

What are your weaknesses?

How to answer honestly without disqualifying yourself

Date started: _____

Learning Objective

By the end of this episode, you will be able to talk about a real weakness professionally using the WAP structure (Weakness, Action, Progress) in 30-45 seconds.

How do you feel about this question right now, before the lesson?

Circle your confidence level (1 = nervous, 5 = confident):

Обведи рівень впевненості (1 = нервову, 5 = впевнений/а):

1

nervous

2

unsure

3

ok

4

good

5

confident

Key Words & Pronunciation

Word	Pronunciation	Translation	Definition	Stress Pattern
weakness	/ˈwiːknes/	слабка сторона		WEAK·ness
self-aware	UK /ˌself əˈweə/ US /ˌself əˈwer/	самосвідомий	having an honest understanding of your own abilities and limits	self·a·WARE
overcome	UK /əʊvəˈkʌm/ US /oʊvərˈkʌm/	подолати	to succeed in dealing with a challenge or difficulty	o·ver·COME
reflect	/rɪˈflekt/	рефлексувати,		re·FLECT
progress	UK /ˈprəʊɡres/ US /ˈproʊːɡres/	прогрес, розвиток	forward movement toward a goal or improvement	PRO·gress

☐ Done

☐ Review

My notes · мої нотатки

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Interview Crimes · What Not to Say

The question: "What are your weaknesses?"

Crime 1 of 4

You say: "I don't really have any weaknesses. I'm a fast learner so I adapt quickly to anything."

Interviewer thinks: "Either they have no self-awareness, or they think I'm foolish enough to believe this. Both are red flags."

Better: Every strong candidate has genuine weaknesses. Claiming none signals dishonesty or a complete lack of self-reflection.

Crime 2 of 4

You say: "My weakness is that I work too hard and care too much about the quality of my work."

Interviewer thinks: "That's not a weakness, it's a strength with a bow on it. They're trying to trick me and it's completely transparent."

Better: Name a real developmental area. Interviewers are specifically trained to catch disguised-strength answers. Genuine honesty is far more impressive.

Crime 3 of 4

You say: "I struggle with delegating. I find it hard to trust others to do things to my standard." (applying for a team lead role)

Interviewer thinks: "Delegation is literally half the job description. Why would I hire someone who just admitted they can't do it?"

Better: Choose a peripheral weakness, not a core skill for this role. Research the job description and avoid mentioning anything central to what the role requires.

Crime 4 of 4

You say: "My weakness is public speaking. I get very anxious, my hands shake, I lose my train of thought, I once completely froze at a conference in front of 200 people..."

Interviewer thinks: "I asked for a weakness, not a therapy session. This is now a problem I have to manage."

Better: Keep it 30-45 seconds total. Name it, say what you're doing about it, mention the progress. Then stop. Less is more here.

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Which crime is easiest to slip into? · яку помилку легко припуститися саме тобі?

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Model Answer · Read & Fill in the Gaps

Word Bank:

working

used

found

limiting

volunteering

presented

received

"One area I'm actively _____ on is public speaking. Early in my career I _____ to avoid presenting in front of large groups. I _____ it genuinely stressful and realised it was _____ my visibility at work.

So two years ago I joined a communication skills group and started _____ for internal presentations. Last month I _____ to a group of 40 stakeholders and _____ positive feedback from my manager.

It's still something I'm developing, but I no longer avoid it. I now actively look for opportunities to practise."

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Cultural Note

Candidates often either say "I have no weaknesses" or share a genuine flaw without explaining what they are doing about it. The formula is simple: name the weakness honestly, then immediately show the action you are taking. The goal is not to hide a weakness; it is to show you are someone who reflects and grows.

KEY TAKEAWAY

Self-awareness + action step = a weakness that makes you look stronger, not weaker.

Check Your Understanding

1. Why is "I work too hard" a poor answer to this question?

2. What should always follow the admission of a weakness?

3. What types of weakness should you avoid mentioning?

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Phrase Flashcards

Phrase	IPA	Ukrainian	How to use
One area I'm actively working on is...	/wʌn 'eəriə aɪm 'æktɪvli 'wɜ:kɪŋ ɒn ɪz/	Одна сфера, над якою я активно працюю, це...	frames weakness as a growth area. "Actively working on" signals initiative, not passive acknowledgement.
I used to struggle with... but I've since...	/aɪ juːst tə 'strʌɡl wið ... bʌt aɪv sɪns/	Раніше мені давалося важко... але відтоді я...	shows a weakness already addressed. The past tense signals growth. You've moved beyond it.
I've realised I need to develop...	/aɪv 'rɪəlaɪzd aɪ niːd tə dɪ'veləp/	Я зрозумів(ла), що мені потрібно розвивати...	honest and forward-looking. Pair it immediately with concrete actions you are already taking.
I've been working to improve this by...	/aɪv biːn 'wɜ:kɪŋ tə ɪm'pruːv ðɪs baɪ/	Я працюю над покращенням цього шляхом...	the action step: specific actions outweigh vague intentions. Name the course, habit, or method.
What I've learned from this is...	/wɒt aɪv lɜːnd frɒm ðɪs ɪz/	Що я з цього засвоїв(ла), це...	the closing reflection. Demonstrates maturity. You turned a limitation into a learning experience.

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Answer Builder · Build Your Answer

Structure: WAP structure

W

Weakness

What is one real developmental area? Choose something peripheral to the role.

A

Action

What concrete steps are you taking to address it?

P

Progress

What improvement have you seen? Even a small, honest result is enough.

Sample answer:

I tend to over-prepare before presenting new ideas, which sometimes slows me down. I noticed this when I spent two weeks on a proposal my manager actually needed in two days. Since then I have been practising the concept of a minimum viable draft: I share work earlier, collect feedback, and refine from there. It has already changed how quickly I can move on new initiatives.

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Grammar Practice · used to & Present Perfect

Fill in the gaps

Write the correct form of the verb in brackets.

I _____ (use) to find public speaking very stressful. I _____ (avoid) presentations whenever I could. But over the past two years, I _____ (join) a communication skills group and I _____ (practise) regularly. I _____ (notice) a real difference since then.

Fill in the gaps

Complete the answer with the correct verb forms.

"I _____ (realise) I needed to improve my time management, so I _____ (start) using a task-management system six months ago. It _____ (help) me meet all my deadlines since. My manager _____ (mention) it as an area of visible improvement in my last review."

☐ Done ☐ Review

How do you feel about this question now, after the lesson?

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nervous



unsure



ok



good



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Plan Your Next Episode

Plan Your Next Episode

When do you plan to do the next episode?

Date: _____

Words & phrases I want to remember · слова та фрази, які хочу запам'ятати

Answer Key

Model Answer - fill in the gaps:

1. working 2. used 3. found 4. limiting 5. volunteering
6. presented 7. received

Check Your Understanding:

1. Why is "I work too hard" a poor answer to this question?

It is a disguised strength, not a weakness. Interviewers are trained to spot this. It signals a lack of genuine self-reflection, which is more damaging than the weakness itself.

2. What should always follow the admission of a weakness?

A concrete action you are taking (or have taken) to address it. Without this, the weakness sounds like an unresolved problem. With it, the weakness becomes a story of growth.

3. What types of weakness should you avoid mentioning?

Core skills that are essential for the role. Research the job description first and make sure your chosen weakness is peripheral, not central to what the job requires day-to-day.

Grammar Practice:

Exercise 1:

1. used 2. avoided 3. have joined 4. practise 5. have noticed

Exercise 2:

1. realised 2. started 3. has helped 4. mentioned

What to review before the interview · що повторити перед співбесідою