

“Tell me about yourself:”

- This is a **very common** request in an interview, when networking, or when introducing yourself to a recruiter.
- Nailing your reply can be a game changer in setting the tone for an interview.
- This inquiry is often used in the beginning of an interview to break the ice or build rapport with the job candidate.
- Your introduction statement may need to be tweaked or slightly revised based on the actual job for which you are interviewing or for the situation where you are introducing yourself; however, it is best to have a solid, written down, general statement drafted that you have **practiced**.
- It is **your** job to communicate to the interviewer, recruiter, or recipient of the information **how your background and skills will contribute to meeting the organization's needs**. You must figuratively draw the picture for the interviewer. Having a solid introduction can help illustrate how your skills and background translate to this new opportunity.
- Let the interviewer see a bit of your personality; let them get to know you a bit. Yes, **be a little vulnerable here**.
- One to 3 minutes is the optimal length for your Statement of Introduction.
- The statement needs to roll off your tongue and sound natural; strike a balance between brief and lengthy.
- It is NOT a complete run-through of your resume, **unless** the interviewer specifically asks you to use the resume to tell them about yourself. Usually, the introduction they are looking for is only highlights, but it is also okay to ask, “Would you like a general overview?” or “Would you like me to walk you through my resume?”
- There are lots of resources you can rely upon to build your introduction statement. Pull your past performance reviews, or feedback you have received about what people like about your work or why they like working with you. Consider sending a short three- or four-question email survey to your past coworkers or friends who can tell you what they would say about you.
- Tell a coherent, engaging short story about yourself.
- Don't go back too far on your history. Focus primarily on things you have done the **last 5 to 7 years** when providing supportive examples describing yourself.
- It is great to share a few interesting tidbits about you personally such as hobbies, sports, books, community engagement, or volunteer opportunities you enjoy. Be cautious not to share information that could be controversial. Avoid personal information about family, marital status, etc.
- Think “highlights,” not details.
- **RELEVANCE (to the job opportunity) MATTERS A LOT!**

Let's Get Started Writing ...

Use the questions below to assist you in writing your Statement of Introduction.

- What do you want to be absolutely sure the interviewer knows about you when you leave the interview? Write down three or four attributes, talents, and facts about yourself that pertain to the responsibilities of types of jobs you will be applying for.

For example, if you are applying for an executive assistant position and you are known for being extremely organized, you might say, "My friends and coworkers love calling me the 'Organization Queen.' I seem to automatically be the one who takes on being the unofficial event organizer. I love it."

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

- What do you do really well? What are your best strengths, skills, or abilities?

Think about those past performance reviews or complements you have received from coworkers, supervisors, and friends.

For example, if you are applying for a position that requires "out-of-the-box" thinking, and you are really good at solving problems using your ingenuity, provide a brief story about yourself that reflects inventive thinking.

Write down a list of two or three of your best talents, skills, or abilities. This is not bragging; think of it as informing or providing insight to the interviewer on how you could be of help to the organization.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

- Can you think of examples that you can provide to support your assertions about yourself? You do *not* need long, drawn-out stories—just an example that could be described in one or two sentences.
- What is one of the things you are most proud of in relation to your past work experience that creates a picture or provides an example of what kind of employee you are or how you work best? Think about things you have done in the past 5 to 7 years.
- What you are hoping to do next? What you want to do? What you are looking for? Or, if changing careers, it is okay to say you aren't sure yet and are exploring and appreciate the opportunity to network if that is what you are doing.

Example Introduction Statements**Example 1:**

I am an engineer to my core. I love numbers, creating things, and solving problems. I pride myself on being able to take on projects that others say cannot be done and figuring out ways to make it happen. For example, in my most recent position, our machines intermittently were skipping steps during the production process. We would get it fixed and then it would happen again. My supervisors were convinced we needed to spend thousands of dollars investing in a new machine. I stepped up and told them that I thought I could fix it. It took me 1 week and I was able to develop an innovative solution and the problem was solved. I also love to read and go camping. Fishing is a big part of my life, including ice fishing. I am somewhat quiet, reserved, analytical, and thoughtful in my approach to almost everything I do.

Example 2:

I am not your typical accountant. Yes, I love numbers and people consider me to be very good with them, but I also enjoy being around people and working together on a team. For me, I need to be working in a position that requires interacting with others regularly and feeling like we are working toward a common goal. Being able to laugh and have an appropriate sense of humor helps me get through the workday. My coworkers have often commented to me about the positive energy I bring to work and how I always make them feel their opinions are welcome. For fun, I like to go to concerts and play board games with my friends.

Example 3:

Most people consider me a go-getter—someone who does not let grass grow under my feet. I am happy to take on extra projects and am still able to juggle getting my primary responsibilities done. However, I am also a bit of a perfectionist and have high expectations of myself that not only do I get things done, I also want to do them well. I do not like being bored and always have a to-do list, and I can't wait to get things checked off my list. I love the outdoors: spring, summer, winter, or fall. My favorite outdoor activity is playing Ultimate Frisbee or going on a long bike ride. I tend to organize a lot of events for my community and my friends. I am the unofficial planner. My organization and planning skills have helped me significantly in my previous positions since event planning has always been at least a small part of my responsibilities.

Example 4:

As you can see from my resume, I have worked in manufacturing for most of my career. I enjoy the physical, manual work. I am not someone who can sit at a desk all day and I don't mind some of the repetition that comes with working in a factory. I am prompt and someone who rarely misses work. In my most recent position, I went 5 years straight never missing work or being late. I am extremely reliable. Personally, I am a dog lover. I have two Golden Retrievers and spend most of my days off with them. I am extremely interested in this job, because I have heard from others this is a great place to work and it appears that the position will be a great fit with my skill set.

Example 5:

I am quiet and somewhat reserved. I like to come to work and put my mind to the grindstone. Of course, I am friendly, but I tend to be someone who stays in the background. I love designing things and am happiest when I am drawing, painting, crafting, designing, or doing something related to using those skills; that is why I am so interested in this position. To have the opportunity to be creative and design for this product would be a dream come true. I enjoy the challenge of designing to meet specific parameters while staying within budget. You can see from my resume that I have worked my way up from doing more basic design to much more complicated types of design. To date, one of the pieces I am most proud of is the one I designed for my company last year. The client we were preparing it for absolutely loved it. I was fortunate to get the opportunity to step out of my comfort zone and presented the design directly to the client. In my free time, I love to kayak, cross-country ski, and read. My favorite genre is historical fiction or mysteries.

Example 6:

I am committed to truly making a difference in the lives of others. At my core, I cannot think of anything more important than being able to help others every day. I learned about the mission of ABC Community Nonprofit when I was volunteering at a fundraiser for another organization called XYZ Organization. A woman I have known for years stopped by and said she had heard about this position and she immediately thought of me. I think she knows how passionate I am about helping people in this regard. Although when I started my education, I thought I wanted to be an elementary teacher, I also learned about nonprofit leadership and began taking classes along these lines. Since then, I have continued to build upon my knowledge in this area by volunteering on lots of committees and boards and taking advantage of every learning opportunity I can find. I love to learn and find that my insatiable curiosity keeps me motivated and engaged in my work life and beyond.

Example 7:

I have found I really enjoy being a receptionist. It seems to fit well with my skill set. I love to meet new people, I don't mind talking on the phone at all, and I can juggle multiple tasks all at once. I truly enjoy keeping track and organizing things. In my most recent position, I was excited when they approached me and asked if I would be willing to take on acting as the receptionist for another arm of our organization. I loved the additional challenges that came along with the added responsibility and welcomed the opportunity to meet a whole separate group of people. In my personal life, I enjoy attending sporting events and love going to movies.

Example 8:

I have always been told I am a natural leader. I enjoy the strategic part of leading and building relationships with my staff, and I especially enjoy developing employees. It is exciting when an employee grows into their job and grows into a leader themselves. For example, we had a human resource assistant who started out as a support person in our office. She was always asking questions, asking for more work and more growth opportunities. However, she really had no formal education to take on some of the more advanced HR tasks even though I could tell she wanted to. I started talking with her about what she might want to do next and we started identifying ways she could obtain the education she needed. To make a long story short, we kept talking and I kept mentoring her and just the other day she called and said she was offered the role of director of HR at her company. I do not shy away from making tough decisions as a leader either. A leader needs to be willing to make tough calls and then stand behind them with the "buck stops right here" attitude. I am someone who pushes hard to encourage my direct reports to think out of the box and strive for being a leader in their field. It is important that we move faster than our competition in a solid, prudent manner. I am truly proud that my department was the first to implement ABC strategies into their business plan. It made a huge difference in our financial success last year. On a personal note, I love to golf, watch baseball, and spend time at my cabin.

Example 9:

As you can see on my resume, I received my degree from the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater and learned early in my career my love for customer service and the benefits of good organizational skills. Throughout my professional career, I have been recognized locally and nationally for my contributions to the success of my employers and have developed my business acumen and ability to learn customized software systems. As an executive administrative assistant reporting to the president, I organized and updated the owner's personal and business investment information; it had not been updated in years. I was assigned specific projects to manage and track and attended meetings in his absence. I loved this role because I was active in all aspects of the business operations. I am eager to continue utilizing and developing my administrative, organizational, and customer skills in my next role.