A case interview is a job interview with business content. You will interact with an interviewer to analyze and solve case studies of business problems. In about 30 minutes (depending on firms and interviewers), you will replicate the methods and practices real consultants use in projects to solve a business problem.

Interviewers look for the following skills:
They want to know you can start quickly, think on your feet, and not be flustered by ambiguity!

Effective Communication
- Good/active listening
- Engages with interviewer
- Asks insightful questions
- Skilled with both oral and written communication

Problem Solving and Analytical Thinking Skills
- Organizes information effectively
- Identifies relevant data and quantifies responses
- Shows comfort with complex and ambiguous problems
- Thinks logically
- Breaks problems into smaller segments
- States assumptions clearly

Interpersonal Skills
- Remains relaxed and flexible
- Demonstrates poise, initiative, and confidence
- Defends without being defensive
- Thinks creatively under pressure
- Displays energy and enthusiasm

How to solve any case interview problem:
Cases help assess a candidate across multiple dimensions. Your answers should project clear thinking, practical judgment, and a professional attitude.

Apply this five-step approach while working through the case interview:

1) **Listen to the Case**
   - a. Gather all of the facts from the description and take notes
   - b. Identify the key client issue

2) **Clarify the Problem**
   - a. Restate the problem and ask questions
   - b. Pause to structure your thinking

3) **Deconstruct the Problem**
   - a. Break down the problem into logical parts in a structured manner
   - b. Identify potential hypotheses and framework

4) **State and Test Hypotheses**
   - a. Develop one or more hypotheses and choose an appropriate framework
   - b. Apply framework to test hypotheses

5) **Summarize Findings**
   - a. Make your recommendation and present alternative scenarios if necessary
   - b. Suggest recommendations to client and next steps
Sample frameworks:

- **Issue Tree**: Break down issue into key components so the problem can be effectively solved
- **Profitability Tree**: Assess profitability by breaking down components of revenue and cost
  - Profitability = Revenue \((\text{volume} \times \text{price})\) – Cost (fixed costs vs. variable costs)
- **Market Entry Framework**: Use to determine whether a company should enter a new market
- **3 C’s**: Customer, Company, and Competition
- **Porter’s Five Forces**: Use to understand the dynamics of entering a new industry or assess the industry a company is already in
  - Bargaining power of suppliers, bargaining power of buyers, threat of new entrants, rivalry among existing competitors, and threat of substitute products or services
- **4 P’s**: Use when launching a new product or reviewing positioning of an existing product
  - Product, Price, Promotion, and Place

Types of cases:

- **The Great Unknown**: Provides very little information and tests your ability to probe for additional details
  - Example: Disney is considering buying Netflix. Should they?
- **Parade of Facts**: Provides a significant amount of detail, some of which is unnecessary
  - Example: The client wants to break into the Asian markets, they have two unprofitable products, the CFO is leaving, and wheat prices are increasing. How do we increase profitability?
- **Market Sizing**: Asks a key question and requires a logical thought process and ease with numbers—know general numbers such as U.S. population (~320 million) or number of households (~120 million)
  - Example: How many new cars are sold in the U.S. each year?
- **Brain Teasers**: Serves to test how well you think on your feet, and may or may not have a definite answer—are uncommon but solved in the same way as market sizing questions
  - Examples:
    - How many golf balls would fit into a Boeing 747?
    - How do you measure 4 gallons of water using only a 3 and 5 gallon jug?
    - Is it better to be a truck driver on salary or by the mile?

To help you demonstrate your best thinking:

- **Take notes** and write down facts throughout—use a blank sheet of paper in landscape layout
- Be sure you **understand** the case question before proceeding
- Ask **specific questions**, but don’t use them as a crutch
- Develop and articulate a framework and the initial hypothesis that you intend to explore
- Be careful **not to memorize** frameworks, and tailor your approach
- Take time to **compose** your thoughts—don’t just start talking
- Structure your analysis into a clear, logical story—be thorough and organized
- Walk the interviewer through your thinking and explain your assumptions
- **Engage** the interviewer in a business conversation and remember that this is a partnership
- Maintain **enthusiasm** and keep a positive attitude

Resources for interview prep:

**Websites**

- **Deloitte** (case interview prep and practice questions): caseinterviewprep.deloitte.com
- **Boston Consulting Group** (practice cases and tips for navigating interviews): careers.bcg.com/case-interview-preparation
- **MBACASE** (case interview training, videos, and more): mbacase.com/ctcs-case-lib
- **CaseInterview.com** (case interview handouts and videos from Victor Cheng): caseinterview.com

**Books**

- **Case in Point** by Marc P. Cosentino
- **Case Interview Secrets** by Victor Cheng
- **Crack the Case System: How to Conquer Your Case Interviews** by David Ohrvall