

Youthfully Interview Question Themes Prep Template

INSTRUCTIONS:

- **THIS IS AN EXAMPLE ONLY**
- Before getting started, make sure you read our [Interview Skills Guide](#).
- *****DO NOT write out answers and read them during your interview. Simply write SHORT **talking points** under each bullet (you will see prompts under each, but feel free to add whatever comes to you). This template is meant to get you to think about your thoughts on each theme. **This is NOT A SCRIPT.*******
- For the **Personal Questions**, read our [Narrative Communication Approach™ Guide](#) to learn how to make your experiences unique, authentic, and memorable! For the **Problem Question**, read our [Deductive Communication Approach™](#) for guidance on logically organizing your thoughts in an effective and structured way.

If you need support at any point during your interview prep, [reach out to a Youth Coach™](#) for support and they'll be happy to help! 👍

Question Type 1: Personal Questions

Theme	Buzzwords	Opinion / Belief	1-2 Experiences/Background
Interests & Goals	• Passionate (about) • Interested (in) • Goal(s) • Love doing • Enjoy	Academic/Career: • Positive long term presence in my local community • Develop a diverse, enthusiastic and innovative team/circle Personal: • Dog training/agility • Cross country cycling	• I've been doing agility with my rescue dog for more than five years and have organized a weekly training group open to all which I have been running for more than two years now • I've cycled trails in five provinces and intend to ride in the remaining five and the territories within the next eight years - I'd like to organize a group tour with other enthusiastic cyclists
Leadership & Responsibility	• Leadership • Responsibility • Resourceful • Reliable • Accountable	Leadership is... • By example: be willing to do any task you would ask of others • Nurturing (a leader's job is to develop the people she is leading) and guidance (a leader clearly establishes expectations, and can help but not tell a person how to achieve those expectations - that's micromanagement and fails to nurture a person's skills)	• I've worked as head server for a catering company for the last two years and am responsible for organizing and directing the servers under me - team morale and dedication is improved when I willingly step into any role: If I pinch hit as sous chef (when we're overwhelmed) or clean the bathrooms (on very bad nights) first, the servers are more willing to do it the second time • As a dog trainer, I've had to learn to lead; I build up my partner's capabilities and set the expectations. Early on I gave too many instructions too quickly thinking I was being encouraging and my dog froze up. I needed to give one instruction then back off and quietly give him time to figure it out. This has proven true for people as well (like when training newer servers)
Role Models & Influential Factors	• Role Model • Respect • Inspire • Impact • Advice • Admire	Role Model (people): • My creative writing instructor (Ann) - Ann is very poised and sure of herself. She gives freely of her time and fairly assesses criticism Influential Factors (things): • The six months I spent in Western Samoa when I was twelve • My love of reading	• I met Ann when she was giving a guest lecture which was not well received - the audience was very hostile because of Ann's background. Her handling of the situation impressed me (and continued to impress me when I went on to take classes with her) • I was privileged to live in Western Samoa where I slowly became friends with many of the children of the women who worked at the hotel. When I left they asked if I would give them my books, since new books were difficult to get. Due to the language barrier we had

			never really talked about books and it was only upon leaving that I started to wonder what education and literary access looked like to the kids on the Island. This thought took root in me and has changed my perspectives on privilege and wealth
Accomplishments & Advancements	- Accomplish(ment) - Proud - Succeed - Done - Achieve - Win	Academic/Career: - I recently completed my first solo flight and intend to achieve my private pilot's license this summer - I was selected to participate in a competitive creative writing program Personal: - I've spent a week cycling across BC and living off my bicycle - I published a short story in a magazine	- I struggled with the radio work when preparing for my first solo flight and I was very proud of not making a single mistake on that flight, particularly when speaking with the tower and other aircraft - I found a study buddy and we practiced radio work over the phone - I trained for months for that ride and while I was very sore at the end of it, I hit every single daily target and arrived at the planned rendezvous on time. Later I drew on that experience to write a short story which was published as runner up in a short fiction contest
Creativity & Innovation	- Creativity - Innovate - Value - Problem solving - Obstacle	Creativity is...knowing where you want to end up then figuring out how to get there. In writing I always begin by deciding on my ending first - I have to solve the problem of the middle creatively Innovation is...finding that untapped intersection between two unrelated fields and developing a way they can benefit each other. I 'rescue' bikes from the landfill, repair, and donate them.	- I learned about a short fiction contest close to the entry deadline. In order to keep my submission tight, I wrote the ending first then needed to craft a creative plot which reached that conclusion. Amid all the entries my story was selected as a finalist and I've used this method of writing since - I've been cycling for many years and was appalled to discover how many perfectly repairable bikes are dumped at the landfill. 'Rescuing' these bikes serves two of my favorite interests: encouraging the cycling community and working to preserve our planet
Theme	Buzzwords	Opinion / Point of View	1-2 Experiences/Background
Teamwork & Collaboration	- Team(work/player/mate/member) - People - Collaboration - Group - Cooperate - Participate	Academic/Career: - Accounting for each other's skills and needs to place everyone in the optimal position - Agree on a shared purpose and negotiate from there Personal: - Communication means speak plainly and	- organizing the other servers at my catering job means taking into account everyone's schedules, their working preferences, and having the ability to adjust as needed in the moment to create optimal working conditions - like the time we worked a last minute black tie event with a team of mostly green servers and I had to orchestrate multiple food stations across a large property from one kitchen - I once had to write a final essay for a critical writing

		be willing to hear the other person Develop a shared plan with clear steps and expectations	class with two other students who would not speak to each other. To complete the project I needed to work as the go-between and negotiate with both very strong willed personalities to develop shared expectations, a clear path for achieving them, and a successful work-flow. This was unexpectedly one of my most challenging academic experiences
Social Issues & Helping Others	- Community - Social/current issue - Important (to you) - Help someone/ someone in need - Volunteer - Make a difference	volunteerism with Friends4seniors We've built a society that is very segregated across age lines and when seniors see their networks start to dwindle it can be very difficult for them to connect with new communities/younger people don't have the benefit of spending valuable time with their elders the way more integrated family communities do	I learned about Friends4seniors after an older woman who was lost approached me in a parking lot - I ended up helping her get home and along the way we talked about our lives. She was living alone and didn't have anyone to help her with things like getting groceries or basic home maintenance. I enjoyed her company and after some research found there was a real need for support networks for the elderly. Friends4seniors has given me a new perspective on dignified aging
Resilience & Failure	- Conflict - Challenge - Disappoint(ment) - Problem - Fail(ure) - Difficult	I failed my first driving test I had to hand in a term essay and decided at the last minute my thesis was not focused enough. It is important to hold yourself to standards you are proud of - this doesn't mean you always have to succeed, but it does mean you have to do the work	- I'm very good at book learning and was overconfident as a result. The time I had to commit to preparing for the test a second time taught me that it's important to understand what I'm doing in depth and not simply rely on my cleverness to get by - I had an important essay due and procrastinated on writing it. At the last minute I found myself struggling because the thesis I had submitted was not comprehensive enough. I ended up asking permission to change my thesis then scrambling to complete the essay. I knew that my essay could have been so much better if I had started it earlier and my teacher knew it too. I deservedly lost marks for that and resolved to keep a better schedule with my work because I want to be proud of what I hand in
Morality & Integrity	- Justice - Unjust - Unethical - Integrity - Right - Wrong	My friend was bullied in school It's not always easy to react in the face of an injustice. You can still do something about it after the fact - talk to people, find people who want to help, and raise awareness.	I was walking to class with a friend when we were knocked over and trampled from behind while people shouted terrible things at my friend. I was shocked and I froze. My friend helped me up after and that's when I learned this wasn't the first time this had happened to him. I wish I had known. We are regular walking

	• Acceptable		buddies now and we worked with a great teacher and group of students to launch an anti-bullying campaign in our school.
Conflict & Dealing With People	• Mistake • Disagree(ment) • Competition • Don't get along • Misunderstanding	I had to negotiate a group essay with two other students who would not work with each other I was volunteering as "whip" at a dressage show and found myself arguing with the riders	• I was assigned two partners for a group essay who didn't get along. When the teacher refused to reassign them they refused to talk to each other and repeatedly deleted each other's work. I had to mediate with both partners to complete the assignment and work hard to maintain my own standing with each partner to avoid being shut down as well. It took a lot of plain talking and a firm neutral stance • I was volunteering as "whip" (my job was to keep the show running on schedule) and I found myself getting frustrated with contestants who kept asking for more time to warm up before their turns. I could not alter the schedule so I had to refuse. Several contestants got belligerent and eventually one of the judges had to intervene. In retrospect I failed to keep that situation from escalating because I dismissed them too harshly. Next time I will be more diplomatic

Question Type 2: Problem Questions

Example Question: How would you estimate the number of gas stations in Canada?

Define

Seek context, challenge assumptions, and clarify terms in order to fully align on and understand the specific problem to be solved.

- What do you mean by gas stations?
 - For example, are these strictly commercial gas stations for everyday consumer vehicles (e.g. Petro Canada), and excludes any industrial, trucking, propane tank refill stations, go kart tracks, and car dealerships.
- These are active, operating gas (not electric) stations, as per our agreed definition, located in Canada.

Analyze

Break down the problem into its component parts, using a top-down, formulaic approach, then continue to dissect the issue looking at fundamental 'truths' and facts.

- The number of gas stations that exist is a function of the population who own cars
- I know there are four gas stations in my town of 40,000 people; approximately one in two people (50%) own cars (20,000)
- That means, if we assume my town is a proxy for the rest of Canada, we can estimate four gas stations for 20,000 people, or one for 5,000
- Let's divide 5,000 by the population of Canada, which is approximately 35m = 7,000

Refine

Form a hypothesis, then rigorously test the hypothesis to prove or disprove its validity—often through exhaustive quantitative and qualitative research

- 7,000 feels right...In order to sense-check this number, I would look at any industry census data, research main gas providers public filings to see if they publish the data, speak with experts in the gas industry, or see how many gas stations per population member
- In particular, I would want to validate the "one in two people own cars" statement, as this is largely an assumption based on my observations

Think

Think a bit deeper about this result to draw conclusions, insights back to the bigger picture, or next steps in your analysis

- After refining my answer, I would compare this to other countries. Does Canada have more per capita than other countries? Which providers have the largest market share? Is the number of gas stations growing due or shrinking due to electric vehicles? etc.

Summarize

Communicate your thought process using the [Deductive Communication Approach](#) (hypothesis/answer, main reasons, supporting arguments, so what?)

- In summary, the number of gas stations in Canada is approximately 7,000 because there are about one station for every 5,000 people. This is based on observations from my town having four gas stations, so I would cross check this with other towns and also conduct more industry and market research. Knowing the number of gas stations can help us answer other questions, one of which is the growth rate given the adoption of electric vehicles.

