

INTERVIEW PREPARATION

Compiled and prepared by:
Sabeel Ahmed A K
(sabeelak83@gmail.com)



[linkedin.com/in/sabeel-ahmed-msc-483b4118/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/sabeel-ahmed-msc-483b4118/)

Contents

SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS AND GUIDE TO ANSWER	1
Personal Assessment.....	1
Career Ambition and Plans	2
Education and Experience.....	3
Company Or Organization.....	4
The Closing.....	4
BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEWS (STAR METHOD)	5
Some Common Behavioural Questions	5
SKILLS and STAR Method.....	6
SAMPLE QUESTIONS TO ASK AN INTERVIEWER	7
The Position	7
Career Paths	7
Education and Training.....	7
Assessment Questions for Interviewer.....	7
General Questions for Interviewer.....	8

SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS AND GUIDE TO ANSWER

Personal Assessment

1. Tell me about yourself.

- Who you are?
- Highlights of achievements/ Experience (focus on work experiences that are relevant to the current position you are interviewing for)
- Why you are best fit. (Look at the job description of the position you are interviewing for and try to closely align your answers to that)

2. What are your greatest strengths?

- List skills that employers are seeking and narrow it down.
- Choose a skill that is the best for you.
- Show example of how you used the skills in the past (Use STAR method)

3. Greatest weaknesses?

- Choose weakness that will not prevent you from succeeding the role.
- Provide example of how you work to improve your weakness.

4. Describe your ideal job/ Work Environment.

- To see if you understand what it is like to work in the company and if you can thrive.
- Emphasize on flexibility.
- Call out the culture of the company that you like (show that you did your research)

5. Define success. Define failure.

- Does not have to be materialistic.
- Can be in many forms. Ie: Satisfaction in achieving goals, dream etc.
- Create your story.

6. What motivates you to put forth your greatest effort?

- Emphasize on flexibility, dynamic and adaptable.
- Explain on how your work and your goals (be it personal or professional)
- Tell about the skills you want to learn.
- Link how your work performance can make you achieve your goals.
- Can also mention about getting feedbacks help you to stay motivate and make you improve yourself/ your skills.

7. Tell me your Work Style.

- It's important to show with your answer that you are flexible, dependable and do not need handholding.
- Your work style in the past and some examples (Can use STAR method)
- Tie back your answer with the company

8. Tell the time when you fail/ made big mistake or bad decision.

- Own up to mistakes and tell any lesson learnt.
- Choose one specific sample and tell in STAR format. Tell how you own up to the mistake and how did you react and rectify it.
- Explain the things/ skills you have learnt.

9. Tell me how you develop and improve yourselves.

- Change is the only constant.
- Opportunity to talk about how you invest / upgrade yourself.
- Activities: Reading, networking, seminar, online classes etc
- How the upgrade can contribute to your career.

10. Why have you been out of work so long?

- You want to emphasize factors which have prolonged your job search by your own choice.
- Examples: decision not to jump on the first opportunity to come along, think of things you really want to do etc
- Maybe explain that you have carefully considered a lot of factors and the decision is a conscious and informed one. Tell that application to the company is after considering your skills, requirements, interest, passion etc.

11. What are your outside interests?

- Relate hobby to your job. (In term of skill obtain form the hobby e.g.: teamwork from playing team sports)
- If not related, talk about what you have learned from the hobby or how the hobby benefits you and how it can help you with the job.
- Avoid unprofessional and generic hobbies.

12. Who has inspired you in your life and why?

- Avoid famous historical figures, celebrities, and unimpressive individuals.
- Use mentors, teachers, researchers, and family if they have relevance to the industry.

13. What is your favourite subject during undergraduate? (for fresh graduate)

- Be honest, but also keep the job in mind. When answered thoughtfully, your answer to this question can demonstrate how your interests, skills, and past achievements make you a strong fit for the position.
- Show what you are passionate about and how it aligns with the job. Keep the job requirements in mind.

14. How would you describe yourself?

- With this question, your interviewer wants to learn how your qualities and characteristics align with the skills they believe are required to succeed in the role.
- To answer this question, pick one to a few personal characteristics and elaborate on them with examples.

Career Ambition and Plans**1. Where do you want to be in 5 years? Ten years?**

- This is to understand how your roles fits in with your hopes.
- Focus on values for your career and show enthusiasm but be realistic.
- What are the details of skills you want to master? Talk about your desire to mentor others and taking a bigger project.

2. What are your long-range and short-range goals and objectives?

- Relate your goals and objectives to job description, company's aim, mission and vision.
- Ensure short range and long range are relatable. (Short range objectives help in achieving long term goals)
- Include a short description of the steps you hope to take to achieve your goals. Avoid giving too many details.

3. What are your career aspirations? How do you see this company can help you achieve that?

- to see if your anticipated career path aligns with the company.
- Reflect on long term goals and how the company can help in achieving that.
- Show them that you plan to stay with the company for a decent amount of time.
- Relate with how the company can support in learning skills and how that can help you to achieve your goals.

4. What kind of challenge are you looking for?

- Discuss how you would like to be able to utilize your skills and experience effectively if you were hired for the job.
- Mention that you are motivated by challenges, can effectively meet challenges, and have the flexibility and skills necessary to handle a challenging job.
- Connect your answer to the job. Focus on the types of challenges that you will be given on the job and demonstrate your ability to handle them well. (Can use example)

5. What do you think determines a person's progress in a good company?

- opportunity to highlight your strengths.
- The first answer talks directly about the three things all employers want to hear—ability to do the job, cultural fit and motivation.
- then goes a step further and states that all three are qualities that you offer.

6. What are your ideas on salary?

- Your answer to this question can be the beginning of the salary negotiation process. You want to make sure you are providing a well-researched response.
- For this, you need to know your worth, give a salary range or can also not answer right away (Would like to consider other benefits and other factors).

7. If you could, how would you live your life over??

- Can tell that generally satisfied with life but maybe, if you had known something earlier in life, you might have moved in a certain direction sooner. (Like to learn more certain things etc)
- But all things considered, you take responsibility for where you are and how you've gotten there, and you harbour no regrets.

Education and Experience

1. Describe your most rewarding accomplishment since you have started college.

- Be honest, but you also want to focus on an experience that demonstrates a skill or quality that the employer is looking for in a candidate.
- Focus on company's values and how you can fit in. Identify skills required and mention experience related to the skills.
- Explain why the experience is rewarding.

2. Tell me about the most satisfying job you ever held. The least?

- Recount a challenge that shows your abilities, confidence (but not ego), humanity and determination (think about something that may have been difficult for you, but you were able to conquer and succeed)
- Show how you have benefited your employer.

3. What kind of boss do you prefer?

- Employers might want to assess how you'll respond to supervision if you are hired.
- . Research the company's organizational structure before your interview so that you will have a good idea of their management style.
- Tailor your answer so that it shows how you could seamlessly adapt to their system.
- Emphasize your ability to work independently as well as your comfort with taking direction from a boss.

4. What frustrates you on the job?

- Employers usually ask about what frustrates you when they want to know how well you handle workplace stress.
- can be a good opportunity to highlight your emotional intelligence, level-headedness and problem-solving abilities.

- Explain your frustration and use example (STAR Method) on how you handle it. Connect the answer to your future work.

5. How would a former supervisor describe your work?

- The easiest way to answer this question is to paraphrase a recent positive performance review. Referencing specifically where you're getting your information from makes it easier to compliment yourself without cringing.
- Another way to do this is to start off with the story and conclude it with how your boss or coworkers would describe you.
- Another way is name Three Positive Traits with Short Examples for Each

Company Or Organization

1. Why do you want to work for this organization?

- Be honest, but also do your research.
- Try to see what the company is focused on and incorporate some of that into your answer. This will show the interviewer you have done your research.

2. Why should I hire you/ What makes you the best person for this job/What can you offer us/ Why we should hire you?

- Explain your experiences and/ or unique abilities (jobskills, experiences, strength to differentiate yourself)
- Example of what you bring/ your contributions (Can use STAR method)
- Connect your experience with the position applied and how it can benefit the company (Can pull out some keywords from job description)

3. What do you think it takes to be successful in a company such as ours?

- Talk about the company and what will be expected of you.
- Discuss your skills and how they apply to the position.
- Talk about your experiences with being successful at a previous place of employment.
- Relate skills you learned at past jobs to this current one.

4. Are you willing to work overtime? Are you willing to go where the company sends you?

- If yes: Express enthusiasm and readiness
- If no: Be honest, but do not get too into the specifics of why you can't or won't relocate. The interviewer wants to know the reason so they can best tailor their response to you (and come up with a plan should they decide to move you forward) but doesn't need every detail of your thought process or fears.

The Closing

1. Is there anything else I should know about you?

- Restating Excitement but do not sound desperate.
- Emphasize your skills, what makes you the best candidate and how you can be the best fit.
- Prepare story to tell how you can be best fit.
- Reiterate enthusiasm for the role.

2. When could you start work?

- Consider moving period etc.
- Immediately/ Ask about employer's preferred date/ need notice.

3. Do you have any other questions?

BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEWS (STAR METHOD)

Behavioral interviewing is a technique used by employers in which the questions asked to assist the employer in making predictions about a potential employee's future success based on past behaviors. In behavior-based interviews, candidates are asked to give specific examples of when they demonstrated particular behaviors or skills.

Effective Formula for Answering Behavioral Interviews

S: Describe the **Situation** you were in

T: Describe the **Task** you needed to accomplish

A: Describe the **Action** you took

R: Describe the **Results** of your experience

Some Common Behavioural Questions

1. Tell me about a time when you had to deal with someone whose personality was different from yours.
2. Give me a time where you had to carry out a directive with which you did not agree.
3. Describe a time when you saw a problem and took action to correct it rather than waiting for someone else to do so.
4. Tell me about your most successful presentation and what made it so.
5. Tell me about a meeting where you provided technical expertise. How did you ensure that everyone understood?
6. Tell me about a time when there was a conflict in a job/ lab/class project. How did you handle it?
7. Describe a time when you took a risk. What were the biggest challenges/problems you encountered in college? How did you handle them?
8. Talk about a time when you had trouble getting along with a professor/team member/ supervisor?
9. How are you conducting your job search and how will you go about making your decision?
10. Describe a situation in which you used persuasion to successfully convince someone to see things your way.
11. By providing examples, convince me that you can adapt to a wide variety of people, situations and environments.
12. Give me an example of a time in which you had to be relatively quick in coming to a decision.
13. Give me an example of when you showed initiative.
14. Tell me about the time when you must make a big change for a report/ presentations etc to your clients/ audience and how did you handle it.
15. Tell me the time you provide a unique solution to problem.
16. Tell me about a situation when your work was criticized.
17. What was the toughest decision you ever had to make?
18. What was the toughest challenge you have ever faced?

SKILLS and STAR Method

Below are some common required skills. Relate the skills with your story.

Skills	STAR Story	
Teamwork	Situation: Task:	Action: Result:
Decision Making	Situation: Task:	Action: Result:
Persuasion	Situation: Task:	Action: Result:
Communication Skills	Situation: Task:	Action: Result:
Time Management	Situation: Task:	Action: Result:
Multitasking	Situation: Task:	Action: Result:
Leadership	Situation: Task:	Action: Result:
Problem Solving	Situation: Task:	Action: Result:
Adaptability	Situation: Task:	Action: Result:
Goal Setting/ Achievement	Situation: Task:	Action: Result:
Creativity	Situation: Task:	Action: Result:
Conflict Management	Situation: Task:	Action: Result:
	Situation: Task:	Action: Result:
	Situation: Task:	Action: Result:

SAMPLE QUESTIONS TO ASK AN INTERVIEWER

The Position

1. Would you describe the duties of the position for me, please?
2. Can you tell me about the primary people with whom I would be working?
3. What skills do you see as most important to be successful in this position?
4. To whom would I be reporting?
5. What kinds of assignments might I expect the first six months on the job?
6. How and when would my performance be evaluated?
7. Can you tell me about the people who would be reporting to me?
8. Is this a new position or am I replacing someone?
9. May I talk with the last person who held this position?

Career Paths

1. Can you tell me about the career path this position offers?
2. What is the growth potential in this position? Where does this role fit in the growth strategy of the company?
3. About the people who have preceded me in this position and in the department, where are they now and what are they doing?
4. Is it your usual policy to promote from within?
5. How are promotions or transfers determined within the company?
6. Does advancement to upper management usually require an advanced degree?
7. Have you cut your staff in the last three years?

Education and Training

1. What additional training might be necessary for this position?
2. Is training done in a classroom/ group session or is it handled on an individual basis?
3. Are there training programs available to me so that I can learn and grow professionally?
4. What type of on-the-job training programs do you offer?
5. Does the firm support further college education for its employees?

Assessment Questions for Interviewer

1. What kind of personal attributes and qualifications does your company value?
2. What characteristics are important for this position?
3. What is the most significant challenge facing your staff now?
4. What have been some of the best results produced by people in this position?
5. What are your projections for this department/position for the next year? (specify type of projections e.g. sales, production, products, profits)
6. What do you see ahead for your company in the next five years?
7. What are your plans for expanding the (sales, audit, research, etc.) department?

General Questions for Interviewer

1. Can you tell me a little about your own experience with the company?
2. What do you like best about your job/company?
3. Are you happy here?
4. If you could change one thing about the company, what would it be and why?
5. When do you expect to make a hiring decision for this position?
6. Could you describe the hiring process?
7. Is there anything that we have discussed today that would give you concern regarding my candidacy?
8. In what ways is a career with your company better than one with your competitors?
9. What is the largest single problem facing your staff (department) now?