QUICK POLL
VOTE ON · 1 OF 3

When do most interviewers make up their minds?

- **A** In the first minute
- **B** In the first 5 minutes
- **C** In the first 15 minutes
- **D** After 15 minutes

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Recruiting Strategies

- Interviews

Cameron Fakouri, CPA, MSA
Recruiter | Executive Coach
www.RezzyCheck.com

COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of this session, you will:

1. Prepare the right way
2. Answer questions with the STAR, CAR, and 3-2-1 methods
3. Present yourself and your portfolio, in person or on video
4. Handle tough questions, including pay and AI
5. Follow up like a pro



WHEN INTERVIEWERS DECIDE
THE RESULTS ARE IN

5%	1 in 4	6 in 10
decide in the first minute	have decided by minute 5	have decided by minute 15

A strong start matters, and a slow start is recoverable.

Source: Frieder, Van Iddekinge & Raymark, Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology (2016)

THE PURPOSE OF AN INTERVIEW

- An interview is a **vibe check** (like a first date)
  - **Vibe #1:** Is this person telling the truth about their resume?
  - **Vibe #2:** Are they excited about the role?
  - **Vibe #3:** Will they fit our team?
- **You're already qualified.** That's why they called you in!



WHY DO PEOPLE FAIL INTERVIEWS?

- They're **not prepared**, or they **prepared the wrong way**
- They thought they could just **"wing it"**
- They get **overly nervous**
- They **stretch the truth** (yes, even "white lies")
- **"Selling yourself"** feels new and awkward



PREPARING FOR AN INTERVIEW

- **MUST:** Know what to expect and make time to prepare
- **MUST:** Research the company and interviewer, and prep specific questions
- **MUST:** Practice common interview questions
- **MUST:** Mock interview (alone, with a friend, or on camera)



RESEARCH THE COMPANY

- **Why?** Shows enthusiasm and gives you substance for conversation
- **How?** Their website, socials, recent work, LinkedIn, friends who work there
- **What?** Mission, recent projects, clients, culture, positive news
- **Artist bonus:** know their recent work well enough to name a favorite piece



NONVERBAL ESSENTIALS
MYTH OR FACT?

"90% of communication is nonverbal."

Hands up: myth or fact?

NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION
CARRIES MUCH OF YOUR MESSAGE

- Interviewers form impressions within the first few minutes, often before your best answers come up
- Eye contact, posture, facial expression and tone all shape how you're rated
- Research on interviews backs this up. Candidates who show warmth and engagement are rated higher, even when they give the same answers.
- Even your handshake has been shown to affect hiring recommendations.

Sources: Mehrabian & Ferris (1967); Mehrabian, Silent Messages (1971)

NONVERBAL ESSENTIALS
SHOW UP ON TIME (DUH)

- **General rule:** arrive 20–30 minutes early, check in about 5 minutes before
- **Dry run:** visit days before, time the drive, plan parking
- **Observe:** How are people dressed? Is there a reception desk?
- **On video?** Log in 5 minutes early with everything tested



NONVERBAL ESSENTIALS
VIRTUAL INTERVIEWS

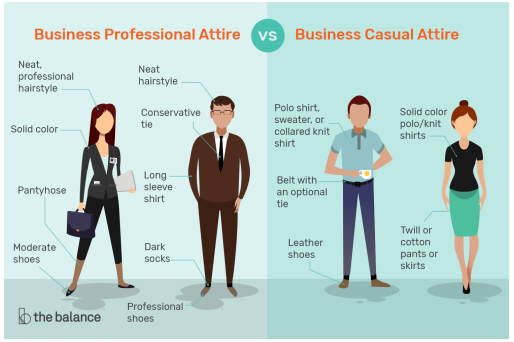
- **Camera at eye level,** light in front of you, quiet background
- **Test everything** (link, mic, screen share) 15 minutes early
- **Portfolio open in a tab,** everything else closed, notifications off
- **Look at the camera** when you answer, notes off to the side
- **Backup plan:** have the interviewer's phone number



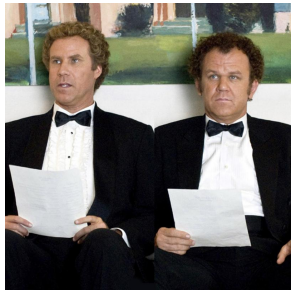
NONVERBAL ESSENTIALS
DRESS APPROPRIATELY

- **General rule:** better overdressed than underdressed
- **Match the studio, then go one step up**
- **Comfort is king:** appropriate AND comfortable
- **Your outfit is part of your portfolio**

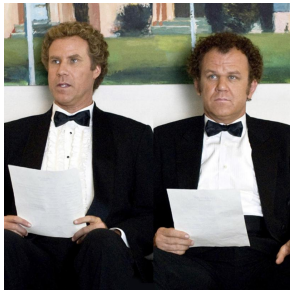
NONVERBAL ESSENTIALS
WHAT TO WEAR



NONVERBAL ESSENTIALS
THERE ARE LIMITS



NONVERBAL ESSENTIALS
THERE ARE LIMITS



- **Not until you earn that cultural capital**

NONVERBAL ESSENTIALS
TAKE NOTES

- **Padfolio, resumes, notepad:** show you're prepared
- Taking notes shows you're listening and interested
- Bring extra printed resumes, even if they already have one



NONVERBAL ESSENTIALS
SHARE YOUR PORTFOLIO

- Laptop or tablet with your site **pre-loaded** (don't count on their Wi-Fi)
- A **PDF** and a **physical copy** ready, whichever fits the room
- You don't know what you're walking into. **Be prepared!**
- Physical portfolio: **compact and easy to flip through**



WALK THEM THROUGH YOUR WORK
PORTFOLIO REVIEWS

- **Lead with 3–5 pieces** that match the role
- **For each piece:** the brief, your role, your process, the result
- **Show process, not just polish:** sketches, iterations, feedback you applied
- **Team project?** Say exactly what YOU did
- **Ask:** "Is there anything you'd like to see more of?"



ART TESTS & DESIGN CHALLENGES
SHOW HOW YOU WORK

- **Many studios use them,** especially in games, animation, and design
- **Clarify first:** the brief, the deadline, and the format
- **Follow the brief.** They're testing judgment as much as skill.
- **Save your process files:** thumbnails, layers, versions
- **Some studios now test live** to rule out AI-generated work
- **If a "test" looks like unpaid client work,** it's fair to ask how it will be used

Source: Video Games Chronicle (Dec 2025), on a studio testing artists live

MOST COMMON INTERVIEW PROBLEMS

- **Rambling:** off topic, circular answers, no beginning-middle-end
- **Sounding scripted:** like a robot programmed to answer questions
- **Freezing up:** your mind goes blank and words won't come
- **No connection:** treating it like an interrogation, not a conversation



MOST COMMON INTERVIEW PROBLEMS



HOW TO SET YOURSELF APART

- Connect on a **personal** level
  - **How?** Comment on something that interests them
- Ask questions **throughout** the interview
  - **Why?** It's a conversation, not an interrogation
- Be **pleasant:** smile and be friendly
  - **Why?** Hiring managers want to know if you're pleasant to work with



MOST COMMON INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- **Personal insight:** *"Tell me about yourself."*
- **Motivation & fit:** *"Why do you want to work here?"*
- **Resume clarifications:** *"Tell me about [something on your resume]."*
- **Behavioral:** *"Tell me about a time when you [faced a challenge]."*
- **Situational:** *"How would you handle [hypothetical situation]?"*

"TELL ME ABOUT YOURSELF"

- Sets the tone
- Tests your ability to summarize and prioritize
- Shows your story, motivations, and goals
- **Not** a chronology of your life
- Use **"because," "but,"** and **"therefore,"** not **"and then"**



FORMULA: "TELL ME ABOUT YOURSELF"

1. Where are you **today**?
2. Where have you been in the **past**?
   - If no prior work history, share what relevant projects you've completed at LCAD
3. Why did you apply to **our company**?

- Always end on a positive note!
  - "...and I'm excited to learn more about this role!"
  - "...and I'm happy to be here to see if this might be a fit!"



GET HYPED

- Use your full vocal range (volume up, volume down)
- Smile and laugh! It's a conversation, not an interrogation
- No one knows your experiences better than **you**
- **You have something to offer:** your skills, experience, and personality, in exchange for their salary, benefits, and opportunities



TELL ME ABOUT YOURSELF
YOUR TURN · 5 MIN

1. Pair up. Decide who goes first.
2. Talk for 60 seconds. Use because, but, therefore. Never "and then."
3. Partner shares one thing to keep and one thing to change. Then swap.



5 MIN

End with where you're headed and why this role fits.

PREPARE 3–5 STORIES

- Don't memorize answers to every question. **Prepare 3–5 stories** you can adapt.
- Stories make your answers **engaging and memorable**
- They show your **skills in action**



PREPARE 3–5 STORIES EXAMPLE

- **Example story:** an important prop went missing during a video shoot, and you improvised a new one
- **Use it for:**
  - *"Describe a time you had to meet a tight deadline."*
  - *"Tell me about a time you made a big impact on a project."*
  - *"Give an example of balancing creativity with business goals."*

STAR METHOD

- Structures your answers with clarity and impact
- Works for prepared stories or on-the-spot questions

S **Situation:** set the scene with some context

T **Task:** what was your job?

A **Action:** what did you do?

R **Result:** what was the outcome?



STAR METHOD EXAMPLE

Question: *"Tell me about a time you had to meet a tight deadline."*

- **Situation:** *"We were on set to shoot a commercial when the main prop went missing. We had 2 hours before going live."*
- **Task:** *"As a creative, I was responsible for a smooth production."*
- **Action:** *"I grabbed 2 of my most trusted teammates and we scavenged the art department for anything we could use."*
- **Result:** *"We found something! A quick coat of paint and we kept our schedule."*

CAR METHOD

- STAR's shorter cousin
- Great for on-the-spot questions

C **Challenge**

A **Action**

R **Result**



3-2-1 METHOD
PICK WHAT FITS

3 steps: explain it in three clear steps
or
2 types: compare two categories or approaches
or
1 thing: highlight one key takeaway or lesson

- Not every question needs a full story!

Source: Vinh Giang (vinhgiang.com)

3-2-1 METHOD
EXAMPLE: 3 STEPS

Question: *"How do you approach a new design project?"*

*"**First,** I make sure the project goals are clear."*

*"**Second,** I brainstorm and prototype different concepts."*

*"**Finally,** I refine the design based on feedback."*

30-SECOND PORTFOLIO PITCH
YOUR TURN · 5 MIN

1. Pull up one piece from your portfolio on your phone.
2. Write down your STAR response:
   S: the brief, **T:** your role, **A:** your process, **R:** the result.
3. Pitch it to your neighbor in 30 seconds.
4. Ask your partner: "What would you change?" Then swap.



5 MIN

This is exactly what a portfolio review feels like.

ANSWERING DIFFICULT QUESTIONS

- **"What's your biggest weakness?"** → pick a real one and show how you're improving
- **"Tell me about a time you failed."** → focus on what you learned
- **"You know how to do [unknown skill], right?"** → be honest and show interest in learning



THE AI QUESTION
BE READY FOR IT

- **Expect it:** *"How do you use AI in your work?"*
- **Be honest and specific:** where it helps (research, references, admin) and where you never use it
- **Show judgment:** originality, client confidentiality, quality control
- **Bring proof of process:** sketches, WIPs, layered files
- **Good news:** in California's creative economy, AI is replacing tasks, not workers



Source: Otis College Report on the Creative Economy (2026)

QUICK POLL
VOTE · 2 OF 3

True or false: A California employer can ask what you were paid at your last job.

A True

B False

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TALKING PAY IN CALIFORNIA
KNOW THE RULES

The rules

- **No salary history questions.** No employer can ask what you made before.
- **Pay ranges are posted.** Employers with 15+ employees must include one.
- **They CAN ask your expectations.** Have an answer ready.

Know your number

U.S. median pay, May 2025

- Graphic designers: **$62,960**
- Special effects artists & animators: **$102,030**
- Art directors: **$114,850**
- **Tip:** give a range anchored to the posted range

Sources: Cal. Labor Code §432.3; BLS Occupational Outlook Handbook (2025)

END OF INTERVIEW

- Keep **2–3 insightful questions** ready
- **Examples:**
  - *"What's been your favorite part about working here?"*
  - *"Can you tell me about the team I'd be working with?"*
  - *"If I were hired tomorrow, what would my first projects be?"*
  - *"Is there anything we talked about today that you'd like me to expand on?"*



"NEXT STEPS"

- "I appreciate you making time for me today. **When can I expect to hear back?**"
- "**Do you mind if I grab your card?**"
- "I have your email. **Is it okay if I reach out with any questions?**"



POST-INTERVIEW BEST PRACTICES

- Send a **thank-you email within 24 hours**
- Restate your interest and **reference something you discussed**
- **Go above and beyond:** a handwritten note, or a small sketch or sticker
- Keep networking and pursuing other opportunities
- **Why it matters:** 68% of hiring managers say a thank-you note affects their decision



Source: TopResume survey of 358 recruiters and hiring managers (2017)

QUICK POLL
VOTE ON · 3 OF 3

What's one thing you'll practice before your next interview?

~~Type your answer on Slido. Short and honest wins.~~

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KEY TAKEAWAYS

- **Preparation is key:** research the company and the role
- Use **STAR, CAR, or 3-2-1** for clear, structured answers
- **Nonverbal matters,** in person and on video
- **Know your portfolio's story,** piece by piece
- **Always follow up** with a thank-you email



WRAP-UP & RESOURCES

Resources

- **rezzycheck.com/lcad:** templates, worksheets, slides
- Daniel's resume samples
- **jobscan.co:** keyword check
- **Grammarly** and **Hemingway App**
- **LCAD Writing Lab**

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