Tell us about yourself

Answering the first interview question

A job interview usually starts with the question,
"tell us about yourself," or a question like it.
This exercise will help prepare your answer.
Write notes (talking points) under the headings
to help you tell a two-minute story about yourself.
Start strong!

◆ About me and my New Zealand experience

◆ How I see the job

◆ What I can bring to the job

◆ Summary statement

About me and my New Zealand experience

Say why you've come to New Zealand and how long you plan to stay. Introduce something personal, interesting and motivational about yourself.

Example

Arrived in NZ 2018. Travelled around (very nice scenery, nice people). Studies very useful to understand Kiwi way. Enquiry learning. Worked at drive-thru. Accents, people talk fast. Had to learn quick. Children in school, wife in work. We all want to stay.

How I see the job

What do you like or find exciting about the organisation, based on your research? (Remember to say where you got the information from, eg, website, annual report).

Example

Maintown Engineering - progressive, modern technology and equipment. Many projects on website similar to ones I've worked on. Annual Report very good - expanding.

What I can bring to the job

Describe your expertise, training, and professional strengths – use one to three points. What sparked your interest in this field? What experiences helped you develop useful skills for this job?

Example

China projects: airport 4th runway, motorway extension, tunnel, reclamation.

Project management.

Early interest - Aswan Dam.

Summary statement

Using your notes, write your statement and practice saying it.

Aim to speak for under two minutes but avoid memorising every word.

Be yourself. Tell your story.

Example

My interest in engineering started when I was quite young. I visited the Aswan Dam with my parents. It's a very big dam - 6.6 million tonnes of concrete holding back 38 cubic kilometres of water. It was amazing. I wanted to know who made it and how they made it.

I am very grateful that I could channel my early interest and train to be an engineer. Then I specialised in geotechnical. Over the last 10 years I've been involved in projects ranging in size from the airport's 4th runway, the motorway extension, and land reclamation projects. It's all in my CV, including several projects similar to projects you have completed here at Mairtown Engineering, for example, building suburban infrastructure.

The projects you do here interest me a lot. I'm familiar with the technology and equipment you use. Very up to date. And I see from your Annual Report that you're expanding. I think there are many parallels with my career and I have a lot to offer this company.

I came to NZ in 2018 with my family. We go out most weekends, exploring the countryside and the beaches. And we went on a trip around the South Island. Very beautiful. We like the people. There is so much variety here. The children enjoy school. My partner is already working. We feel very settled.

I did some postgrad study locally, to understand the terminology and regulations used in civil construction here in NZ. It was a different style of learning - enquiry learning. I realised that in New Zealand it's okay to ask questions, and share my thoughts with the team. I feel a lot more comfortable, knowing I can express my curiosity and actually it's expected here. I'm naturally a curious person.

While I was studying I worked at Maintown Drivethru and that was a good way to get used to all the different accents. At first it was challenging, but now I understand very well.

So I'm very interested to talk about this job with you and answer any questions you have.

Please note:

1. *This example is a guide only. Your answer will be specific to the job you're applying for.*
2. *Your interviewers may ask you again about what you can bring to the job. It is not necessary to give a full answer here, only a summary.*
3. *Refer to the Work Connect resource "Decoding a Job Description" for more information.*

Your turn