

WBG INTERVIEW GUIDE 2018



WORLD BANK GROUP
Human Resources

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Contacted for An Interview?

1. **Respond promptly to show interest.** Express thanks for the opportunity and get specifics on logistics: address, special entry requirements, and the names of those with whom you'll be interviewing. You'll need these names so that you can research these individuals prior to your meeting.
2. **Research the interviewers, the organization, and the sector/department/division.** In addition to reading, talk with others who might have knowledge. Based on what you learn, prepare questions you can ask about the organization, department, and/or position. Show, through these questions, that you're knowledgeable; don't ask anything that could be answered easily and readily through an online search.
3. **Review the position announcement and the value you will bring.** Make a list of what is required and desired; then, make a comparable list of what you can bring to the organization to meet these requirements. Think about experience, strengths, education, and feedback others have given you about your work and about you as a person.

Consider relevant accomplishments or projects you've undertaken. Review your resume to remind you. Using SAR (Situation-Your Actions-Results), prepare "mini-stories" that describe your accomplishments and demonstrate your ability to meet the position requirements.

Two critical things that every interviewer wants and needs to know are why you want this particular job and what value you will bring. Think carefully about this. A desire to escape your current position or to get a promotion is not an appropriate response.
4. **Prepare and practice a focused, two-minute overview** of your career (experiences, skills, technical qualifications, interests) as it relates to this position. Interviews often begin with a variation of the "Tell me about yourself" question.
5. **Develop and get completely comfortable with interview questions and formats.** Practice responses to any "sticky" interview questions that you're worried about being asked. Prepare for "typical" interview questions as well as behavioral questions where you'll provide specific examples of things you've done that relate to the position. Consulting firms may use a case interview format; prepare accordingly.
6. **Determine your interview outfit in advance** rather than the night before. Professional attire, which may be more formal than what you wear every day to the office, is expected for an interview. **Map out your directions to ensure you arrive in plenty of time.**

Factor in traffic or possibly getting lost. Pack your bag: extra copies of your resume, anything you wish to showcase regarding skills or projects, writing materials.

7. **Be confident.** Think about this interview as an information exchange. You're trying to determine what needs exist that you can meet and the organization is trying to determine if you can do the job, want to do the job, and will be pleasant to work with as a colleague. As Amy Cuddy, social psychologist and researcher from Harvard, tells us (*Your Body Language Shapes Who You Are* <http://www.ted.com> -- highly recommended): Breathe deeply, take up space, and stand tall. Show your confidence and you will feel confident.

8. **Do what makes you calm.** Breathe deeply, read a motivational quote while waiting, visualize a positive experience about to happen and the after-interview feeling of success –whatever it takes to help you relax. Silence your cell phone.

9. **On arrival, give a firm handshake to each person you meet and smile.** A smile is the first thing to go when one is nervous and yet, it's a critical factor in developing rapport.

10. **Within 24-48 hours, send an individualized thank you** letter/email to each person who was in the interview with you. Customize each in case the letters land side-by-side or are compared. Consider the role each person plays and tailor your comments to this. Include a few ideas discussed as well as anything you forgot to mention. Stress why you believe you are uniquely qualified for this position.

Behavioral Interviews

Behavioral interviewing is based on the premise that past performance is the best predictor of future performance. Behavioral questions ask for examples in your past that demonstrate key competencies required for the position for which you're interviewing. Although your entire interview may be a behavioral interview, many interviewers mix behavioral interviewing questions with other interviewing styles.

In a traditional interview situation, the interviewer might ask, "What would you do if...?" while a behavioral interviewer would say, "Tell me about a time when..." or "Could you give me an example of a time when...." In the first example (traditional interview), the candidate can respond with something that sounds impressive but in reality, might not be the way that he/she would actually perform. The second example (behavioral interview) provides an opportunity for the candidate to discuss actual skills used and experience that occurred.

As a candidate, you can use behavioral interviewing techniques to your advantage if faced with a traditional interview format. By citing specific examples of past performance, you build credibility and demonstrate that you can meet the job requirements.

To prepare for a behavioral interview, first review carefully the job posting to identify the key competencies required. Research the organization/department/position to determine needs to be met by the person taking this position. Next, make a list of specific examples of things you've accomplished in your experience that demonstrate the competencies required and needs to be met. Identify 6-8 of these examples where you demonstrated key behaviors and skills that the position requires.

For each of these examples that demonstrates a key competency required, prepare a mini-story. Preparing these in advance is important to focus you to clearly and concisely discuss them in an interview. A great way to prepare to tell these mini-stories is to think about using the S-A-R model: (S) describe the **situation** or task, (A) tell what **actions** you took, and (R) tell the **results** or outcome achieved.

Keep your mini-stories brief (2-3 minutes). The behavioral interviewer can, and often will, drill down for more information by using follow-up questions. Practice telling these stories so that you can tell them clearly and concisely, without rambling.

Examples of behavioral questions (with competencies they are designed to assess):

1. Tell us about a time when you had to deal with a difficult client. What happened and were you successful? (conflict management, interpersonal strengths)
2. Could you give us an example of a time when you had to handle conflicting priorities? (multitasking, organizational and planning, and communication skills)
3. Tell us about a time when you had to manage a team of people who didn't want to work together. (leadership and teambuilding skills)
4. Describe a decision you had to implement that was unpopular and how you did it. (engaging stakeholders and developing collaboration)
5. Give us an example of a time when you had to develop an innovative solution to streamline operations or improve product or service delivery. (innovation)

Managing the Panel Interview

1. If possible, **get the names of the panel members** in advance. This information will help you to feel more comfortable about meeting with them. Also, this enables you to send personalized thank-you notes to each panel member after the interview.

Research (organizational information, LinkedIn, your network) and understand the organizational roles of the panel members. Consider the value you will bring to each person's role within the organization. **Bring extra copies of your resume** to share in the event that someone on the panel has not yet seen it or joins the panel at the last minute.

2. **Make a strong first impression.** As panel members are introduced to you, smile, make eye contact, and greet them using their names. When possible, shake each panel member's hand. Ask permission if you want to take notes but realize that it's distracting for a panel to watch a candidate write during an interview so use any note-taking sparingly. It's inadvisable to write down questions you are asked.

Be prepared to give a brief overview of your career (experience, skills, technical qualifications) as it relates to the position. This is frequently the first thing you're asked, so it's important to do it with confidence.

3. **Share your attention with everyone on the panel.** When answering questions, make initial eye contact with the person asking the question and then try to briefly look at each of the other panel members as you're talking. You are trying to make a connection with the entire panel, and your goal is to make sure that no one feels excluded from the conversation. As you end your answer, look at the person who asked the question to see if you need to provide more information. In summary, you begin and end your response with the panel member who asked the question.

4. **Continue to engage all panel members.** Use a panel member's name, when answering, and consider the panelist's organizational role as you respond. Also, show the relationships between an answer you're giving and a prior panelist's question, when appropriate, to keep panel members engaged. For example, "This actually ties into what Paul asked earlier about..."

5. **Include your prepared mini-stories that demonstrate your accomplishments.** Think SAR: Describe the *Situation*, the *Actions* you took, and the *Results*. Relate your background, experience, and skills to the position through these stories. These mini-stories are focused and concise. The value of giving examples of accomplishments related to the position is that past performance often is one of the best predictors of future performance.

6. **Ask for clarification** if you don't understand a question **and give yourself time to pause and reflect, if you need it.** It's better to think through an answer than to answer incorrectly or ramble. Questions regarding the approach you might take (i.e., How would you deal with...What would your response be if...) might require a moment to think through your response.

7. **Prepare for group dynamics.** In a panel interview, there are different personalities and interviewing styles. You may be able to tell if someone is in doubt or not as open to your responses. Try to give a clear, confident response to this person. Try to establish rapport with as many as possible but also realize that you may not be able to satisfy all of the interviewers with your responses all of the time. Don't be nervous about the fact that they will likely be taking notes on your responses.
8. **Prepare for interruptions,** and you won't be caught off guard. It's not uncommon to have someone enter late or have to leave early to catch another meeting. Stay calm and carry on.
9. **Prepare for two questions asked simultaneously.** In a panel interview, it's not uncommon for two questions to be asked at once simply based on the fact that there are multiple people trying to get information. This can feel stressful. If asked more than one question at a time, answer one and then go back and ask for the other question to be repeated.
10. **You may have to repeat a response.** In a group interview, not everyone hears everything the same way. Don't be surprised or feel impatient if you're asked the same question twice or asked for further clarification on something you've already explained.
11. **Questions from you are expected so have questions ready to ask about the work or the group.** These questions should reflect your research. If you can address these questions to different panel members, you continue to keep panel members involved and interested in the interview (and in you).
12. **Thank all panel participants.** At the end of the interview, make eye contact with all and try to shake hands with each person. Follow the interview by sending an individualized thank-you letter/email to each panel member. Customize each letter in case the letters land side-by-side or are compared. Consider the role each person plays and tailor your comments to this. Include a few ideas discussed as well as anything you forgot to mention. Stress why you believe you are uniquely qualified for this position.

How to Handle the Phone Interview

Phone interviews are used as an initial screening mechanism to determine which candidates should be invited for in-person interviews. They're usually brief: 20-30 minutes. If you're contacted and unprepared, ask if you can schedule a future convenient time and provide alternate dates/times rather than move into the interview unprepared.

1. Prepare as you would for an in-person interview. Research the organization, the department, and if possible, the interviewer using company websites and social media platforms. Review their financial information and corporate culture. Have questions for the interviewer that reflect that you're aware of their priorities and mission.
2. Analyze the position requirements and what you specifically bring to meet these requirements. Practice telling mini-stories about your experience and specific accomplishments that relate to the position requirements. Show the Problem you solved, the Actions you took, and the Results (PAR).
3. If this is an initial screening interview by Human Resources, the interviewer may be more interested in covering details of your resume. In this case, be prepared to discuss job transitions as to why you moved from one position to the next. Respond factually, positively, and with confidence.
4. Prepare for typical interview questions: Tell me about yourself. What are your salary expectations? Where do you see yourself in five years? What's your greatest strength/weakness? Why are you interested in this particular position?
5. Have your questions, your CV, and the job description in front of you to refer to, if needed. Have pen and paper nearby so you can take notes, as needed.
6. Close the door and be sure you're away from all noise and distractions. Consider using a landline if you're at all concerned about cellphone reception.
7. Smile. A smile can be heard over the phone as confidence and warmth. When you smile and talk, your tone will be upbeat and positive.
8. Many prefer to stand up when talking or sit up straight vs. being relaxed in a chair. The intent is to send energy and reflect confidence. It is suggested that you also consider dressing professionally so that you feel as if you're in an actual interview.
9. Take time to listen carefully, think before framing your response, and then focus on speaking clearly and concisely. You can always ask if the interviewer would like more detail. Watch that you don't interrupt the interviewer.
10. When the conversation is ending, thank the interviewer and ask if it would be possible to meet in person.
11. Take notes on what you learned immediately after the conversation. Send a follow-up thank you email within 24-48 hours to the interviewer, restating your interest in the position and summarizing what you uniquely will bring to the position.

Practice Interview Questions

There is no one set of questions, as you know, for every interview. However, by reviewing and developing responses to the questions below, you will gain confidence and focus in talking about yourself which is a major goal of interview preparation.

You will notice that some of these questions ask you to tell mini-stories that relate to specific elements of the position. Preparing these in advance is important to focus you to clearly and concisely discuss your background. Identify 6-8 examples from your past experience where you demonstrated key behaviors and skills that the position requires. Think about using the S-A-R model: describe the situation, tell what actions you took, tell the results or outcome achieved.

1. Tell me about yourself (1-2 minute overview focusing on relevance to the position).
2. Why are you interested in this position/unit?
3. What do you know about us?
4. Why do you want to leave your current position?
5. This job, has as a key component, X. Give us an example of a time when you've had to (a component or function of the job as detailed in the announcement).
6. In this position, you'll have to (key challenge of the job as detailed in the job announcement). Tell us about a time when you've had to (key challenge).
7. What would you do if you found you were unable to (stress factor you've been able to identify from the announcement)?
8. Tell us about a project when things did not go as planned.
9. Give us an example of a time when you had to work under pressure and tight deadlines. How did you handle it?
10. Describe a time when you had to face a conflict on a team and how you handled it.
11. Tell us about a difficult decision related to work that you had to make.
12. Give us an example of a time when you motivated others.
13. Would you say you're more of an individual or a team player?
14. No one is perfect. What is your greatest weakness? (Think about one skill that can be improved through learning and that you've worked on/are working on.)
15. What would your current manager say about your performance?
16. What would your colleagues say about you?
17. What has been the most frustrating part of your current role?
18. What single project or task would you consider the most significant accomplishment in your career so far?
19. What do you think you can bring to this department/unit? (How can you add value?)

Questions to ask at the interview:

Review the organization's mission, products, scope of services, globalization priorities, and financials. You can inquire about growth priorities, how innovation is encouraged, how clientsatisfaction is measured -- in other words, questions developed from your research -- as well as questions regarding the position.

1. What is the most critical function of this position? *or* What are the greatest challenges facing this position?
2. What would be the first issue that you would want me to address? *or* What would you like me to accomplish in the first 60-90 days?
3. How would you describe the ideal candidate for this position?
4. What are the key performance indicators for this role?
5. What are the reporting relationships in this position?
6. How would you like me to follow-up with you?

Preparing for Interviews

Below are a few tips and suggestions for preparing for interviews at the WBG.

Preparation Tips – BEFORE the interview

The best way to stay relaxed and calm during an interview is to be prepared:

- Research the job(s) for which you are interviewing. Review the job description(s) including the role of WBG in that area, duties and responsibilities, selection criteria. Research and be able to articulate how that global practice or cross-cutting solution area relates to WBG's vision and strategy.
- Research yourself. Know why you want the job. Review your application, 360, and most recent performance review. Consider your fit with the job description. Identify transferable skills, key accomplishments, work style, and personal and professional strengths. Remind yourself of specific experiences that exemplify these skills and strengths.
- Practice responding to questions.
- Prepare a list of 4-5 good questions you have about the position.
- Get a good night's rest!
- Allow plenty of time to get to the interview and plan to arrive a bit early.

Questions to ask the panel:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

What is a Behavioral Event Interview?

Typically interviews at the WBG present the elements of a behavioral event interview (BEI), it means they are structured interview used to collect information about past behavior. Because past performance is a predictor of future behavior, a BEI attempts to uncover your past performance by asking open-ended question. Questions are designed to help the interviewer(s) learn about your past experience in a key skill area that is critical to success in the position for which you are interviewing.

We recommend that you prepare to discuss several examples for each competency that is included on the job description. If you can identify 20-30 situations that you have handled in the past, those will come more easily when you are asked particular questions during the interview. Start by trying to respond to the Sample BEI Questions which appear later.

The panel may spend about 5 minutes per competency question, although that timing could vary a lot. They will be trying to find out how YOU handled particular situations. While you may be tempted to answer some questions saying "First WE did this, then WE did that," you should make it clear what actions YOU took as well as what the team did.

The STAR Technique

A useful way to prepare for this style of interview is to use the STAR technique. The STAR technique helps you to frame the answers to each question in an organized manner that gives the interviewer the most information about your past experience (and gives you the maximum credit for your answer, too.) As you prepare to answer each question, consider organizing your response by answering each of the following components of the STAR technique:

- **What was the SITUATION in which you were involved? What did you face?**
- **What was the TASK you needed to accomplish?**
- **What ACTIONS did you take?**
- **What RESULTS did you achieve?**

Probes

After you respond to a question, the panel may probe further into your actions or results. If some of their follow-up questions come across as confrontational, simply focus on the core element they are asking about and respond as best you can. They may ask additional questions about the situations you describe, such as:

- What challenges did you face? How did you overcome those?
- What lessons did you learn from that experience?
- What would you do differently, if you could turn back the clock and start over?
- How would you apply those learnings to dealing with anticipated challenges in the considered role?

As you think through various examples, you might be able to build these points into the stories that you prepare to tell.

Notes:

Tips – DURING the interview

- Notice how the panel is treating the interview (e.g., how formal vs. interactive) and respond accordingly. Help the panel manage the flow of conversation.
- Listen carefully; feel free to ask for clarification before answering a question. Don't be apologetic if you don't hear a statement, just ask the person to repeat.
- Take a moment to formulate your answers before you speak.
- Project energy and enthusiasm in a way that is authentic to you.
- Connect with each person (e.g., by making eye contact).
- Be honest, while focusing on communicating your professional achievements.
- Don't use the same example for every question.
- Be polite to EVERYONE you meet at the interview.
- Be aware of the panel's body language and non-verbal cues.
- THANK the panel for their time.

STAR Technique:

- ***Situation you faced***
- ***Task to accomplish***
- ***Actions you took***
- ***Results you achieved***

Anticipating Likely Questions in YOUR Interview:

Because practice and rehearsal make this type of interviewing more familiar and enjoyable, spend a few moments anticipating questions you think the interviewers might ask you during your interview. Review the job description; think about WBG's mission and competency model. Identify 3-5 questions you think might come up in your interview.

1.-----

SITUATION

TASK(S)

ACTIONS

RESULTS

2.-----

S

T

A

R

3.-----

4.-----

5.-----

Now, for each question, use the STAR technique to answer your own questions. Feel free to make a few notes if it is helpful, but try to be conversational and practice some of the Interviewing Tips.

Asking Good Questions at an Interview

It's your turn! As the interview comes to a close, one of the final questions you may be asked is *"What can I answer for you?"* Your interviewer will expect for you to have some inquiries. Not asking any questions could make you seem unprepared or disinterested, so take the time to have some questions of your own ready to ask the hiring manager.

Asking questions can also give you the opportunity to further highlight some of your qualities, skills, and experience.

Asking very specific questions when you respond will allow you to impress your potential employer with your knowledge and interest in the industry while also determining if this is the right job for you.

Make a List of Questions to Ask at the Interview

Plan ahead and have interview questions of your own ready to ask. Asking questions is a good way to know more about the organization culture and the specific day-to-day responsibilities of the job.

Best Questions to Ask the Interviewer

Here is a list of suggested questions to ask the interviewer so you can ensure the company is a good match for your qualifications and interests.

- *How would you describe your organization's values?*
- *What's the most important thing I should accomplish in the first ninety days?*
- *What are biggest challenges of this job?*
- *How would you describe the responsibilities of the position?*
- *What are the prospects for growth and advancement?*
- *Are there any examples of a career path beginning with this position?*
- *What can I clarify for you about my qualifications?*
- *Are there any other questions I can answer for you?*

General Guidelines for Asking Questions

Avoid "Me" Questions

"Me" questions are those that put yourself ahead of the employer.

These include questions about salary, health insurance, vacation time, work hours per week, and other concessions. During an interview, you are trying to demonstrate to the employer how you can benefit the company, not the other way around. Once you are offered a position, you can begin to ask what the company can do for you.

Ask One Question at a Time

Avoid multi-part questions; they will only overwhelm the employer. Each question should have one specific point.

Avoid "Yes" or "No" Questions

Most questions with a "yes," "no," or other one-word answer could likely be answered by searching website. Instead, stick to questions that will create a dialogue between yourself and the employer.

Ask Questions About Multiple Topics

Avoid asking questions about just one subject. For example, if you only ask questions about your manager and his managerial style, the interviewer may assume you have an issue with authority figures. Ask questions about a variety of topics to demonstrate your curiosity and interest in all aspects of the position.

Post-Interview Thank You Letter/ Email

- Send within 24-48 hours.
- If you send an email to each member of an interview panel, customize and individualize each one as your email may be read and compared by all members of the panel. An option is to send one email to the panel chair, thanking the chair and the panel members.
- Focus on being concise and to-the-point. This is a short letter.
- Email follow-up is fine, which would **not** include the inside address below.

Your street address
City, State Zip Code
Date

Person you're writing to
Title
Organization
Street address
City, State Zip Code

Dear X:

First paragraph (and possibly a second): Thank the interviewer(s) for taking the time to meet with you and restate your interest in the position. Try to recall something from the interview or comments/questions that were of interest or helpful to you. Highlight specific skills and experiences that will enable you to bring value to the organization. Here is also the place to mention anything you forgot to discuss in the interview or to elaborate on items discussed.

Second – third paragraph: Restate your appreciation for being considered and your belief in being able to make a strong contribution. Indicate that you're looking forward to hearing from him/her soon.

Sincerely (Best regards, etc.),

Your name
email
phone

Useful phrases:

- I enjoyed meeting with you to discuss..
- I appreciate the importance of...
- From our discussion, I...
- I was impressed by...
- I'm excited about this chance to...
- I believe I can... I feel confident that I can...
- After reflecting on our meeting...
- I also wanted to mention that...



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