

Television Presenter interview questions

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What to expect

Interviews for television presenter roles usually combine a screen test with a panel conversation. Employers want to see how you handle live pressure, connect with an audience and work with a production team.

- **Screen test and autocue reading:** You will read a script from autocue, often with a mock live cross or guest interview, to assess your delivery, timing and ability to take direction.
- **Live ad-lib scenario:** You may be asked to improvise through a technical failure or an unscripted moment, showing how you stay calm and keep the broadcast moving.
- **Behavioural questions:** Questions about teamwork, deadlines and handling pressure draw on your past experience with producers, crew and guests.
- **Technical questions:** You might be asked about newsroom software like ENPS or iNews, or how you use social media publishing tools during a broadcast.
- **Audience engagement questions:** These explore how you adjust tone and style for different formats, from serious news to light entertainment.

The process often starts with an initial phone or video call with a producer, followed by a studio screen test where you read autocue and handle a mock live cross. A final panel interview with the executive producer and sometimes a network executive covers your experience and approach. Some roles also include a written research task or a social media audition tape.

1. Walk us through how you prepare for a live broadcast.

Why they ask

This shows your organisational skills and how you work with producers and crew before going on air.

How to structure your answer

A walk-through of your steps in chronological order, from reviewing the running order to checking autocue and rehearsing links.

Example answer

"I start by reading the running order and any scripts the producer has prepared. I check the autocue for timing and pronunciation, then rehearse my links out loud. I look at the guest list and research any topics I am less familiar with. About half an hour before we go live, I have a quick chat with the producer to confirm any changes and run through the live crosses. I also check my social media feeds in case there is a breaking story we might need to mention. Once in the studio, I do a final sound check and make sure I know my cues for each segment."

2. Tell me about a time you had to ad-lib when something went wrong on air.

Why they ask

This tests your composure under pressure and your ability to keep the audience engaged when plans change.

How to structure your answer

Use STAR: describe the situation, the task you faced, the action you took and the result.

Example answer

"During a live outside broadcast, our main camera feed dropped just as we were about to interview a community leader. I was on air with no pictures coming through. I acknowledged the technical issue lightly, then turned to the guest and asked a question about their work that we had discussed in the

pre-interview. That gave the crew about forty seconds to restore the feed. I kept the conversation going until we were back, then seamlessly returned to the scripted segment. The producer later said the audience never noticed a major problem, and we finished on time."

3. You are presenting a live segment and the autocue fails. What do you do?

Why they ask

This is a classic scenario question that reveals your judgement under pressure and your ability to prioritise.

How to structure your answer

A judgement-under-pressure structure: assess the situation, act to keep the broadcast moving, and communicate with the crew.

Example answer

"First, I would stay calm and keep talking. I would glance at my notes or the script on the desk if I have them, and if not, I would summarise what I remember about the segment. I would signal to the producer that the autocue is down, perhaps with a quick hand gesture. If the segment involves a guest, I would turn to them with a question to buy time. Once the autocue is back, I would pick up from where we left off and thank the audience for bearing with us. The priority is to avoid dead air and keep the program on track."

4. How do you use ENPS or iNews in your daily work?

Why they ask

This checks your technical familiarity with newsroom systems that are standard in Australian television.

How to structure your answer

Describe your workflow and the specific features you use most, from writing scripts to managing running orders.

Example answer

"I use ENPS to write and edit scripts, and to check the running order as it updates throughout the day. I can search for wire copy and add it to a script, and I use the timing tools to estimate how long each segment will take. I also rely on the messaging function to communicate with producers and the control room. In iNews, I am comfortable creating and modifying rundowns, adding supers and checking for any notes from the legal team. Both systems help me stay in sync with the production team, especially when we are making changes close to air."

5. How do you engage an audience during a serious news story versus a light entertainment segment?

Why they ask

This shows your range and your understanding of tone and audience expectations.

How to structure your answer

Compare and contrast the two approaches, giving specific examples of how you adjust your delivery.

Example answer

"For a serious news story, I focus on clarity and empathy. I slow down my delivery, use a measured tone and avoid any language that could seem flippant. I make sure the facts are clear and give space for guests to speak. For a light entertainment segment, I am more energetic and conversational. I might use a warmer tone, add a personal anecdote if it fits, and keep the pace up to match the mood. In both cases, I am reading the audience and adjusting in real time, but the starting point is always the subject matter and what the viewer needs from me in that moment."

6. Describe how you work with producers to time segments during a broadcast.

Why they ask

This assesses your teamwork and understanding of the live production environment.

How to structure your answer

Describe the collaboration process, how you communicate and how you handle changes on the fly.

Example answer

"Before the broadcast, I go through the running order with the producer and note the time cues for each segment. During the show, I keep an eye on the clock and the producer's signals. If a segment is running long, I might shorten a link or wrap up an interview more quickly. If we are running short, I can add a bit of ad-libbing or ask the guest an extra question. We use hand signals and talkback so I always know how much time we have. The key is to stay flexible and trust the producer's calls, while also feeding back what I am seeing from the studio floor."