DON'T WALK INTO A CONSULTING INTERVIEW WITHOUT KNOWING THESE

30 terms every serious candidate knows fluently before they walk in the room

THINKING & FRAMEWORKS

01 MECE
Mutually Exclusive, Collectively Exhaustive - your structure has no overlaps and no gaps.

02 Hypothesis-Driven
Form a view early and use analysis to prove or disprove it. Don't wait for all the data.

03 Issue Tree
A visual breakdown of a problem into its component parts, used to structure a case.

04 Framework
A structured approach to a problem, for example profitability tree, market entry, Porter's Five Forces.

05 Synthesis
Turning analysis into a clear recommendation. Lead with the answer, not the workings.

06 So What?
The implication of a data point. Never state a number without explaining what it means.

07 Boil the Ocean
Trying to analyse everything, a trap to avoid. Focus on what matters most.

08 80/20 Rule
80% of insight comes from 20% of the analysis. Prioritise ruthlessly.

PROJECT & WORK STRUCTURE

09 Workstream
A distinct track of work within a project, usually owned by one or two team members.

10 Engagement
A consulting project. "We're on an engagement with a FTSE 100 client."

11 Deliverable
The tangible output of a workstream: a deck, model, report, or recommendation.

12 Straw Man
An early draft structure put forward deliberately to be challenged and refined.

13 Work Plan
A structured plan mapping tasks, owners, and timelines for the engagement.

14 Day One Answer
The consultant's best hypothesis on day one, refined as data comes in.

15 Scoping
Defining the boundaries of the problem: what's in and what's out of the engagement.

COMMUNICATION & SLIDES

16 Pyramid Principle
Lead with the conclusion, then provide supporting arguments, not the other way around.

17 Exec Summary
A one-page summary of the full deck, written last, read first. Must stand alone.

18 Signposting
Verbally guiding your audience through structure: "First I'll cover X, then Y, then Z."

19 Headline Message
The "so what" of a slide: a full sentence at the top that conveys the key insight.

20 Storyline
The logical flow of an entire presentation. Every slide leads naturally to the next.

21 Ghost Deck
A deck with structure and headlines but no content yet, used to align before building.

CLIENT & COMMERCIAL

22 Stakeholder
Anyone with an interest in the project outcome: client team, leadership, end users.

23 Buy-In
Getting agreement and commitment from key stakeholders before moving forward.

24 Value Proposition
The specific benefit a recommendation delivers, quantified wherever possible.

25 Quick Win
An action implemented immediately to show early results and build client trust.

26 Run Rate
The annualised value of a current metric, for example monthly revenue x12.

27 Benchmarking
Comparing a client's performance against industry peers or best-in-class competitors.

INTERVIEW-SPECIFIC

28 Case Prompt
The question or scenario given at the start of a case interview.

29 Clarifying Questions
Questions asked before structuring to confirm scope, constraints, and objectives.

30 Candidate-Led Case
A format where you drive the entire case structure and direction, common at MBB.

Learn the language before the interview. It is the cheapest preparation you will ever do.