
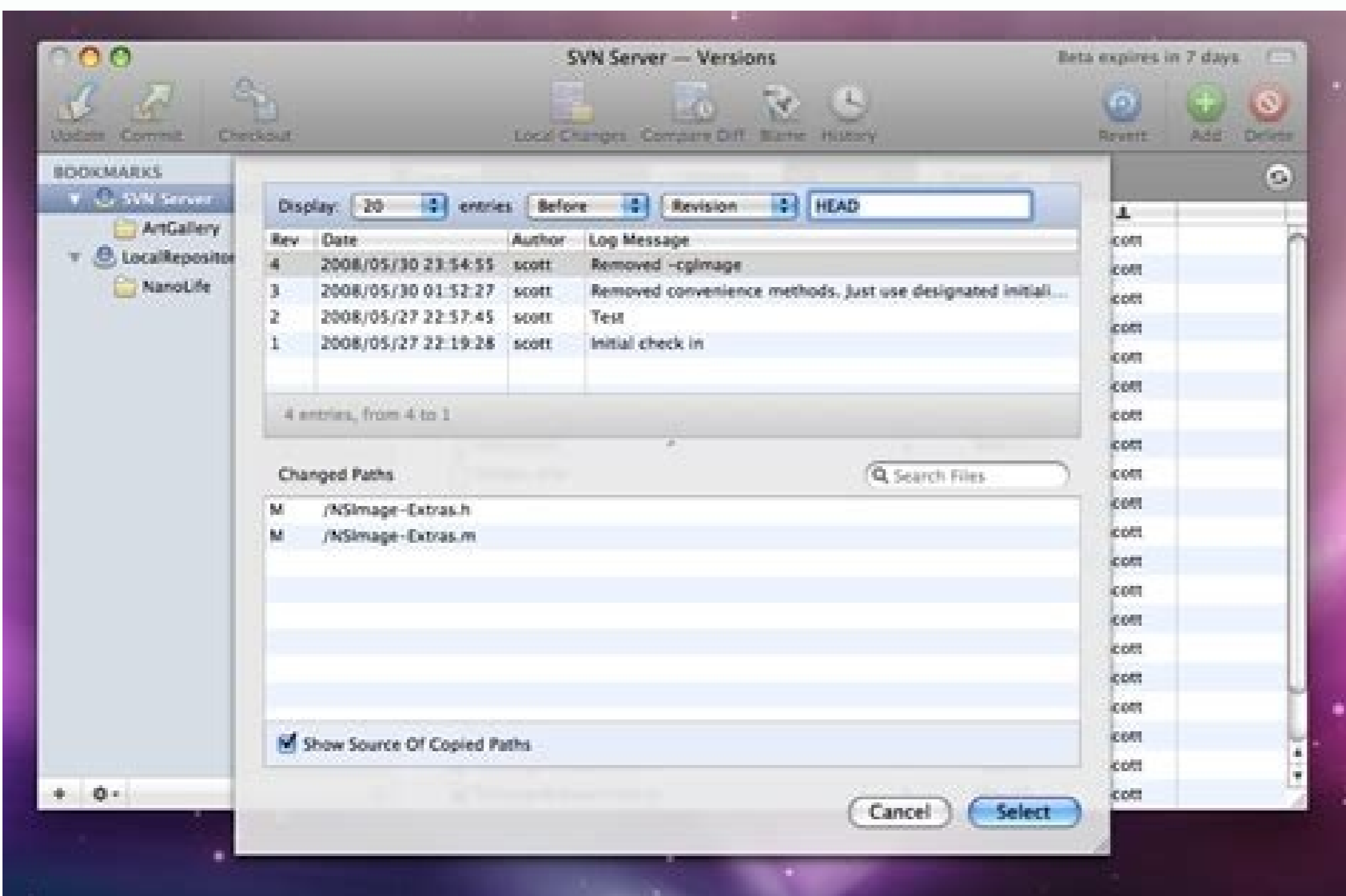
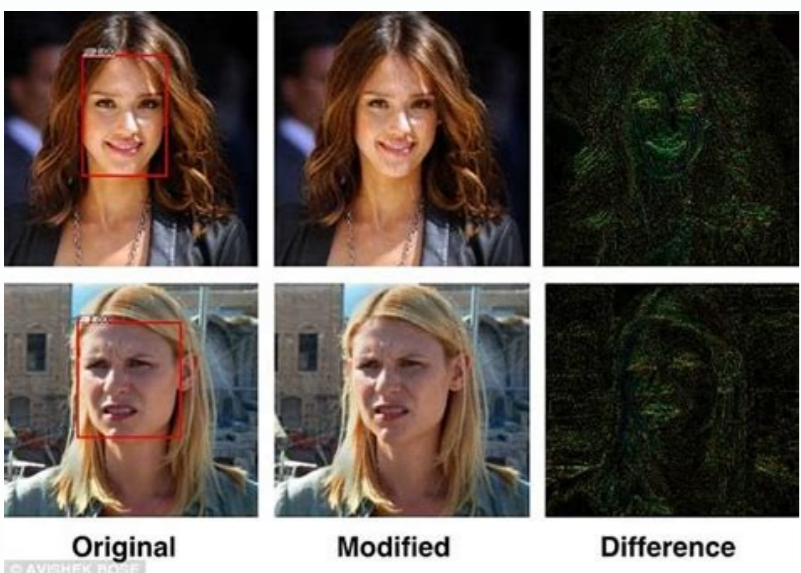
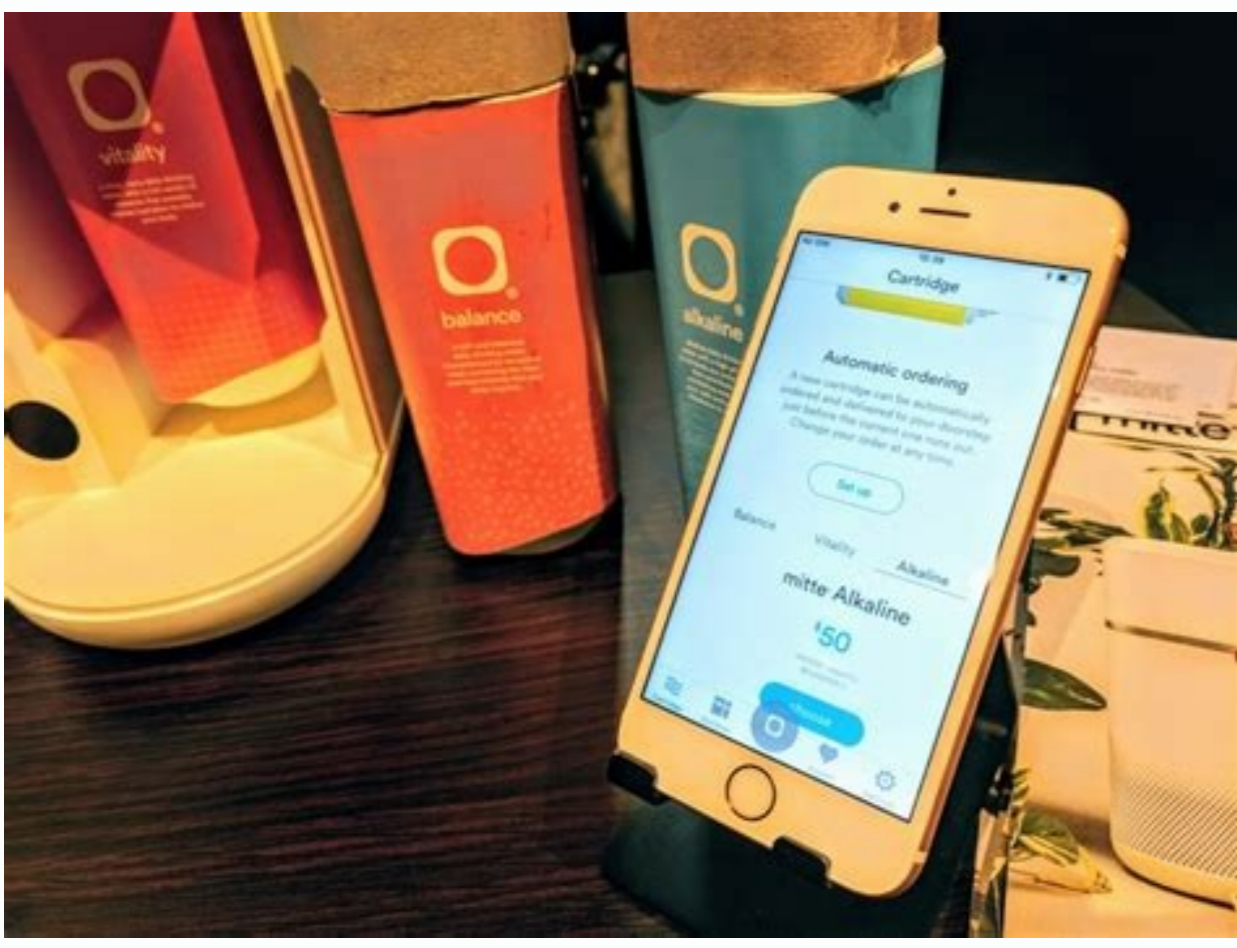


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Walk me through the statements from beginning to end, and assume a 40% tax rate."ANSWER: Initially, nothing changes on the IS. How do its Cost of Equity, Cost of Debt, and WACC change? What's the IRR?"ANSWER: Initial Investor Equity = \$100 million \* 10 \* 40% = \$400 million.Exit Enterprise Value = \$150 million \* 9 = \$1,350 million. Debt Remaining Upon Exit = \$600 million - \$250 million = \$350 million. Exit Equity Proceeds = \$1,350 million - \$350 million = \$1 billion. This represents a 2.5x multiple over 5 years, and you should know that a 2x multiple over 5 years is a ~15% IRR, while a 3x multiple is a ~25% IRR, so this IRR is approximately 20%. QUESTION: "You buy a \$100 EBITDA business for a 10x multiple, and you believe that you can sell it again in 5 years for 10x EBITDA. You use 5x Debt / EBITDA to fund the deal, and the company repays 50% of that Debt over 5 years, generating no extra Cash. It repays \$20 of the loan as well. Were you a failed candidate?"ANSWER: No! Even if it's true, never admit this. You can answer this one by saying that you got interested in banking very late in the process, when it was too late to get the required sequence of internships (plausible if you went to a non-target school; not believable if you went to Harvard or Wharton). Or, you could say that you knew about banking but deliberately chose something else - but then you realized you should have done banking, so you've been working toward it from the start of your full-time role (it's much tougher to make this story work). You must be clear that you didn't "just" get interested in IB - you've been interested for a long time, and you completed specific client work/jobs to move closer over time. QUESTION: "You've changed jobs twice in the past two years, and now you're trying to switch once again. The Buyer has 10 shares at a share price of \$25.00, and its Net Income is \$10. It acquires the Seller for a Purchase Equity Value of \$150. For this, you'll need the background information, deal rationale, a few financial stats, and your opinion of it. But just in case, see the "Why investment banking?" article. QUESTION: "Why our bank, specifically?"ANSWER: See above. Outline the background, deal rationale, 1-2 financial stats, and your opinion of it. These should come from your work experience, but 1-2 can be from school if you're an undergrad or recent grad. Next, you should select 3 strengths and 3 weaknesses based on what bankers want to see (hard work, drive, ability to work long hours, attention to detail, financial skills, leadership, etc.). Possible, not-completely-terrible weaknesses might include your inability to delegate tasks well, second-guessing yourself when making decisions, not managing your time well, or not always speaking up when a teammate has made a mistake. Finally, you should prepare for the key objections that bankers will raise about your background: Did you not attend top universities? Did you not major in something technical? How much EBITDA growth do you need to realize a 20% IRR?"ANSWER: Initial Investor Equity = \$100 \* 10 \* 50% = \$500. 20% IRR Over 5 Years = ~2.5x multiple (2x = ~15% and 3x = ~25%). Required Exit Equity Proceeds = \$500 \* 2.5 = \$1,250. Remaining Debt = \$250, so Exit Enterprise Value = \$1,500. Required EBITDA = \$150, since \$1,500 / 10 = \$150. It must issue \$150 / \$25.00 = 6 additional shares to do the deal, so the Combined Share Count is 10 + 6 = 16. Since both companies have the same tax rate and since no Cash or Debt is used, Combined Net Income = \$10 + \$10 = \$20, and Combined EPS = \$20 / 16 = \$1.25, so the deal is 25% accretive. QUESTION: "What are the Combined Equity Value and Enterprise Value in this same deal?" OK, we're done with that list of sample questions that ended up being surprisingly long. I've seen prospective investment bankers over two subjects that do not matter much for traditional IB interviews: brain teasers and the questions you ask the interviewer when he/she asks if you have any questions at the end. Brain teasers are more likely in sales & trading interviews or consulting interviews, and less likely in banking because they have nothing to do with the job. So, I wouldn't recommend spending much time learning how to estimate the number of golf balls that fit in a 747 or how to move water between jugs of different sizes. If you are worried because you're interviewing at an elite boutique or a group/firm known for brain teasers, get a book to prepare. On another note, interviewees tend to obsess over "the right questions" to ask interviewers at the end. But the truth is, these questions are almost irrelevant unless you say something stupid or inappropriate. Just ask a question about the person's background, experience at the bank so far, etc., and don't devote brain cells to this one. Investment Banking Associate Interview Questions There are no huge differences for Associate-level candidates, as the same topics and types of questions tend to come up. The main difference is that you need to be more polished because everyone at this level at an investment bank is articulate and has more real-world experience. It's also quite important to focus on a specific industry because they want candidates who can leverage their pre-MBA experience for something useful on the job. Finally, case studies - sometimes informal verbal ones, sometimes in writing, and sometimes in Excel - are more likely to come up at this level. To practice, you can look at the many example case studies and solutions in the full Breaking Into Wall Street Investment Banking Interview Guide. For more, please see our article on the investment banking associate job. What Next? This article is detailed and comprehensive, but the most important point is simple: You cannot "prepare" for the technical questions in an investment banking interview at the last minute. You can come up



with a half-day decent story and reasonable answers to common "fit" questions with limited time – such as a few hours or days before the interview. But you cannot answer detailed questions about LBO models, the components of Enterprise Value, or how WACC changes under different conditions unless you have solid technical knowledge, which takes time to acquire. At the minimum, you'll have to start ~2-3 months in advance to get a good sense for these concepts (assuming no background or limited accounting/finance knowledge). The other question categories can wait until the last minute, but you can't cram and master the technical side in that span of time. If you're serious about acing your investment banking interviews, we recommend you enroll in the following Premium Courses as a minimum. You should gather the background information, deal motivation, your personal contributions, and the current status for each one you use. There are many tips on how to research and prepare for these questions in our articles on discussing a recent deal and discussing your own deals. Sample Questions and Answers: There isn't much to say here because the most common questions are listed at the top of this section. For examples of how to answer these questions, please see the templates and samples in the corresponding articles. Investment Banking Interview Questions Category 4: Technical Questions and Answers For this last category, I do not have any magical tips that will get you results in hours instead of weeks or months. Put simply, to succeed in investment banking interviews, you need to put in the time to study accounting, finance, valuation, and M&A and LBO modeling. Since the Seller's Yield is higher, it will be accretive. QUESTION: "Let's say it is a 100% Stock deal. Are you too old? A year passes, and the company pays 10% interest on the debt as it depreciates \$10 of the factory. How much would you pay for this company?" ANSWER: Company Value = Cash Flow / (Discount Rate - Cash Flow Growth Rate), where Cash Flow Growth Rate < Discount Rate. So, this one becomes:  $\$200 / (10\% - 4\%) = \$3,333$ . QUESTION: "What might cause a company's Present Value (PV) to increase or decrease?" ANSWER: A company's PV might increase if its expected future cash flows increase, its expected future cash flows start to grow at a faster rate, or the Discount Rate decreases (e.g., because the expected returns of similar companies decrease). The PV might decrease if the opposite happens. QUESTION: "What does the internal rate of return (IRR) mean?" ANSWER: The IRR is the Discount Rate at which the Net Present Value of an investment, i.e., Present Value of Cash Flows - Upfront Price, equals 0. You can also think of it as the "effective compounded interest rate on an investment" – so, if you invest \$1,000 today, end up with \$2,000 in 5 years, and contribute and earn nothing in between, the IRR is the interest rate you'd have to earn on that \$1,000, compounded each year, to reach \$2,000 in 5 years. Example "Accounting" Questions in Investment Banking Interviews You don't need to know accounting in terms of debits and credits, but you do need to know the 3 main financial statements and how they link together very well. QUESTION: "How do the 3 financial statements link together? The math works because leverage amplifies returns; the PE firm earns a higher return if the deal goes well because it uses less of its own money upfront (and it earns an even lower return if the deal goes poorly!). In Step 1, you make assumptions for the Purchase Price, Debt and Equity, Interest Rate on Debt, and Revenue Growth and Margins. In Step 2, you create a Sources & Uses schedule to calculate the Investor Equity paid by the PE firm. In Step 3, you adjust the Balance Sheet for the effects of the deal, such as the new Debt, Equity, and Goodwill (see our tutorial for more on how to calculate Goodwill). In Step 4, you project the company's statements, or at least its cash flow, and determine how much Debt it repays each year. Finally, in Step 5, you make assumptions about the exit, usually using an EBITDA multiple, and calculate the IRR and cash-on-cash multiple. QUESTION: "What's an ideal LBO candidate?" ANSWER: Price is the most important factor because almost any deal could work at the right price (i.e., one that's low enough) – but if the price is too high, the chances of failure increase substantially. Beyond that, stable and predictable cash flows are important, there shouldn't be a huge need for ongoing CapEx or other big investments, and there should be a realistic path to exit, with returns driven by EBITDA growth and Debt paydown instead of multiple expansion. QUESTION: "A PE firm acquires a \$100 million EBITDA company for a 10x multiple using 60% Debt. The company's EBITDA grows to \$150 million by Year 5, but the exit multiple drops to 9x. How do Equity value and Enterprise Value change in each step?" ANSWER: Initially, Equity Value increases by \$200 million because Total Assets increases by \$200 million and the change is attributable to common shareholders. Enterprise Value stays the same because Cash is a non-core-business Asset; you can also say that the increases in Cash and Equity Value offset each other in the Enterprise Value formula. In the next step, Equity Value decreases by \$100 million because Cash, and therefore Total Assets, falls by \$100 million and this change is attributable to common shareholders. Enterprise Value stays the same because Cash is a non-core-business Asset, or because the reduced Cash and reduced Equity Value offset each other. QUESTION: "What are the advantages and disadvantages of EV / EBITDA vs. You create a Sources & Uses schedule and Purchase Price Allocation schedule to estimate the true cost of the acquisition and its effects. Then, you combine the Balance Sheets of the Buyer and Seller, reflecting the Cash, Debt, and Stock used, new Goodwill created, and any write-ups. Also, point out that you had to put in far more effort to get into this room than the other person did. You're also motivated to stay in banking for the long term because it's your actual end goal; almost everyone from "elite schools" wants to get into private equity ASAP, which runs contrary to the long-term commitment that banks are now trying to encourage. QUESTION: "Can you describe what a banker does in an IPO or M&A deal?" ANSWER: Review our articles on mergers & acquisitions and initial public offerings (IPOs). QUESTION: "Why do you want to be an investment banker?" ANSWER: This is just the last part of your story. Why should I hire you over him?" ANSWER: Because it's the person who does the work, not the degree. Why couldn't you get into an investment bank as an undergrad? They are the most common topics, especially in entry-level interviews. There are thousands of possible questions to test your technical knowledge, so I will list a few representative examples in each of the main categories. I will focus on questions and answers that you probably haven't seen on other sites and other resources, so most of these are in the "more challenging" range. Example "Finance" Questions in Investment Banking Interviews "Finance" means concepts such as the Time Value of Money, the Discount Rate, Present Value, and the Internal Rate of Return (IRR). QUESTION: "How much would you pay for a company that generates \$100 of cash flow every single year into eternity?" ANSWER: It depends on your Discount Rate, or "targeted yield." If your Discount Rate is 10%, meaning you could earn 10% per year in companies with similar risk/potential return profiles, you would pay \$100 / 10% = \$1,000. But if your Discount Rate is 20%, you would pay \$100 / 20% = \$500. QUESTION: "A company generates \$200 of cash flow next year, and its cash flow is expected to grow at 4% per year for the long term. You could earn 10% per year by investing in other, similar companies. Are your grades on the low side? If they ask you to discuss a market, pick the market from this deal and make sure you know the approximate market size, key trends/drivers, major competitors, and your opinion of its prospects. (If Applicable) Prepare for 2 Discussions of Your Own Deals – This one is applicable only if you've had previous IB, PE, corporate law, or Big 4 experience where you worked on deals or with clients. The Seller has a Net Income of \$10 as well. Assume that Equity Value = Enterprise Value for both the Buyer and Seller." ANSWER: Combined Equity Value = Buyer's Equity Value + Value of Stock Issued in the Deal =  $\$250 + \$150 = \$400$ . Combined Enterprise Value = Buyer's Enterprise Value + Purchase Enterprise Value of Seller =  $\$250 + \$150 = \$400$ . QUESTION: "Without doing any math, what ranges would you expect for the Combined EV / EBITDA and P / E multiples, and why?" ANSWER: They should be somewhere in between the Buyer's multiples and the Seller's purchase multiples. Are you a job hopper? Compare yourself to the ideal candidate and pinpoint how you're different. Once you've done that, you can practice with this video tutorial, and the sample questions that follow: Sample Questions and Answers. QUESTION: "What's your greatest strength, and what's your greatest weakness?" ANSWER: Your greatest strength should be easy (see the list above - pick one and support it with a quick story). If you don't, you won't have a great chance against candidates who are obsessed about becoming an investment banker and have spent months preparing. We cover all these topics comprehensively in our full Investment Banking Interview Guide, but you can also get good introductions to them in our YouTube channel and the articles on this site. With limited time, focus on accounting, equity value and enterprise value, and valuation and DCF analysis. If you ever Google "investment banking interview questions", you could easily find yourself depressed. There are endless books, articles and message board threads where people complain about unfair investment banking interviews, and horror stories about "bad copy" interviewers. At first glance, it might seem like the interview preparation process for investment banking is next to impossible. But I'd suggest that everyone is over-complicating it. Investment banking interviews are not rocket science, and this article will unpack every type of question you're likely to face in banking interviews (and how to answer them). Let's start with this summary infographic (scroll down to go straight to a more detailed analysis). Intelligent Preparation For Interview Questions First, note that this article is about investment banking interview questions – not the overall process, how to win interviews, or what to do before and after the interviews. For those, see our articles on how to get into investment banking, investment banking recruitment, and the investment banking industry. Second, I'm going to link and refer back to our existing coverage for many of these questions since the most important ones have dedicated articles on this site. The key preparation point is this: Rather than memorizing 541,763 questions and answers, you should focus on the main question categories and make sure that you have stories and examples prepared for them. There are only four types of questions you'll encounter in interviews at investment banks, and you can prepare for 3 / 4 of them in 1-2 days (or less). The last category – technical questions – will take more time and effort, but you can save time by focusing on the right topics and ignoring the fluff. Investment Banking Interview Questions Category 1: Your Story There is only one question in this category, though it may be phrased in different ways: "Tell me about yourself." "Walk me through your resume." "Why are you here today?" "Tell me about your experience." Each of these phrases should trigger the "story reflex" in your brain and set you 200-300-word pitch into motion. This question is the single most important one in any interview, so if you do nothing else to prepare, please take 30-60 minutes to outline your story! Sample Questions and Answers: We already listed the main question variations above. For sample answers, here are a few examples of how you can answer this question like a pro, taken from our article on how to answer the "Walk me through your resume" question. And if you're more of a visual learner, here's a video tutorial on how to answer the "Walk me through your resume" question. Investment Banking Interview Questions Category 2: "Fit" Questions This category includes questions such as: "What's your greatest strength?" "What's your greatest weakness?" "Tell me about a team activity that did not go as planned." "Why is your GPA on the low side?" All questions that are not related to your story, deal/market/company discussions, and technical concepts are in this category. You can get a wide range of questions here, but you don't need to memorize a wide range of answers – just come up with 2-3 examples that you can recycle for everything. We explain how to do that in the article on investment banking fit questions, but in short: First, you should outline 3 "short stories" – a leadership story, a "success" story, and a "failure" story. It will be almost impossible to describe your 3 strengths and 3 weaknesses in 30-60 seconds, so pick 1 in each category and give a quick story to support it. For example, you worked long hours and finished a last-minute task for a pending deal in your internship, which resulted in a successful close, but you could have been more proactive when following up on assignments and asking for the next steps. QUESTION: "Can you describe a team situation where you worked with a difficult team member?" ANSWER: You could use any of your 3 short stories here, depending on what they're about. You just have to say that a person in the group didn't want to do the work, or wanted to do something unethical, or was competent but couldn't get along with others. Then, you convinced the others to side with you – and you gave this difficult team member something that wouldn't sink the project to prevent further conflicts while still finishing the task. QUESTION: "You have no experience in an investment bank. Will the deal be accretive or dilutive?" ANSWER: You can't tell unless it's a 100% Stock deal. The formula is simple:  $WACC = Cost\ of\ Equity * \%\ Equity + Cost\ of\ Debt * (1 - Tax\ Rate) * \% Debt + Cost\ of\ Preferred\ Stock * \% Preferred\ Stock$ . You usually estimate the Cost of Equity with  $Risk-Free\ Rate + Equity\ Risk\ Premium * Levered\ Beta$ . The Cost of Debt and Cost of Preferred can be based on the Yield to Maturity (YTM) of the current issuances, the median rates or YTM on the issuances of peer companies, or you can take the Risk-Free Rate and add a default spread based on the company's credit rating after it issues more Debt. If Debt or Cash changes over time, the Interest figures should also change. The Combined Net Income equals the Combined Pre-Tax Income times (1 - Buyer's Tax Rate), and you divide that by (Buyer's Existing Share Count + New Shares Issued in the Deal) to get the Combined EPS. You calculate the accretion/dilution by dividing the Combined EPS by the Buyer's standalone EPS and subtracting 1. QUESTION: "A company with a P / E multiple of 25x acquires another company for a purchase P / E multiple of 15x. It shouldn't even be a question if you've told your story properly. Assume it only has Debt and Equity." ANSWER: As a company uses more Debt, the Cost of Debt and Cost of Equity always increase because more Debt increases the risk of bankruptcy, which affects all investors. As the company goes from no Debt to some Debt, WACC decreases at first because Debt is cheaper than Equity, but it starts to increase at higher levels of Debt as the risk of bankruptcy starts to outweigh the lower Cost of Debt. In this case, we can't tell how WACC will change because we don't know where we are on this "curve" – but we guess that WACC will likely decrease because 30% Debt / Total Capital is still in a fairly low/normal range for most industries. QUESTION: "How do you calculate and sanity check Terminal Value in a DCF?" ANSWER: You apply a Terminal Multiple, such as an EV / EBITDA figure based on the comparable companies, to EBITDA in the final year of the forecast period, or you pick a Terminal FCF Growth Rate and use a variation of the "Company Value" formula:  $Terminal\ Value = Final\ Year\ FCF * (1 + Terminal\ FCF\ Growth\ Rate) / (Discount\ Rate - Terminal\ FCF\ Growth\ Rate)$ . To check yourself, back into the Terminal FCF Growth Rate implied by the first method and the Terminal Multiple implied by the second method. If you get, say, a 10% Implied Terminal FCF Growth Rate for a company in a developed country, you're way off and need to pick a lower multiple that results in a growth rate below the long-term GDP growth rate. Example M&A and Merger Model Interview Questions These questions are less important than those in the other technical categories above, but you should still know the basic concepts. It is common in industries where those items are key value drivers for companies (e.g., manufacturing). The P / E multiple is not terribly useful in most cases because it's affected by different tax rates, capital structures, non-core-business activities, and more – so, you often use it in the interest of "completeness" or because you want a multiple that reflects a company's true bottom line. Also, it's important in industries such as commercial banking and insurance where you do need to factor in the interest income and expense. For more on this topic, please see our guide to EBIT vs. It sells a factory that's listed at \$100 on its Balance Sheet for \$80. EV / EBIT, EV / EBITDA is better in cases when you want to completely exclude the company's CapEx, Depreciation, and capital structure. EV / EBIT is better when you want to exclude capital structure but partially factor in CapEx and Depreciation. This can be very short because you just need to show that you know something about the bank. Prepare for 1 In-Depth Deal/Market/Company Discussion – You should also prepare for a more in-depth discussion of a deal, and this deal does not have to be one that this bank advised on. You also show the full proceeds, \$80, in Cash Flow from Investing, so cash at the bottom is up by \$88. Balance Sheet: Cash is up by \$88, but PP&E is down by \$100, so the Assets side is down by \$12. How accretive is this deal?" ANSWER: The buyer's EPS is  $\$10 / 10 = \$1.00$ . Then, you estimate the Purchase Price and the mix of Cash, Debt, and Stock used to fund the deal. We have a full YouTube video tutorial on these questions. But if you prefer the text version, here's a sample: QUESTION: "Walk me through a merger model." ANSWER: Start by projecting the financial statements of the Buyer and Seller. How do I know you won't just leave our firm next year?" ANSWER: Emphasize that you changed jobs twice because it was your original, long-term plan to do so. You won't change jobs yet again because working at an investment bank was your plan all along. For example, you started out in audit, went to a boutique valuation firm to gain client and valuation experience, and now you want to move into banking to work on the entire deal process from beginning to end. That has been your goal since you started out in audit, but you knew you couldn't just move directly from audit to IB. QUESTION: "The person in the room next door has perfect grades from Harvard or Oxford. For your greatest weakness, pick one that's "real," but not too damaging for the role. For example, don't say you can't delegate tasks well at the Associate level since you'll have to do that all the time, especially as you advance. If you say that you take too long to make decisions, state it and then back it up with your "failure" story such as how it took you too long to remove a team member who wasn't contributing because you didn't want to start a conflict – but that slow action ended up hurting the team. QUESTION: "What feedback did you receive from your most recent internship or job?" ANSWER: This one is a combined strengths/weakness question. The \$100 factory purchase shows up as CapEx on the CFS, and the \$100 debt issuance shows up on the CFS as well, offsetting it, so Cash does not change at the bottom. On the Balance Sheet, PP&E is up by \$100, and Debt is up by \$100, so both sides balance. Then in the first year, you record \$10 of interest and \$10 of depreciation on the IS, reducing Pre-Tax Income by \$20 and Net Income by \$12 at a 40% tax rate. On the CFS, Net Income is down by \$12, but you add back the \$10 of depreciation since it is non-cash, and the \$20 loan repayment is a cash outflow, so Cash is down by \$22. On the BS, Cash is down by \$22, and PP&E is down by \$10, so the Assets side is down by \$32. Net Income QUESTION: "Which of the main 3 valuation methodologies will produce the highest valuations?" ANSWER: Any methodology could produce the highest valuations depending on the industry, period, and assumptions. But you can say that Precedent Transactions often produce higher values than the Public Comps because of the control premium – the extra amount that acquirers must pay to acquire sellers. It's tough to say because it's far more dependent on the assumptions and far-in-the-future projections. So: "A DCF tends to produce the most variable output since it's so dependent on the assumptions, and Precedent Transactions tend to produce higher values than the Public Comps because of the control premium." QUESTION: "How might you select a set of comparable public companies for use in a valuation?" ANSWER: You screen based on geography, industry, and size. What happens on the 3 statements, assuming a 40% tax rate?" ANSWER: Income Statement: Record a Loss of \$20 on the Income Statement, which reduces Pre-Tax Income by \$20 and Net Income by \$12 at a 40% tax rate. Cash Flow Statement: Net Income is down by \$12, but you add back the \$20 Loss since it's non-cash. You then combine the Income Statements, reflecting the Foregone Interest on Cash, Interest on Debt, and Synergies (for both revenue and expenses, but if you have to pick one, cost synergies are more important). But just in case, see the "Why our bank?" article. Investment Banking Interview Questions Category 3: Discussing Deals, Markets, and Companies This category includes questions such as: "Tell me about a recent deal." "Tell me about a deal our bank worked on recently." "Tell me about a company you're interested in." "What makes Market X interesting to you?" These questions are not that important unless you've had extensive deal experience that the interviewers plan to dig into – but they do require extra research and preparation. We recommend the following steps: Look Up 1 Deal the Bank Has Worked on Recently - Find something from the past ~6 months on the bank's website or via Google searches. The company repays \$250 million of Debt and generates no extra Cash. The L&E side is also down by \$12 because Retained Earnings fell by \$12 due to the Net Income decrease, so both sides balance. QUESTION: "A company buys a factory using \$100 of debt. Do you not have much work experience? Assume the same tax rates for both companies. Assume the Indirect Method for the Cash Flow Statement." ANSWER: To link the statements, make Net Income at the bottom of the Income Statement the top line of the Cash Flow Statement. Then, adjust this Net Income number for any non-cash items such as Depreciation & Amortization. Next, reflect changes to operational Balance Sheet items such as Accounts Receivable, which may increase or decrease the company's cash flow depending on how they've changed. That gets you to Cash Flow from Operations. Next, reflect investing and financing activities, which may increase or decrease cash flow, and sum up Cash Flow from Operations, Investing, and Financing to get the net change in cash at the bottom. Link Cash on the Balance Sheet to the ending Cash number on the CFS, and add Net Income to Retained Earnings within Equity on the Balance Sheet. Then, link each non-cash adjustment to the appropriate Asset or Liability; SUBTRACT links on the Assets side and ADD links on the L&E side. Link each CFi and OFF item to the matching item on the Balance Sheet, using the same rule as above. Check that Assets equals Liabilities + Equity at the end; if this is not true, you did something wrong and need to re-check your work. QUESTION: "A company runs into financial distress and needs cash immediately. P / E as valuation multiples?" ANSWER: With EV / EBITDA vs. But if higher non-cash charges or artificially low CapEx are boosting FCF, both of those are negative. Example "Valuation" Questions in Investment Banking Interviews You need to understand the "big picture" behind valuation, how Equity Value and Enterprise Value differ, and the trade-offs of different multiples and methodologies. Questions like "How do you value a company?" or "Tell me the 3 basic valuation methodologies" are so basic that banks almost assume you already know them. QUESTION: "What do Equity Value and Enterprise Value mean, intuitively?" ANSWER: Equity Value is the value of ALL the company's Assets, but only to EQUITY INVESTORS (common shareholders). Enterprise Value is the value of only the company's core-business Assets, but to ALL INVESTORS (Equity, Debt, Preferred, and possibly others). For more, please see our tutorial on how to calculate Enterprise Value. QUESTION: "A company issues \$200 million in new shares, and then it uses \$100 million from the proceeds to issue Dividends to shareholders. Why do you think your skills are relevant to this industry?" ANSWER: Start by stating, briefly, the skills that are required for investment banking (see the article on investment banking analyst roles), and then explain how your previous work experience has given you similar skills. For example, you can point out how you've worked with clients in previous jobs, how you've had to work long hours and complete analytical/technical tasks, and how you've learned about accounting and finance in classes. QUESTION: "You already have two years of work experience. If it is, it will be accretive because the Cost of Acquisition is 1 / 25, or 4%, and the Seller's Yield is 1 / 15, or 6.7%. If you've mentioned something the bank is good at in your story, it shouldn't even be a question. For example, your screen might be "U.S.-based steel manufacturing companies with over \$500 million in revenue" or "European legacy airlines with over €1 billion in EBITDA." Get more on Comparable Company Analysis in our YouTube channel. Example "DCF" Questions in Investment Banking Interviews The DCF is "real valuation"; multiples are just abbreviated ways to express it. So, you can expect questions on everything from the basic idea to a walk-through to the Discount Rate and Terminal Value calculations. QUESTION: "Explain the big idea behind a DCF analysis and how it is used to value a company." ANSWER: A DCF is an expansion of this formula:  $Company\ Value = Cash\ Flow / (Discount\ Rate - Cash\ Flow\ Growth\ Rate)$ , where Cash Flow Growth Rate < Discount Rate. The problem is that that formula assumes the company's Discount Rate and Cash Flow Growth Rate never change – but in real life, they keep changing until the company reaches maturity. So, in a Discounted Cash Flow analysis, you divide the valuation into two periods: One where those assumptions change (the explicit forecast period) and one where they stay the same (the Terminal Period). You then project the company's cash flows in both periods and discount them to their Present Values based on the appropriate Discount Rate(s). Then, you compare this sum – the company's Implied Value – to the company's Current Value or "Asking Price" to see if it's valued appropriately. QUESTION: "Walk me through an Unlevered DCF." ANSWER: You start by projecting the company's Unlevered Free Cash Flows over the next 5-10 years by making assumptions for revenue growth, margins, Working Capital, and CapEx. Unlevered FCF excludes all financing and non-core-business activities and equals  $EBIT * (1 - Tax\ Rate) + \Delta\&A + / - Change\ in\ Working\ Capital - CapEx$ . Then, you discount the UFCFs to Present Value using the Weighted Average Cost of Capital and sum up everything. Next, you estimate the company's Terminal Value using the Multiples Method or the Gordon Growth Method; it represents the company's value after those first 5-10 years into perpetuity. You then discount the Terminal Value to Present Value using WACC and add it to the sum of the company's discounted UFCFs. Finally, you compare this Implied Enterprise Value to the company's Current Enterprise Value; you'll often calculate the company's Implied Share Price so you can compare that to the Current Share Price as well. Get more on Unlevered Free Cash Flow in our YouTube channel. QUESTION: "Explain what WACC means intuitively and how you might calculate each component of it." ANSWER: WACC is the expected annualized return over the long term if you invest proportionately in all parts of the company's capital structure – Debt, Equity, Preferred Stock, and anything else it has. To a company, WACC represents the cost of funding its operations by using all its sources of capital and keeping its capital structure percentages the same over time.



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