Interviewing Script
Preparing for Interviews

Hello, my name is Jessica and I work in Human Resources for Target Corporation.

Interviews for jobs or internships are your opportunity to present yourself and your qualifications for the position you desire. To prepare for an interview you need to:

- Know yourself,
- Know about the position and the organization,
- Know general interviewing guidelines, and
- Prepare for typical interview questions and plan how you will answer them.

First, know yourself

- Be sure you are familiar with all aspects of your education and work experience, especially the ways in which they are of value to the prospective employer. Be able to "talk" your resume.

- Identify three or four areas of your skills/abilities/strengths, and your values/priorities. Be sure you know which personal qualities you want to highlight.

- Be prepared to cite examples that give evidence of your personal qualities.

Know the job and the organization

Understand as much as you can about the nature of the position and the qualifications needed. You can get this information from the description of the job or internship. It is also helpful to talk to other people who have held the position or a similar one in another organization.

If you are unclear about what a particular type of job entails, you may also want to consult general career guides that describe the nature of the work, typical salaries, etc. for different careers. There are many resources available thorough the UST Career and Library Web sites.

Know as much about the organization itself as you can reasonably be expected to know. Most large companies put information about their products and services, the history of
the company, and career opportunities on their Web site. It is important to know as much about the organization as you can so that you are at least able to convey why you have an interest in working for them.

**Know general interviewing guidelines**

- Remember that an interview is basically a conversation between two human beings. The interviewer's main goal is to get to know you, not to test or trick you.

- If you feel comfortable in discussing your background and know something about the position and the organization, you have no reason to feel nervous.

- Always emphasize the positive. If it is necessary to discuss any negative aspects of your background (e.g. jobs or bosses you didn't like), try not to sound bitter or angry and don't make excuses.

- Be sure to answer the questions. Pay attention to what the interviewer is asking. If a question isn't clear, ask for clarification. Take time to think of your answer.

- Elaborate on your responses when appropriate. Give examples whenever possible.

These are just a few guidelines to get you prepared for the interview process. The next audio segment will cover the **Stages of an Interview**.

If you have additional questions on this or any other career related concerns, be sure to visit the University of St. Thomas Career Development Center for additional resources or to meet with a counselor.
Stages of the Interview

Hello, my name is Jaison and I work for Target Headquarters in Human Resources.

Now that you have done all the preparation, you're ready for the actual interview. And if you have done your homework, you'll find that the interview process won't be quite as bad as you thought it would be.

One thing that can help you make sure all goes well is to recognize that the interview process will naturally break down into four stages. Knowing what stage of the interview you are in will help you respond to the interviewer in the proper manner.

Regardless of the style of the interviewer, the interview will progress through four basic stages:

- Introduction
- Sharing General Information
- Gathering more information about the position
- Closing

The interview begins with the **introduction**. The first minute or two will often set the tone for the entire interview. It's important to get off on the right foot. Introduction begins with small talk initiated by the interviewer. The interviewer may ask a few casual questions or make some general remarks. The purpose is to put you at ease, establish rapport, and find a comfortable level of communication.

Here are some suggestions to help you make sure the interview gets off on the right foot:

- Greet the interviewer. Sounds simple, but many people forget this basic courtesy.
- Smile. A sincere smile can do a lot to put both of you at ease.
- Introduce yourself. Don't assume the interviewer already knows your name.
- Shake hands firmly and warmly.
- Stand until the interviewer asks you to sit down.
- Relax and sit naturally but do not slump in your chair or lean on the interviewer's desk.
- Be prepared to make small talk to put both of you at ease.
- Speak in a firm, clear, confident voice. You may have great answers to all the interviewer's questions, but that won't matter if your responses are so muffled or timidly expressed that the interviewer can't hear you or doesn't believe you.
- Maintain a positive attitude throughout the interview.

The second stage of the interview is communicating your qualifications, an **Exchange of Information**

Most of the interview will involve the exchange of information. Just relax and believe that all your preparation will help you answer any question. Sharing general information
starts when the interviewer shifts from small talk to general information about you, the organization, and the position.

You may be asked to review your background, interests, and goals. The interviewer will discuss the organization and its goals. This will test your listening and speaking skills as well as give you additional information on which to base intelligent questions.

Be prepared to tell the interviewer more about your:

- education, training, and skills
- desirable personality traits
- work experience

Use specific examples rather than general statements when giving this information. For advice on how to navigate this part of the interview, listen to the audio on “Behavioral Based Interviews” from this Web site.

Moving on to the third stage of the interview: Gathering more information about the position and “Your questions for the interviewer”

Show interest in the job by asking questions about the company, their product or services, and specific details of the job for which you are applying. This is the part of the interview where you have the opportunity to expand upon your skills and to demonstrate how they apply to the job requirements. Your efforts in researching the job and the organization will pay off at this point.

All interviews will end with a brief closing phase. This is usually the last stage. No matter how you thought the interview went, make sure you end on a positive note.

Closing happens when the interviewer begins summarizing what has been said and clarifying certain aspects of the interview. It is crucial that you express your interest in the position at this time.

It is also important that you review the points you've made, especially about how you are uniquely qualified for the position. If you have relevant skills or experience that you have not yet shared, do it now.

The employer will probably explain how and when the next contact will be made and may end with, "Do you have any other questions?" Try to save at least one of your questions for the end so that you wrap-up the interview on a positive note, leaving an enthusiastic impression.

If you are interested in the position, send a brief thank you letter. If you have been corresponding with the employer via email, it is acceptable to email the thank you note. If not, a mailed thank you note is the safest way to go. Thank the interviewer for his or her time and reiterate your interest in the career opportunity. You may also include any
additional information or materials relevant to your interview discussion. Send a separate thank you letter to each individual who took part in the interview.

The next segment will deal with the **Behavioral Based Interview Style**.

**These were the basic stages of an interview. If you have further questions concerning job interviews or any other career related concerns be sure to visit the University of St. Thomas Career Development Center for additional resources or to meet with a counselor.**
Behavioral Interviewing

Hello, my name is Jessica and I work for Target Corporation in Human Resources.

The most popular method employers use to determine your ability to do a job through an in-person meeting is called “behavioral interviewing.”

This technique is based on the premise that your past behavior is a good predictor of future success. Even if an employer is not knowledgeable about behavioral interviewing, it is to your benefit to be prepared in this way.

First, get a job description or as much information about the potential position as possible. Assess your experiences and try to determine what three or four key skills or characteristics you have that fit the position. Next create a short story about each experience, using what we call the CAR method.

There should be three parts to your story, one for each letter in CAR which stands for:

- Context
- Action
- Results

First put it into context.

- How did you get into the situation?
- Were you doing a required part of your job or was this beyond what was expected of you?
- Were you working alone or on a team?

Volunteer or educational experiences may also be used if you don’t have past work experience that relates to the question.

The second part of your story is the action that you took. This is the most important part of your story because you are naming your skill. Remember action is not always visible. If there was a problem to be solved and you analyzed a situation resulting in a change, then “analyzing” is your action.

Be sure to focus on your personal contributions, not your team members, within your stories.

The last part of the CAR method is to share with the interviewer the results of your action. Employers want outcomes and results from their employees. Of course the ideal would be outcomes that were positive and could be either qualitative or quantifiable. However, employers know that sometimes the best outcome is simply learning what to do differently next time.

By using this method you are providing a prospective employer with “proof by example.” You are not just saying you have a skill but providing your listener with a factual
example of when you exhibited the skill. Preparing in this way will make you stand out from other applicants and it will show your uniqueness through your stories.

Remember to be somewhat concise and not get too long winded. It will be helpful to practice with someone you know or during a mock interview scheduled through the Career Development Center.

By having three or four of these short scenarios prepared ahead of time you will have a sense of control going into an interview. You can use these to answer different questions.

For example if one interviewer asks; “What is a strength you have for this job?” and another interviewer asks: “Why should we hire you?” the same “CAR” scenario could be used to answer both questions. You can find a list of potential interview questions on the Career Development Center’s Web site.

Remember, this is only part of the interview and you can never be perfectly prepared. You will need to think on your feet and be clear on what the interviewer is asking. It is OK to ask an interviewer to repeat a question or ask for clarification.

For a sample of behavioral based interviewing, listen to the Behavioral Based Mock Interview audio on this Web site.

These were a few points concerning interviewing. If you have additional questions on this or any other career related concerns, be sure to visit the University of St. Thomas Career Development Center for additional resources, samples or to meet with a counselor.
Mock Interview using Behavioral Based Questions

NARRATOR: Hello, my name is Jaison and I work in Human Resources at Target Corporation.

The following is a mock interview, using Behavioral Interview based questions.

[5 second pause]

INTERVIEWER: Describe a time when you worked within a team to accomplish a goal – what was your role and contribution to the team?

INTERVIEWEE: Our Marketing club sponsored Race for the Cure event on campus. As the PR Chair, one of my jobs was to put together a flyer. I had developed the copy and general design, and handed it off to a committee member who had volunteered to put on the finishing touches and get the flyer to the printer.

It was 2 and a half weeks before the event and I called this member to get a status on the fliers. I left messages and e-mailed him a number of times, but he was not getting back to me. Eventually I reached him. He apologized and said he’d completely forgotten about the project and his offer to get the flyers printed.

I realized I had made a mistake delegating this important piece of the job and not following up in a more ongoing way.

I was able to better the situation by getting him to agree to meet with me that afternoon. We worked together on the last few finishing touches, and delivered the flyers to the campus printing shop, with a request for overnight completion.

Together we were able to get the fliers distributed - a little later than we’d hoped, but with plenty of time before the event. To compensate for the time we did lose, we did a massive e-mail promotion to increase awareness.

The event was a big success and we raised $1000 more than anticipated.

For me, it was also a lesson for me on the importance of communicating with team members on an ongoing basis, especially when you’ve assumed a leadership role.
**INTERVIEWER:** Tell me about a time you had to investigate a situation further in order to discover the root cause or problem.

**INTERVIEWEE:** In my internship I had to assemble sales reports for my supervisor. It seemed like a pretty straightforward assignment—computer generated from paperwork that the sales reps had already submitted and I was summarizing their individual data into one document—but the numbers were not coming out right. They were using a system that was new not only to me, but to the company also.

I looked at numerous reports. Sometimes they were coming out as they should and sometimes they were off. I could not understand the inconsistency. I did what I could on my own, but decided to seek advice from one of the sales reps when I hit a dead end. I figured that he had input some of the original data so he might see something that I missed. He and I were able to come to the conclusion that the data had been inputted properly, but that the generated documents were sometimes affected by a date change on the company calendar or a holiday.

I brought this issue to my supervisor, she told the technical team what I had figured out.

The technical team did the required work to make the data generation consistent for all of the reps’ reports, and corrected the situation before it became a major problem. The issue could have potentially caused quite a bit of confusion. I learned that double checking work and getting perspective from others on how to fix problems can save you a lot of trouble over the long run.

**INTERVIEWER:** Tell me about a high stress situation you have been in.

**INTERVIEWEE:** When I was an intern at a wholesale lighting business, we worked with construction companies getting new houses ready for the home show. There were very tight time frames for ordering lights and having them delivered.

I was assigned one builder that had large accounts with us. There were several lights on back order which wouldn’t make it by the date specified. At first the builder was very upset. I tried other companies, but also ran into delivery problems. I was very persistent with the vendors that had the best lights I could find and kept communicating with the builder regarding options and status.

In the end the builder had acceptable lights in all of his homes on time. He said he knew I had worked hard and thanked me personally for a job well done.

[5 second pause]
NARRATOR: This is a sample of a mock interview, where Behavioral based interview questions were utilized. If you have additional questions on this or any other career related concerns, be sure to visit the University of St. Thomas Career Development Center for additional resources, samples or to meet with a counselor.