

Tell Me About Yourself

Pacific University Career Development Center

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Whether in a formal interview or just a casual conversation with an employer, this question is going to come up: “Tell me about yourself.” Sounds simple enough—but what do they want, and what should you say? Where do you begin—and end?*

An employer typically wants to know several things about you, including what sort of work you do or want to do, what skills you have, what your strengths are, and what sort of experience you have. If they like what you say, they’ll want to know more. So, try to come up with summary statements that you can draw on when needed. Condense or expand your response as the situation dictates, and do your best to move through the items quickly—about 1 minute should be all you need to describe your...

1. **Situation.** State your current role and the profession or occupation you affiliate with, or would like to join.
2. **Skills.** Highlight what you can do in terms of specific skills you have and roles you can fulfill.
3. **Strengths.** Describe a few of your strengths, whether expressed as personal characteristics or the types of settings in which you obtain your best results.
4. **Summary of Experience.** Briefly touch on 2 to 3 work experiences and how they relate to what you want to do.

Example

1. **Situation.** I’m a senior at Pacific University majoring in biology and seeking work in the area of plant propagation. I could envision working for a horticultural operation anywhere on the West Coast.
2. **Skills.** I’ve gained a lot of skill recently in experiment design and field research. I can organize a research project from start to finish and know how to present results in person or in writing. I’m also very proficient at statistical analysis.
3. **Strengths.** I am self-motivated and focused, and can perform tasks well with little supervision. I get my best results when working against a deadline and teaming up with other committed people.
4. **Summary of Experience.** I’ve assisted with two faculty research projects over the last two years, and am preparing to present findings on my own research into challenges with organic cultivation of elephant garlic in the Pacific Northwest. I’ve also worked at a native plants nursery for 3 years.

* Adapted from Bruce Hazen’s *Job Search and Networking Strategy: A Workshop for Pacific University, February 2007.*