
10 COMMON INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Interviews are tests...and like any test, the more you prepare, the better you will do. Just like when taking a test, you have to practice and prepare for every possible interview question, in so doing, you will be able to give a reasonable answer to every question asked.

This list highlights some of the most common questions, but there are many more possibilities. There are many excellent resources on the Internet; take time to do some research.

1. Tell me about yourself.

- This question is often used as an icebreaker, but it is also a critical means for the interviewer to learn about your relevant work experience and what makes you a good candidate for this job. Never assume that the interviewer remembers all the details of your application, even if it is sitting in front of the interviewer.
- Answer this question by talking about your relevant work experience, reasons for being interested in the company and the specific position, and how you and your skills and experiences will benefit the company and/or the hiring manager.
- Remember – this question...and every other question in the interview process is **NOT** about you...it's about what you can do for the company, the team, and the hiring manager(s). You want to make it clear to the interviewer that by hiring you, their life will be easier.

2. Why would you like to work at [Company Name]?

- It is essential to research the company prior to the interview so you can demonstrate your interest in the company, your research skills, and your critical thinking skills. Key areas to review include the company's mission/vision/values (About us), community outreach, key products, customer service model, etc.
- Don't give the impression that you are here because you need to make a living. You want to demonstrate that you don't want any job...you want this job!

3. What is your greatest strength?

- This question should be answered by citing a key strength (or strengths). Be sure to include an example of how that strength has made a difference in a work-related situation. Use the CAR format (Circumstance, Action, and Result) so you demonstrate how your actions or strengths impacted the result.
- Be attentive to this question; interviewers may ask for one strength or several strengths! Answer the question they asked.

4. In what areas do you think you can improve (i.e. What is your greatest weakness?)

- No one is perfect, so an interviewer wants to see that the applicant has done some self-assessment in understanding any weakness they have. This is an important opportunity to show how you are working on improving that weakness. You can also choose to highlight a weakness that can, in some circumstances, also be a strength.

5. Tell me about a time you handled a difficult situation.

- An interviewer wants to hear about a past work experience that the applicant was able to manage even though it may have been hard. Again, use the CAR format and demonstrate how your actions improved a difficult situation.
- Be succinct when describing difficult situations. You want to be honest, but still portray yourself in a positive light. This is not the time to provide too much detail.

6. Tell me about one of your most significant work-related accomplishments.

- Again using the CAR format, share a story that demonstrates how you were able to positively affect the outcome of a work-related assignment. The goal is to provide a snapshot of the skills and attributes you will bring to the position. When possible, cite measurable outcomes (e.g. I increased sales by 50 percent in the past two years).

7. Why did you leave your last job?

- There are many reasons for leaving a job. Yet, when it comes to an interview, it is critical to answer positively rather than complain about what made you unhappy. If you complain about your former employer, the interviewer will assume it is only a matter of time before you complain about them...and no one likes that.
- Talk about your departure in relation to your career goals and how the job you are applying for provides a better environment for growth than your previous job. As always, tailor your reply so you can demonstrate that what you learned in your previous job has enriched you with valuable skills for the current position.
- If you have not worked for a while, focus on sharing what new skills or accomplishments you have obtained since becoming unemployed. If possible, explain what prevented you from working. Answers should be upbeat and positive. If you were not working due to a personal circumstance, be sure to address why it will not impact you now.

8. Where do you see yourself in 5 years?

- This question is asked to find out whether you are committed to the job. An interviewer will want to see that your personal goals align well with the position for which you are applying and that you are likely to want to remain in the position for an extended period of time. By having a plan for your future, you demonstrate leadership and strategic planning skills as well as personal motivation to succeed.

9. Why should we hire you for this position?

- This is the part where you tie everything together...and link your skills, experience, education, and your personal characteristics to the job itself. This is another area where it helps to be very familiar with the job description and the company culture. It is also an excellent time to reiterate your interest in being hired for this position.

10. What questions do you have for me?

Be prepared to ask 1-3 questions to the interviewer. This demonstrates good critical thinking skills and genuine interest in the position for which you are applying.

Possible questions are:

- What type of person do you think will be most successful in this position?
- If hired, what is your onboarding process for new employees?
- What do you like best about working here?
- Be sure to ask a question related to your research about the company.
- End with asking about the time line and process for filling this position.
- It is **NOT** acceptable to discuss salary **UNLESS** the interviewer brings it up first.
- If the interview feels more like a conversation and you ask questions throughout the meeting, you may tell the interviewer that they addressed all your questions during the interview and therefore, you have no additional questions to ask.