

Avoiding common mistakes

Whatever job you're applying for, there are some questions that you will nearly always get asked. Preparing for these questions will help you to use them to demonstrate effectively why you are the best candidate for the position.

7 a In pairs, discuss how you would answer the following questions. Then, take turns to ask and answer them.

- 1 What do you see as your strengths?
- 2 What university did you attend, and why did you choose it?
- 3 What are your weaknesses?
- 4 What do you like doing in your spare time?

b ▶ 4.10 Listen to two recruitment experts, Grace and Oliver, sharing tips on effective ways to answer these questions. Do you agree with them? What would you change about your own answers to make them more effective?

c ▶ 4.10 Match the advice given by Grace and Oliver (a–h) to the questions (1–4) in Exercise 7a. Listen again and check your answers.

- a Use examples from your experience to support your claims. 1
- b Don't say that you chose it because it was the closest one to home.
- c Mention what steps you have taken to tackle this problem.
- d Focus on the educational/academic/professional reasons for your choice.
- e Don't use tentative language such as 'I feel' or 'I think I'm quite good at'.
- f Mention anything that demonstrates you working as part of a team or group.
- g Don't say that you have none.
- h Talk about things that are unusual and memorable.

d ▶ 4.11 Lidia and Rafa are both applying for a marketing position with a magazine based in New York. Listen to their answers to the questions in Exercise 7a and decide who is the stronger candidate.

e ▶ 4.11 Complete the following extracts from Lidia's interview. Listen again and check your answers.

- 1 I'm also able to prioritise my work and work under pressure if deadlines are moved forward.
- 2 I did a lot of _____ into universities, both abroad and in Spain.
- 3 In the end I decided to go to the University of Barcelona as it was clear that its Economics department had an excellent _____.
- 4 Well, my French is a bit rusty, so I have _____ started evening classes to improve it.
- 5 I still play _____ for a local club and love going away with the team for matches against other clubs.
- 6 I'm also a _____ traveller.
- 7 During the summer last year I _____ a month in Africa working with volunteers at a national reserve.

f Look at the following answer templates based on Lidia's answers. Complete the templates so they are true for you.

- 1 I am _____ and apply a _____ approach to my work. I believe in _____. This enables me to _____. I'm also able to _____. For example, in my last job _____, I implemented a new system for _____. This way we were able to _____.
- 2 I did a lot of research into _____. In the end I decided to _____ as it was clear that its _____ had an excellent reputation.
- 3 Well, I feel that _____, so I have recently started _____ to improve _____. I used to be _____, but I've started _____, which has enabled me to _____.
- 4 I enjoy _____. I'm also a keen _____. During the _____ I _____. I'm currently _____.

g In pairs, take turns to ask and answer the questions in Exercise 7a, using the templates in Exercise 7f.