre-Interview Intelligence

Apply the 90-minute research protocol and career narrative framework to a real upcoming interview.

Exercise: 90-Minute Company Research Sprint

Choose a real upcoming interview (or a target company if no interview is scheduled). Work through each of the five research layers in sequence. Set a timer for each layer and stop when it rings. Write your outputs in the prompts below.

• Layer 1 — Financials/Press: What are the three words the CEO or leadership team repeats most in recent communications? What is the single biggest strategic priority they have announced in the last 12 months?

• Layer 2 — Job Description Archaeology: List the top 8 non-filler words from the JD and map each to one of the 8 universal competencies (influence without authority, prioritization, ambiguity, conflict, initiative, failure, collaboration, customer focus). Which competency appears most?

• Layer 3 — Glassdoor/Blind: What is the most frequently cited cultural friction point in recent reviews for your target department? How does that change what questions you plan to ask?

• Layer 4 — Interviewer Research: Write the one genuine, specific observation about your interviewer that you will use in your opening 3 minutes. (Keep it professional — a recent post they shared, a project they led, a shared connection.)

Worksheet: Career Narrative Arc Builder

Draft your 90-second "Tell me about yourself" answer using the Three-Act Career Narrative Framework. Fill in each field, then combine them into a single 150-word narrative and record yourself delivering it.

Act 1 — Foundation (one sentence, max 20 words): your professional identity and most relevant background

Act 2 — Thread or Pivot (2–3 sentences): the consistent skill or deliberate evolution that connects your history to the target role

Act 3 — Forward Hook (1–2 sentences): the specific connection between your background and this company's stated priority

Full combined narrative (target 120–150 words):

Timed delivery (record yourself and note the actual duration in seconds):

One thing to cut or sharpen after listening back:

Checklist: Pre-Interview Intelligence Checklist

[ ] Read at least 2 recent earnings call transcripts or press releases (public) OR 2 Crunchbase/news items (private)
[ ] Run the JD through a word-frequency counter and mapped top 8 words to competencies
[ ] Read 30+ Glassdoor or Blind reviews filtered to target department
[ ] Looked up each interviewer on LinkedIn and identified one specific observation
[ ] Used or reviewed the product/service for at least 15 minutes
[ ] Written 3 tailored talking points that bridge company priorities to your background
[ ] Rehearsed the 90-second career narrative out loud at least 3 times

Behavioral Interviews — The STAR Story Bank

Build and document your personal 15-story bank, mapped to the eight universal behavioral competencies.

Exercise: Story Mining Session

Set aside 45 uninterrupted minutes. List every job, project, volunteer role, academic team, and club you have participated in over the last 5 years. For each, identify 3 things that went well and 1 that went badly. Then scan the full list for moments involving a decision, a constraint, a deadline, an interpersonal dynamic, or a surprise — those are your raw story candidates.

• List every context (job/project/volunteer/academic/club) from the last 5 years — aim for at least 8 entries. For each, write: 3 went-well moments and 1 went-badly moment.

• Circle the top 15 moments that involved the highest stakes, clearest decision, or most measurable outcome. These become your story candidates.

• For each of the 8 universal competencies, identify at least one story candidate from your list. Mark any competency where you have fewer than 2 candidates — you need to find or build stories there.

• Identify 3 story candidates that include a quantified result. If you have fewer than 3 with numbers, go back and find approximate metrics (percentages, time saved, volume handled) for your strongest stories.

Worksheet: STAR Story Card

Complete one copy of this card for each of your top 15 stories. Use this template repeatedly — make 15 copies and fill one per story. Store completed cards in a single document and review before every interview.

Story Headline (one sentence, plain language description of the situation):

Competency this story demonstrates (choose one of the 8):

Interview stage target (phone screen / first-round / final-round):

Framework (STAR or SOAR — note which and why):

Situation (1–2 sentences, 10% of delivery time):

Task or Obstacle (1–2 sentences, 10–15% of delivery time):

Action — Step 1 (active verb + what you did + why you made that choice):

Action — Step 2:

Action — Step 3:

Result (quantified outcome, before/after, or concrete change):

Timed delivery (record yourself and note duration in seconds — target: phone=90s, first-round=2min, final=2.5min):

Checklist: Story Bank Quality Checklist

[ ] I have at least one story for each of the 8 universal competencies
[ ] I have a primary and backup story for at least 4 competencies
[ ] At least 2 stories involve a mistake or failure with a clear learning
[ ] At least 3 stories include a quantified result (even an approximation)
[ ] Stories come from at least 3 different contexts (not all from the same job)
[ ] Every story has been timed — none run over 3 minutes
[ ] Every story has been recorded and I have listened back to cut filler
[ ] Story cards are stored in a single accessible document for pre-interview review

Case and Technical Format Interviews

Practice the issue-tree method, technical think-aloud protocol, and salary anchoring techniques with real prompts.

Exercise: Issue Tree Decomposition Practice

For each of the three case prompts below, set a 60-second timer and draw a first-level issue tree (maximum 3 branches, MECE). Then write a 3-minute opening using the structure: objective confirmation, framework choice and rationale, starting branch and initial hypothesis. Practice delivering the opening out loud.

• Case Prompt A — Profitability: "A mid-size regional grocery chain has seen net profit margin drop from 4% to 1.5% over 18 months despite flat revenue. What is driving this and what would you investigate first?" Draw your issue tree and write your 3-minute opener.

• Case Prompt B — Market Sizing: "Estimate the total annual revenue opportunity for electric vehicle charging stations in Canada." State which sizing method you are using (top-down or bottom-up) and show your assumption chain with explicit numbers.

• Case Prompt C — Strategy: "A SaaS company selling project management software to SMBs wants to expand into the enterprise market. Should they do it? Walk me through your framework." Draw your strategic entry framework tree and state your initial hypothesis.

Worksheet: Salary Anchoring Research Sheet

Before any final-round interview, complete this sheet to build your evidence-based compensation anchor. Use at least 3 data sources and triangulate to a range. This sheet is your negotiation preparation document.

Role title and location:

Data source 1 (name + URL) and median base salary found:

Data source 2 (name + URL) and median base salary found:

Data source 3 (name + URL) and median base salary found:

Calculated median from 3 sources combined:

Your target anchor (median + 10–15% — show your math):

Your stated range (target at the low end): from $ to $

Total compensation additions to raise in negotiation (equity, bonus, signing, PTO, remote flexibility):

Your PAUSE-BRIDGE-ANCHOR script for the question "What are your salary expectations?" (write it out word for word):

Checklist: Technical and Case Interview Readiness Checklist

[ ] Practiced drawing issue trees for at least 5 different case prompt types (profitability, market sizing, market entry, M&A, pricing)
[ ] Can state the MECE principle out loud and apply it to a novel prompt in under 60 seconds
[ ] Practiced the think-aloud protocol on at least 3 domain-specific technical questions for this role
[ ] Have a prepared response for a question I cannot answer (acknowledge, reason from analogy, offer follow-up)
[ ] Completed the salary anchoring research sheet with at least 3 data sources
[ ] Rehearsed the PAUSE-BRIDGE-ANCHOR script for salary questions out loud
[ ] Have a range — not a single number — ready to state if pressed on compensation

Exercise: Think-Aloud Technical Practice

Choose 3 technical or domain-specific questions likely to appear in your target role's interview. For each, set a 10-minute timer and work through the problem out loud — narrate every step, assumption, and dead end. Record yourself. Listen back and identify where your narration went silent for more than 10 seconds — those are your gaps to drill.

• Technical question 1 (write the question, then record your think-aloud response, then note: where did you go silent, what assumption did you forget to state, what would you do differently?):

• Technical question 2 (same format — write the question, record response, debrief):

• Technical question 3 — this one should be outside your comfort zone. Pick a question you are not sure you can answer and practice the "I don't know but here's how I'd find out" protocol explicitly.

Panel, Multi-Round, and Post-Interview Mastery

Build your panel tracking system, multi-round interview log, and post-interview follow-up templates.

Exercise: Panel Interview Simulation and Debrief

Ask two people (friends, family, colleagues) to act as panelists. Brief them: one plays the Skeptic (pushes back, probes, looks unmoved), one plays the Driver (asks direct, efficiency-focused questions). Record a 20-minute mock panel interview. Then debrief using the prompts below.

• Eye contact distribution: After reviewing the recording, estimate what percentage of your delivery time was directed at the Skeptic vs. the Driver vs. no one specific. Was it roughly balanced?

• Skeptic handling: Did you hold your position when challenged, or did you qualify your answer and back down? Write the exact exchange and how you would rephrase it.

• Attribution check: When the Driver asked a question, did you start and close on the Driver while sweeping the room once in the middle? Mark each question in the recording as "yes" or "needs work."

• Energy and specificity: Compare your answer quality in minute 1–5 vs. minute 15–20. Did specificity decline? If so, what is your energy reset protocol between panel rounds?

Worksheet: Multi-Round Interview Log

Complete one entry per interview round, immediately after each round ends. This log prevents story repetition, surfaces scoring patterns, and gives you calibration data for the next round. Keep this document on your phone or a device you can access between interviews.

Date and round number (e.g., Round 2 of 4):

Interviewer name, title, and likely competency focus:

Questions asked (list all, verbatim where possible):

Stories I used (one line per story — enough to identify it):

Topics the interviewer probed or seemed most interested in:

Topics the interviewer seemed skeptical about or where I stumbled:

Competencies not yet assessed in any round — likely coming next:

One thing I would do differently in the next round:

HR/recruiter feedback received after this round (if any):

Checklist: Post-Interview Follow-Up Checklist

[ ] Sent a personalized thank-you note to each interviewer within 24 hours (not the same note to each — personalized per person)
[ ] Each thank-you note references one specific topic from the conversation with that interviewer
[ ] Each thank-you note re-sells one specific qualification linked to one specific challenge they described
[ ] Each thank-you note closes with a clear next step or expression of interest
[ ] Updated my multi-round interview log within 10 minutes of leaving the building or ending the video call
[ ] If the timeline has passed, sent one (only one) follow-up requesting an updated timeline
[ ] If I have a competing offer, communicated it clearly and professionally with the exact decision deadline
[ ] Evaluated the offer (if received) against all four dimensions: compensation, growth trajectory, manager quality, cultural environment — before deciding

Your Action Plan

1. Complete the Story Mining Session exercise this week — set aside 45 minutes, list all contexts, and identify your top 15 story candidates
2. Fill out STAR Story Cards for your top 8 stories (one per universal competency) before your next interview
3. Run the 90-Minute Company Research Protocol on your next target company — schedule it as a calendar block
4. Draft and rehearse your 90-second career narrative out loud at least 5 times until it sounds unrehearsed
5. Research your target compensation range using at least 3 sources and complete the Salary Anchoring Research Sheet
6. Practice the issue-tree method on all three case prompts in the workbook before any case-format interview
7. Run a recorded mock panel interview with two people playing the Skeptic and Driver archetypes, then debrief using the exercise prompts
8. Set up your Multi-Round Interview Log as a live document on your phone so you can update it immediately after every round
9. Write a draft thank-you note using the three-part formula and save it as a template — personalize it after each interview
10. After each interview, review your story bank for repetition risks and pre-assign backup stories to all upcoming rounds