

# Common Interview Questions

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## **Why should I hire you?** *(always expect this question)*

Tell me about yourself.

What are your future career plans? Where would you like to be in your career five years from now?

What jobs have you held? Why did you leave your last position?

What do you hope to be doing five years from now? Ten years?

What do you know about this position?

Why are you interested in working for this company/organization?

What are you going to do for this company that someone else could not do?

Tell me about the job you are applying for and what you think it involves.

What skills do you possess that are relevant to this position?

How did you learn about this company (job)?

What skills and experience do you have which make you believe that you will be successful in this position?

What are your expectations for a starting salary?

What interests you about our products or services?

What can you offer to this company that will help it meet its goals?

What distinguishes you from other applicants?

What are your expectations about advancing in the company (organization)?

How do you feel about working overtime?

Our company requires mandatory drug testing. How do you feel about this?

Why did you choose this area of work?

What do you think determines a person's progress in a company or organization?

Do you like to work with others, or do you prefer to work alone?

What kind of supervisor do you prefer to work for?

How do you respond to instructions about how to do your work?

What kinds of people do you find difficult to work with?

How do you feel about routine work tasks? About a variety of work tasks?

Are you willing to travel?

When workload demands, are you willing to work overtime?

What do you consider to be your greatest weaknesses? Strength?

How do you approach a problem situation?

How do you deal with stress?

Do you work well with constant supervision or do you prefer to be self-directed?

Do you feel that good communication skills are important? Why?

Are you willing to relocate if the company offers you a position in another office?

What examples can you offer that demonstrate your initiative and willingness to work hard?

What one word best describes you, and why?

What are your major strengths and weaknesses?

What is the most difficult challenge you have faced in your life and how did you handle it?

If you were a(n) \_\_\_\_, what would you be?

In what activities do you participate?

What types of leadership roles/positions have you had?

How do you feel your courses have helped prepare you for work?

Do you have any volunteer or community service experience you would like to talk more about?

Tell me about a project you have successfully completed and how you got the work done.

What are your immediate career goals? What are your long-range career goals?

Is there anything else that you feel is important for me to consider about you?

## **Do you have any questions for me?** *(always expect this question ... and come ready with AT LEAST one good question to ask them about the job or the company)*

# The Most Common Job Interview Questions and How to Answer Them

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Got an interview coming up? The best thing that you can do to prepare is to think through the questions you're likely to be asked and formulate answers ahead of time. Here are the seven most common interview questions, along with what a strong answer will look like.

1. "Tell me about yourself." This question means "give me a broad overview of who you are, professionally speaking, before we dive into specifics." You should prepare about a one-minute answer that summarizes where you're at in your career and what you're especially good at, with an emphasis on your most recent job. Keep your personal life out of it; your interviewer isn't asking to hear about your family, hobbies or where you grew up.
2. "What interests you about this job?" Your answer here should focus on what about the substance of the role most interests you. You should not talk about benefits, salary, the short commute or anything else unrelated to the day-to-day work you'd be doing, or you'll signal that you're not particularly enthusiastic about the work itself. Interviewers want to hire people who have carefully considered whether this is a job they'd be glad to work at every day, and that means focusing on the work itself, not what the job can do for you.
3. "Why are you thinking about leaving your job?" Or, if you're unemployed, "Why did you leave your last job?" This isn't the time to talk about conflicts with your manager or complaints about your co-workers. Job seekers are commonly advised to answer this by saying that they're seeking new challenges, but that answer only rings true if you're specific about what those new challenges are and how this job will provide them in a way your last job didn't. It's also fine to cite things like a recent or planned move, financial instability at your organization or other reasons that are genuinely true -- just stay away from badmouthing employers or complaining about work.
4. "Why would you excel at this job?" This is your chance to make a case for why you'd shine in the job -- and if you don't know the answer to that, it's unlikely that your interviewer will figure it out either. Since this gets to the crux of the whole interview, you should have a strong answer prepared for this ahead of time. A strong answer will point to your skills and track record of experience and tie them to the needs of the job.
5. "Tell me about a time when ..." Good interviewers will probe into times in your past when you had to exercise the skills required for the job. For instance: Tell me about when you had to take initiative / had to deal with a difficult customer / had to solve a problem for a client ... and so forth. Make sure to prepare in advance for these questions, so that you're not struggling to come up with real-life past examples. Spend some time brainstorming about what skills you're likely to need in the job and what challenges you're likely to face. Then think about what examples from your past work you can use as "evidence" that you can meet those needs. When you construct your answer, discuss the challenge you faced, how you responded and the outcome you achieved.
6. "What would you do in your first 90 days if you got this position?" Interviewers are looking for answers that reveal how you set goals and problem-solve, and whether you're ambitious without being unrealistic. You should also acknowledge that you'll need to take time to get to know the team, what's working and what can be improved before you make any big decisions -- but your answer should still get into specifics to the extent you reasonably can.
7. "What salary range are you looking for?" Job seekers are almost always asked this question, yet too often fail to prepare for it and then are caught off-guard when the topic comes up. If you wing your answer to this, you risk lowballing yourself and ending up with a salary offer below what you might have otherwise received. It's crucial to research the market rate for the job ahead of time. Don't let discomfort with talking about money thwart your ability to negotiate well for yourself.