

Types of Interview Questions

Although you will never be able to know exactly what the interviewer will ask, it may help to review these questions so that you can become more comfortable with the types of questions that might come up. Avoid giving vague or unsubstantiated answers. Always use specific examples, comparisons, and/or descriptions to support your answers. Take time to prepare and PRACTICE your answers. This gives you an edge over others who have not done their homework.

PERSONALITY-RELATED QUESTIONS:

Tell me about yourself.

How would you describe yourself?

What do you consider your greatest strengths? Weaknesses?

What motivates you to give your best effort?

How do you handle conflict?

Who were your favorite professors? Why?

How do you determine or evaluate success?

How do you work under pressure?

What have you learned from your mistakes?

How do you spend your spare time? What are your hobbies?

How would your co-workers (boss, professors, friends) describe you?

What do you want me to know about you that is not on your resume?

Why should we hire you?

CAREER-RELATED QUESTIONS:

Why did you choose the career for which you are preparing?

What qualities should a successful manager possess?

What do you think it takes to be successful in this career?

How has your education prepared you for your career?

Describe the relationship that should exist between a supervisor and those reporting to him/her.

How would you describe the ideal job for you?

What two or three things are the most important to you in your work?

Why do you want to work in the _____ industry?

Are you seeking employment in a company of a certain size? Why?

What criteria are you using to evaluate the company for which you hope to work?

Do you have a geographical preference? Why?

Are you willing to relocate or travel?

What are your salary requirements?

FUTURE-RELATED QUESTIONS:

What do you see yourself doing in the next five years?

What do you expect to be earning in five years?

Do you have plans for further education?

EXPERIENCE-RELATED QUESTIONS:

What two or three accomplishments have given you the most satisfaction? Why?

Describe your most rewarding college/work experience.

Why did you choose your major?

What major problems have you encountered and how did you deal with them?

What supervisory or leadership roles have you had?

What have you learned from your past work experience that would help in the position you are applying for?

ORGANIZATION-RELATED QUESTIONS:

What do you know about our company?

Why do you want to work for us?

What qualifications do you have that make you think that you will be successful in an organization like ours?

In what ways do you think you can make a contribution to our organization?

If you were hiring someone for this position, what would you look for?

Why did you decide to seek a position with this company?

"STRESS" QUESTIONS:

These questions are intended to put you on the spot. Interviewers want to see how you can handle stress or a sticky situation so that they know you are reliable under pressure. Simply be calm and specific.

What makes you think you are qualified for this position?

Why shouldn't we hire you?

BEHAVIOR-BASED QUESTIONS:

Based on the premise that an applicant's past behavior will predict how well he or she will respond to similar situations in the *future*, *behavior-based interviews focus on determining how you, the interviewee, have actively applied your skills. The interviewer is looking for proof that you can demonstrate the desired capabilities in the real world.*

You will be expected to give detailed, but focused, descriptions of actual circumstances. Take your time in formulating your response. The interviewer will understand and allow you to gather your thoughts. In your response, be thorough yet direct. Describe an overview of the situation, the action you took, and the result (SAR). Below are some of the questions commonly asked in the behavior-based interview.

- Describe a creative/innovative idea that you produced which led to a significant contribution to the success of an activity or project.
- Tell me about a time when you handled a conflict with a team member.
- What was the most complex assignment you have had? What was your role?
- Provide an example of how you acquired a technical skill and converted it to a practical application.
- By providing examples, demonstrate that you can adapt to a wide variety of people, situations, and/or environments.
- Tell me a suggestion you made to improve the way job processes/operations worked.
- What are the three effective leadership qualities you think are most important? How have you demonstrated these qualities in your past/present situation?
- Tell me about a time you had to deal with a difficult person and how you handled it.

NOTE ON UNETHICAL QUESTIONS

It is illegal for a prospective employer to ask questions that relate to race, gender, religion, marital status or other personal areas that do not have any bearing on your ability to do the job. While employers might require certain personal information after hiring, there is no legal reason that those questions should be asked of a prospective employee during the interview if they have no bearing on that person's ability to do the job. An interviewer may not intend to break the law with certain questions – he or she may not have the experience to know what subjects to avoid. If you feel that an inappropriate question has been asked, you can consider the interviewer is either uninformed, trying to put you on the spot, or actually is unethical. Examine whether or not this question was intentional and then decide how you should handle it, either by sidestepping the question, or, in a severe case, by confronting the interviewer about the question.

QUESTIONS TO ASK THE INTERVIEWER

Once you have answered the interviewer's questions, you will usually be given the opportunity to ask questions as well. Interviewers make hiring decisions as much from the questions you ask as from the ones you answer.

Winning questions are related to the job for which you are applying. Do not ask about things that you have already been told or things that are obvious or can be easily researched. Use the following types of questions to make a winning impression.

- What type of personality/traits does it take to succeed in this company?
 - What is it like working here in terms of job pressures?
 - What skills do you find most valuable in an employee?
 - Describe the type of person that does best in your company.
 - What is it that you need this person to do, right now, to contribute?
 - Why was this position created?
 - What is the organization's competitive strategy?
 - What percent of the employees pursue advanced degrees/training in this industry or organization?
 - What would a typical first assignment be in this position?
 - What is the most difficult part of this job?
 - Why did the previous person in this position leave?
 - What is your typical day like in this position?
 - How will my performance be evaluated?
 - What freedom would I have in getting the job done?
 - Where do you see the company going in the next four years?
 - What is the management style of this organization?
 - What is your staff turnover rate like compared to the rest of the company?
 - When will you be making your decision to fill this position?
 - Is there anything that I can expand on or clarify from my resume?
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Be aware of these potential pitfalls during an interview:

- Not listening to the question
- Annoying the interviewer by answering a question that was not asked
- Providing superfluous information; be brief, thorough, and to the point
- Attempting to interview without preparation or practice

Employers also say they don't hire because candidates:

- Have a poor personal appearance
 - Show up late for an interview
 - Do not show interest or enthusiasm
 - Do not ask questions about the job opening
 - Do not look at the interviewer when talking to him or her
 - Are unable to express themselves clearly
 - Do not have career goals
 - Have a "know it all" attitude
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