



OFFICE OF  
CAREER EDUCATION

# The First Question of Every Interview

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## “Tell me about yourself.”

The first question at all interviews is not a question but a request. "Tell me about yourself." It is hard to answer this question without feeling like you are bragging. Get over it! This is about exuding confidence and putting your best foot forward. Do not think of it as bragging, but good marketing. Three minutes should suffice. Any longer and you may be perceived as one who chatters too much.

## Be Prepared

- Have a response ready and stick to it
- Don't memorize it; you will sound robotic
- Follow an outline and fill in details

## Where to Start

- Start no earlier than college unless you did something spectacular before then
- Example: "After graduating from high school..."

## Words of Caution

Preparing helps you avoid giving away information that could prejudice the interviewer. Such information is sometimes illegal for the interviewer to ask

- Avoid mention of any members of your family, religion, political affiliations, marital status, sexual orientation, and/or most disabilities
- Avoid divulging any personal information that has nothing to do with your ability to fulfill all functions of the job
- Never share any weakness or deficiency or use demeaning words or phrases to describe yourself - even jokingly

## Topics for Discussion

- Why you chose to attend Marshall University
- Elaborate on what you listed in the skill section of your resume and point out how much they match what the prospective employer is searching for
- Talk about what you gained from the most routine jobs. Example: "I have employed marketing and customer service skills in the restaurant field. In my most recent position, I marketed appetizers, desserts, and other add-ons to customers' orders which added value to their dining experiences. I would like to apply the same sales savvy to this job."
- Outstanding achievements or experiences
- How well your preparation fits the needs of the organization
- Communicate your desire and enthusiasm for the job you are applying for and back it up with examples you found while researching the company
- State your work philosophy
- Give examples highlighting your team skills

## Final Advice

- Practice your script to become comfortable with it and not feel like you are bragging.
- Never lie about yourself or embellish. You will get caught by a good interviewer.
- Use your shortcomings as a positive attribute that you are working to correct or have corrected.

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