



Common Interview Questions

Important: It is imperative that you utilize resources like Glassdoor and the company's website to review typical interview questions and styles. You may also want to ask the recruiter that schedules your interview what style interview you should expect. The below questions are based on a traditional and behavioral interview style, but some companies may have a technical interview style instead. In this case, you need to prepare accordingly.

Q: "So, tell me about yourself"

This question may be used to assess your personality, preparation, communication skills and ability to think on your feet. Prepare a list of what you do (your current or last job), your strengths (stick to job-focused skills), and a summary of your career trajectory, linking your experience to the job at hand.

Q: "Why did you leave your last job?"

Respond positively — "...for better career advancement or promotion opportunities, increased responsibility, and more variety at work..."

Q: "Why do you want to do this job / work for this company?"

Demonstrate your knowledge of the company and re-emphasize your suitability for the position.

Q: "What do you think you have to offer this company?"

This is a chance to sing your own praises — concentrating on the skills you have that are required for the position. ("I have strong sales skills, am a good team player and am very keen to be involved in the new markets you are developing in the Asian region.")

Q: "What do you think this position involves?"

This question is designed to reveal if you have thought about the position, done some research, listened to the interviewer, and can summarize all of this information clearly.

Q: "What do you know about the company?"

Demonstrate your interest in the job, and your understanding of the organization and industry. Talk about the research you did into the company's key areas of interest, its size, its main customers or current status, making reference to your source of information.

Q: "Do you have any questions you would like to ask?"

Always prepare a question to ask the interviewer. Ask about the position, request clarification of general information about the company, or summarize your understanding and request confirmation. If they have already answered your questions tell them (be specific) so they know that you have thought about the position in preparing for the interview.

For example:

"What do you see as being the main focus of this role?"

"Am I correct in saying that the position involves mediating between A and B departments and monitoring and developing new approaches to...?"

"I'd like to ask about the organizational structure... are the publications produced on a national basis or individually by each regional office? How are budgets controlled and allocated?"



Q: "What do you believe are your key strengths?"

Prepare responses that give specific examples of your strengths at previous positions that will support your job application.

Q: "What do you believe are your weaknesses?"

No-one readily admits real weaknesses in an interview situation. It is general knowledge that this is an opportunity to turn the question into a positive. Think of something that relates to your experience of work that is plausible as a weakness but is not really a negative point. ("I am very particular about detail", "I become very focused on the projects I am involved in")

Q: "Why have you had so many jobs?"

If you have had jobs in different industries or several positions in a short period, describe the positives — that you were learning new skills, following different career paths, travelling overseas, etc. Refer to the experience you gained in past jobs that relates to the position under discussion.

Q: "What do you enjoy most about your current / last job?"

The trick with this question is to list what you have enjoyed about work that strongly relate to the key competencies of the position in question, and mention that you are looking forward to expanding your experience / scope in these areas.

Q: A question requesting confidential information about a previous employer

This may be a testing of your discretion and professionalism. It is best to reply that you would prefer not to divulge any confidential information (sales figures, for instance), citing the fact that you are sure your interviewer would expect the same discretion from their employees.

Q: "Where do you see yourself in five years' time?"

This is an assessment of the extent of your ambition and career planning. You should demonstrate that your long-term goals are appropriate for the position being discussed and your commitment to them.

Q: "Can you give me an example of your creativity / managerial / organizational skills?" Think of some examples that prove that you possess the key attributes and competencies requested in the job ad and description. These are probably the areas on which your interviewer will probably focus.

Q: "Do you work well under pressure?"

Answer with a 'yes', and give a specific example of a time when you were under pressure and how you rose to the challenge.

Common Behavioral Questions (refer to next page to discuss how to best answer these questions):

Q: "Tell me about a time when you had to go above and beyond in order to get a job done."

Q: "Give me an example of a time when you tried to accomplish a task and failed."

Q: "Have you ever had a disagreement with a co-worker or boss? How did you handle it?"

Q: "Give an example of your actions in previous jobs that demonstrate your willingness to work hard."

Q: "Describe a time you contributed creatively to a team."

Q: "Tell me about a time when you were required to prioritize your tasks and how you did so."

Q: "Give me a specific example of a time when you used good judgment in solving a problem."

Q: "Tell me about your best/worst team experience — and your role in it."

Q: "Give an example of a difficult situation you've faced and how you handled it."



Utilize the STAR Method

Important: The STAR Method is the BEST way to answer behavioral interview questions. If you express the situation, task, action and result in your answer while being concise but informative, you will be sure to win over your interviewer. Make an appointment with a Career Development Career Coach to practice this technique.



S

Situation

Describe the situation you were in while providing context. Tell the interviewer about a specific challenge or situation. You should provide enough details for the employer to understand the “who, what, when, where and why” of the situation.



T

Task

Explain exactly what you were you trying to achieve. What task were you assigned to do? Describe the project or assignment. Tell the interviewer what you were aiming to accomplish.



A

Action

Explain your specific role and what action you have taken. If problems or challenges arose, outline how you handled it. Tell the interviewer how you proactively took action.



R

Result

Describe the result of YOUR specific action. Explain how you have met your objective. Always remember to provide a positive result. Demonstrate what you have learned from this experience and how you have applied this knowledge since.