

Where do you see yourself in 5 years?

How to show ambition and commitment without sounding naive or threatening

Date started: _____

Learning Objective

By the end of this episode, you will be able to give a focused, professional answer about your goals using the VAL structure (Vision, Alignment, Link to this role) 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):



nervous



unsure



ok



good



confident

Key Words & Pronunciation

Word	Pronunciation	Translation	Definition	Stress Pattern
ambitious	/æm'biʃəs/	амбіційний		am·BI·tious
vision	/'viʒən/	бачення, мета		VI·sion
contribute	/kən'tribju:t/	вносити внесок		con·TRIB·ute
expertise	UK /ˌekspɜː'tiːz/ US /ˌekspɜːr'tiːz/	фаховість, експертиза	a high level of knowledge or skill developed through experience and study	ex·per·TISE
aspire	UK /ə'spaɪə/ US /ə'spaɪər/	прагнути, мати за мету	to direct your hopes and ambitions towards achieving something important	as·PIRE

☐ Done

☐ Review

My notes · мої нотатки

Where do you see yourself in 5 years?

How to show ambition and commitment without sounding naive or threatening

Interview Crimes · What Not to Say

The question: "Where do you see yourself in five years?"

Crime 1 of 4

You say: "In five years I hope to be in your position."

Interviewer thinks: "Is this a compliment or a threat? Either way, it's uncomfortable and shows no real career thinking."

Better: Never reference the interviewer's role. Talk about growth in terms of skills, scope, and impact. Your answer should be about you and the company, not them personally.

Crime 2 of 4

You say: "Honestly, I see myself with a stable job, maybe married, with a dog, living outside the city..."

Interviewer thinks: "I asked about your career goals. This tells me nothing about your professional ambition. Did they misunderstand the question?"

Better: Keep it professional. The question is about your career development, not your personal life. Save the dog for a different conversation.

Crime 3 of 4

You say: "In five years I'd love to start my own business. That's my real goal."

Interviewer thinks: "So they're planning to leave in a few years. Why would I spend months training someone who has already mentally checked out?"

Better: Even if this is true, don't say it in an interview. Talk about growing your expertise in the field, leading bigger projects, and contributing more. That is what they are hiring for.

Crime 4 of 4

You say: "Honestly, I don't know. The future is hard to predict and things change so fast these days."

Interviewer thinks: "They have no professional direction. I'm not sure they even want a career, let alone one here."

Better: The interviewer is not asking for a forecast. They want to see that you think about your career. Have a direction, even a broad one. "I want to grow into a leadership role in this field" is enough to show you have a compass.

☐ Done

☐ Review

Where do you see yourself in 5 years?

How to show ambition and commitment without sounding naive or threatening

Model Answer · Read & Fill in the Gaps

Word Bank:

contributing

leading

draws

path

plan

deepen

demonstrate

"In five years, I see myself _____ at a more senior level, ideally _____ a team or managing a key area of the business.

What _____ me to this company specifically is that I can see a clear _____ here. I _____ to _____ my expertise over the first two years, take on more responsibility gradually, and _____ enough value to grow with the organisation rather than look elsewhere."

☐ Done

☐ Review

Cultural Note

Candidates often give very generic answers: "I want to develop and grow." This phrase, by itself, tells the interviewer nothing. In English-language interviews, vague ambition is a red flag. The question is testing whether you have a direction AND whether this company fits into it. Name a specific kind of growth, and connect it to the role you are applying for.

KEY TAKEAWAY

Vision + Alignment + Commitment. That's what "where do you see yourself" is really asking.

Check Your Understanding

1. Why is "I want to develop and grow" a weak answer to this question?

2. What three elements should a strong answer include?

3. Why is saying "I plan to start my own company in five years" a mistake in an interview?

☐ Done

☐ Review

Where do you see yourself in 5 years?

How to show ambition and commitment without sounding naive or threatening

Phrase Flashcards

Phrase	IPA	Ukrainian	How to use
In five years, I see myself...	/ɪn faɪv jɪəz aɪ siː maɪ'self/	Через п'ять років я бачу себе...	direct and confident. Interviewers respond well to candidates who can articulate their professional future clearly.
I hope to be contributing to...	/aɪ həʊp tə biː kən'tɪbjuːtɪŋ tuː/	Я сподіваюсь робити внесок у...	describes desired impact. Shows outward, team-focused thinking about value, not just personal titles or salary.
This role feels like a strong foundation for...	/ðɪs rəʊl fiːlz laɪk ə strɒŋ faʊn'deɪʃən fɔː/	Ця роль здається мені міцною основою для...	one of the strongest alignment phrases. It connects the current application to your future direction.
I aim to develop my expertise in...	/aɪ eɪm tə dɪ'veləp maɪ ˌekspɜː'tiːz ɪn/	Я маю на меті розвинути свою фаховість у...	"aim to" conveys a plan rather than mere aspiration. Identifies a specific growth area, showing intentionality.
What excites me about the next few years is...	/wɒt ɪk'saɪts miː əˌbaʊt ðə nekst fjuː jɪəz ɪz/	Що мене захоплює у найближчих роках, це...	a strong closing. It demonstrates genuine enthusiasm rather than calculated ambition. Interviewers remember excited candidates.

☐ Done

☐ Review

Answer Builder · Build Your Answer

Structure: VAL structure

V

Vision

What kind of work do you want to be doing in 5 years? Name a specific role or responsibility level.

A

Alignment

Why does this company fit into that vision? Be specific. Mention the industry, team size, culture, or scope.

L

Link to this role

How does this specific role get you to your vision? Show the connection between day one and year five.

Sample answer:

In five years I want to be leading a small team, probably in a product or strategy role. Right now I am focused on deepening my technical knowledge. I recently completed a course in data analysis to better understand product metrics. What draws me to this company is that this role offers both individual contribution and early leadership, which is the path I am actively building towards.

Where do you see yourself in 5 years?

How to show ambition and commitment without sounding naive or threatening

Grammar Practice · Future plans: hope to, plan to, aim to

Fill in the gaps

Write the correct form of the verb in brackets.

Over the next two years, I _____ (plan) to complete a project management certification. In five years, I _____ (hope) to be leading a cross-functional team. I _____ (aim) to add real value at each stage before moving forward. I _____ (aspire) to work at a level where I can influence decisions, not just carry them out.

Fill in the gaps

Complete the interview answer with the correct verb forms.

"I _____ (hope) to move into a leadership role within the next three to four years. I _____ (start) preparing six months ago when I _____ (enrol) in a management course. Since then, I _____ (complete) two modules and I am currently _____ (build) a portfolio of small team projects."

☐ Done

☐ Review

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

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

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

1

nervous

2

unsure

3

ok

4

good

5

confident

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. contributing 2. leading 3. draws 4. path 5. plan
6. deepen 7. demonstrate

Check Your Understanding:

1. Why is "I want to develop and grow" a weak answer to this question?

It gives no direction, shows no research into the company, and says nothing specific. Every candidate uses similar language. A strong answer names a type of growth and connects it to the role or company.

2. What three elements should a strong answer include?

Vision (where you want to be professionally), Alignment (why this company fits that vision), and Commitment (you plan to grow here, not leave). Without all three, the answer feels incomplete.

3. Why is saying "I plan to start my own company in five years" a mistake in an interview?

It tells the interviewer you are already planning to leave. Even if it is true, it signals that you see this job as temporary. Interviewers invest significantly in onboarding and training; they want to hire someone who intends to stay and grow.

Grammar Practice:

Exercise 1:

1. plan 2. hope 3. aim 4. aspire

Exercise 2:

1. am hoping 2. started 3. enrolled 4. have completed 5. building

What to review before the interview · що повторити перед співбесідою