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25 Common Python Interview Questions You Need to Know

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Apr 2, 2025Updated on
Apr 2, 2025

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5 min read

Preparing for a Python interview can be daunting, but having a solid grasp of common questions and their answers can make a significant difference. In this article, we

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What are Python interview questions?

Python interview questions are queries posed to candidates to assess their proficiency in Python programming. These questions typically cover a range of topics, including syntax, data structures, algorithms, and problem-solving skills, to gauge the candidate's technical expertise and practical experience.

Why do interviewers ask Python questions?

The main purpose of Python interview questions is to evaluate a candidate's technical skills and problem-solving abilities in Python programming. Interviewers ask these questions to ensure that the candidate possesses the necessary knowledge and experience to effectively contribute to the team and handle real-world coding challenges.

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questions

What is Python, and what are its key features?

Explain the difference between lists and tuples in Python.

Write a Python function to check if a string is a palindrome.

How do you handle exceptions in Python? Provide an example.

Write a Python program to find the factorial of a number using recursion.

What are Python decorators, and how do you use them?

Write a Python function to merge two dictionaries.

Explain the concept of list comprehensions and provide an example.

Write a Python script to read a file and count the number of words in it.

What is the purpose of the `self` keyword in Python classes?

Write a Python function to sort a list of dictionaries by a specific key.

Explain the difference between deep copy and shallow copy in Python.

Write a Python program to implement a simple calculator using functions.

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Explain the Global Interpreter Lock (GIL) in Python.

Write a Python script to remove duplicates from a list while preserving order.

What are Python generators, and how do they differ from regular functions?

Write a Python function to check if two strings are anagrams of each other.

Explain the concept of context managers in Python and provide an example.

Write a Python program to implement a binary search algorithm.

What is the purpose of the `__init__` method in Python classes?

Write a Python function to calculate the Fibonacci sequence up to a given number.

Explain the difference between `==` and `is` in Python.

Write a Python script to scrape data from a website using BeautifulSoup.

1. What is Python, and what are its key features?

Why you might get asked this: Interviewers often ask about Python and its key features to assess your foundational knowledge of the language, which is crucial for roles such as software development or data analysis.

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Mention its key features such as simplicity, readability, and extensive libraries.

Highlight its versatility in various domains like web development, data science, and automation.

Example answer:

"Python is a high-level, interpreted programming language known for its simplicity and readability. Its key features include extensive libraries, versatility in various domains like web development and data science, and strong community support."

2. Explain the difference between lists and tuples in Python.

Why you might get asked this: Interviewers may ask you to explain the difference between lists and tuples in Python to evaluate your understanding of data structures, which is essential for roles that involve data manipulation and storage, such as software engineering or data analysis.

How to answer:

Define lists and tuples as data structures in Python.

Highlight the mutability of lists versus the immutability of tuples.

Provide examples of when to use each data structure.

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elements cannot be altered. Lists are typically used for collections of items that may need to be modified, whereas tuples are used for fixed collections of items."

3. Write a Python function to check if a string is a palindrome.

Why you might get asked this: Interviewers may ask you to write a Python function to check if a string is a palindrome to evaluate your problem-solving skills and understanding of string manipulation, which are crucial for technical roles such as software development or data analysis.

How to answer:

Explain the concept of a palindrome as a string that reads the same forward and backward.

Describe using string slicing to reverse the string and compare it to the original.

Mention handling edge cases like empty strings and single-character strings.

Example answer:

"A palindrome is a string that reads the same forward and backward. To check if a string is a palindrome in Python, you can use string slicing to reverse the string and compare it to the original."

```
def is_palindrome(s): return s ==  
s[::-1]
```

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Why you might get asked this: Interviewers may ask how you handle exceptions in Python to assess your ability to write robust and error-resistant code, which is crucial for roles such as software engineering or backend development.

How to answer:

Explain the use of `try` and `except` blocks to catch exceptions.

Mention the importance of handling specific exceptions for better error management.

Provide an example demonstrating a simple `try` and `except` block in Python.

Example answer:

"In Python, exceptions are handled using `try` and `except` blocks. This allows you to catch and manage errors gracefully, ensuring your program can handle unexpected situations without crashing."

5. Write a Python program to find the factorial of a number using recursion.

Why you might get asked this: Interviewers may ask you to write a Python program to find the factorial of a number using recursion to evaluate your understanding of recursive functions and mathematical problem-solving, which are essential skills for technical roles such as software development or algorithm design.

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Describe the base case for the recursion to prevent infinite loops.

Provide a simple Python function that demonstrates the recursive approach.

Example answer:

"To find the factorial of a number using recursion, you define a function that calls itself with the decremented value until it reaches the base case of 1. This approach elegantly breaks down the problem into smaller subproblems."

```
def factorial(n): return 1 if n == 1  
else n * factorial(n - 1)
```

6. What are Python decorators, and how do you use them?

Why you might get asked this: Interviewers may ask about Python decorators to assess your understanding of advanced Python features and your ability to write modular and reusable code, which is crucial for roles such as software engineering or backend development.

How to answer:

Define decorators as functions that modify the behavior of other functions or methods.

Explain that they are often used for logging, access control, and memoization.

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"Python decorators are functions that modify the behavior of other functions or methods. They are often used for logging, access control, and memoization."

7. Write a Python function to merge two dictionaries.

Why you might get asked this: Interviewers may ask you to write a Python function to merge two dictionaries to evaluate your understanding of dictionary operations and data manipulation, which is crucial for technical roles such as software development or data engineering.

How to answer:

Explain the use of the `update()` method to merge dictionaries.

Mention the dictionary unpacking method using `**` for merging.

Provide a simple example demonstrating both approaches.

Example answer:

*"To merge two dictionaries in Python, you can use the `update()` method or dictionary unpacking with `**`. Both methods are efficient and straightforward for combining dictionaries."*

8. Explain the concept of list comprehensions and provide an example.

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roles such as software development or data analysis.

How to answer:

Define list comprehensions as a concise way to create lists.

Explain that they consist of brackets containing an expression followed by a for clause.

Provide a simple example that demonstrates creating a list of squares.

Example answer:

*"List comprehensions in Python provide a concise way to create lists. They consist of brackets containing an expression followed by a for clause, for example, [x**2 for x in range(10)] creates a list of squares."*

9. Write a Python script to read a file and count the number of words in it.

Why you might get asked this: Interviewers may ask you to write a Python script to read a file and count the number of words in it to evaluate your file handling and text processing skills, which are essential for roles such as software development or data analysis.

How to answer:

Explain the use of the open() function to read the file.

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`len()`.**Example answer:**

"To read a file and count the number of words in it, you can use the `open()` function to read the file and the `split()` method to split the content into words. Then, use the `len()` function to count the number of words."

```
def count_words_in_file(file_path):  
    with open(file_path, 'r') as file:  
        return len(file.read().split())
```

10. What is the purpose of the `self` keyword in Python classes?

Why you might get asked this: Interviewers may ask about the purpose of the `self` keyword in Python classes to evaluate your understanding of object-oriented programming principles, which is crucial for roles such as software development or backend engineering.

How to answer:

Define `self` as a reference to the instance of the class.

Explain that it allows access to the attributes and methods of the class.

Mention that it is used to differentiate between instance variables and local variables.

Example answer:

11. Write a Python function to sort a list of dictionaries by a specific key.

Why you might get asked this: Interviewers may ask you to write a Python function to sort a list of dictionaries by a specific key to evaluate your data manipulation skills and understanding of sorting algorithms, which are essential for technical roles such as software development or data engineering.

How to answer:

Explain the use of the `sorted()` function with a lambda function as the key parameter.

Mention handling cases where the key might not be present in all dictionaries.

Provide a simple example demonstrating sorting by a specific key.

Example answer:

"To sort a list of dictionaries by a specific key, you can use the `sorted()` function with a lambda function as the key parameter. This approach ensures that the dictionaries are sorted efficiently and correctly based on the specified key."

12. Explain the difference between deep copy and shallow copy in Python.

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which is crucial for roles such as software development or data engineering.

How to answer:

Define shallow copy as a copy of the object that only copies the references to the objects within the original.

Explain that deep copy creates a new object and recursively copies all objects found in the original.

Mention using the copy module to perform both shallow and deep copies in Python.

Example answer:

"A shallow copy creates a new object but inserts references into it to the objects found in the original. In contrast, a deep copy creates a new object and recursively copies all objects found in the original, ensuring no shared references."

13. Write a Python program to implement a simple calculator using functions.

Why you might get asked this: Interviewers may ask you to write a Python program to implement a simple calculator using functions to evaluate your understanding of function design and basic arithmetic operations, which are essential skills for technical roles such as software development or backend engineering.

How to answer:

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handle user input and call the appropriate arithmetic function.

Provide a simple example demonstrating the implementation of the calculator using functions.

Example answer:

"To implement a simple calculator in Python, you can define functions for basic arithmetic operations like addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division. Then, create a main function to handle user input and call the appropriate arithmetic function based on the user's choice."

```
def add(x, y): return x + y

def subtract(x, y): return x - y

def multiply(x, y): return x * y

def divide(x, y): return x / y if y != 0 else 'Error: Division by zero'

def calculator(): operation = input("Enter operation (+, -, *, /): ") x = float(input("Enter first number: ")) y = float(input("Enter second number: ")) if operation == '+': print(add(x, y)) elif operation == '-': print(subtract(x, y)) elif operation == '*': print(multiply(x, y)) elif operation == '/': print(divide(x, y)) else: print("Invalid operation")
```

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Why you might get asked this: Interviewers may ask about lambda functions in Python to evaluate your ability to write concise, anonymous functions, which is crucial for roles that require efficient coding practices, such as software development or data analysis.

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How to answer:

Define lambda functions as small anonymous functions in Python.

Explain that they are used for creating small, throwaway functions without a name.

Provide a simple example demonstrating a lambda function that adds two numbers.

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Example answer:

"Lambda functions in Python are small anonymous functions defined using the `lambda` keyword. They are often used for creating small, throwaway functions without a name, such as `lambda x, y: x + y`."

15. Write a Python function to find the longest common prefix among a list of strings.

Why you might get asked this: Interviewers may ask you to write a Python function to find the longest common prefix among a list of strings to evaluate your string manipulation and algorithmic problem-solving skills, which

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Explain the concept of a common prefix and its significance in string manipulation.

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Mention iterating through the characters of the shortest string to find the common prefix.

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Provide a simple Python function that demonstrates this approach.

Example answer:

"To find the longest common prefix among a list of strings, you can iterate through the characters of the shortest string and compare them with the corresponding characters of the other strings. This approach ensures that you efficiently find the common prefix without unnecessary comparisons."

```
def longest_common_prefix(strs): if not strs: return "" shortest = min(strs, key=len) for i, char in enumerate(shortest): for other in strs: if other[i] != char: return shortest[:i] return shortest
```

16. Explain the Global Interpreter Lock (GIL) in Python.

Why you might get asked this: Interviewers may ask you to explain the Global Interpreter Lock (GIL) in Python to assess your understanding of Python's concurrency model and its implications on multi-threaded programs, which is crucial for roles that involve performance optimization, such as backend development or systems engineering.

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Explain that it allows only one thread to execute Python bytecode at a time.

Mention its impact on multi-threaded programs and potential workarounds like multiprocessing.

Example answer:

"The Global Interpreter Lock (GIL) in Python is a mutex that protects access to Python objects, allowing only one thread to execute Python bytecode at a time. This can limit the performance of multi-threaded programs, but workarounds like multiprocessing can help mitigate its impact."

17. Write a Python script to remove duplicates from a list while preserving order.

Why you might get asked this: Interviewers may ask you to write a Python script to remove duplicates from a list while preserving order to evaluate your data manipulation skills and understanding of efficient algorithms, which are crucial for technical roles such as software development or data engineering.

How to answer:

Explain using a set to track seen elements.

Mention iterating through the list and adding unseen elements to a new list.

Provide a simple example demonstrating this approach.

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adding unseen elements to a new list."

"This approach ensures that duplicates are removed efficiently while maintaining the original order of elements."

```
def remove_duplicates(lst): seen = set() return [x for x in lst if not (x in seen or seen.add(x))]
```

18. What are Python generators, and how do they differ from regular functions?

Why you might get asked this: Interviewers may ask about Python generators to evaluate your understanding of memory-efficient programming and lazy evaluation, which is crucial for roles that involve handling large datasets, such as data engineering or backend development.

How to answer:

Define generators as functions that yield values one at a time using the `yield` keyword.

Explain that generators produce items lazily, which makes them memory-efficient for large datasets.

Mention that unlike regular functions, generators maintain their state between executions.

Example answer:

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"between executions, making them memory-efficient for large datasets."

19. Write a Python function to check if two strings are anagrams of each other.

Why you might get asked this: Interviewers may ask you to write a Python function to check if two strings are anagrams of each other to evaluate your problem-solving skills and understanding of string manipulation, which are crucial for technical roles such as software development or data analysis.

How to answer:

Explain that anagrams are words with the same characters in different orders.

Mention sorting both strings and comparing them for equality.

Provide a simple Python function that demonstrates this approach.

Example answer:

"An amazing answer would clearly define anagrams as words with the same characters in different orders. It would then provide a concise Python function that sorts both strings and compares them for equality."

```
def are_anagrams(str1, str2): return sorted(str1) == sorted(str2)
```

20. Explain the concept of context managers in

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They may ask you to explain the concept of context managers in Python and provide an example to evaluate your understanding of resource management and efficient coding practices, which is crucial for roles such as software development or backend engineering.

How to answer:

Define context managers as constructs that manage the setup and teardown of resources.

Explain that they use the `with` statement to ensure resources are properly released.

Provide a simple example demonstrating a context manager for file handling.

Example answer:

"An amazing answer would define context managers as constructs that manage the setup and teardown of resources. It would then provide a concise example using the `with` statement for file handling."

21. Write a Python program to implement a binary search algorithm.

Why you might get asked this: Interviewers may ask you to write a Python program to implement a binary search algorithm to evaluate your understanding of efficient search algorithms and problem-solving skills, which are crucial for technical roles such as software development or data engineering.

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Mention the importance of having a sorted list for binary search to work.

Provide a simple Python function that demonstrates the binary search algorithm.

Example answer:

"An amazing answer would explain the concept of binary search as a divide-and-conquer algorithm. It would then provide a concise Python function that demonstrates the binary search algorithm."

```
def binary_search(arr, target):
    left, right = 0, len(arr) - 1
    while left <= right:
        mid = (left + right) // 2
        if arr[mid] == target:
            return mid
        elif arr[mid] < target:
            left = mid + 1
        else:
            right = mid - 1
    return -1
```

22. What is the purpose of the `__init__` method in Python classes?

Why you might get asked this: Interviewers may ask about the purpose of the `__init__` method in Python classes to evaluate your understanding of object-oriented programming principles, which is crucial for roles such as software development or backend engineering.

How to answer:

Define `__init__` as the initializer method for Python classes.

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created.

Example answer:

"An amazing answer would define `__init__` as the initializer method for Python classes. It would then explain that it sets up the initial state by assigning values to object properties and is automatically called when a new instance of the class is created."

23. Write a Python function to calculate the Fibonacci sequence up to a given number.

Why you might get asked this: Interviewers may ask you to write a Python function to calculate the Fibonacci sequence up to a given number to evaluate your understanding of iterative and recursive algorithms, which are essential for technical roles such as software development or algorithm design.

How to answer:

Explain the concept of the Fibonacci sequence as a series where each number is the sum of the two preceding ones.

Mention using a loop or recursion to generate the sequence up to the given number.

Provide a simple Python function that demonstrates this approach.

Example answer:

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this approach."

```
def fibonacci(n): a, b = 0, 1 while  
a <= n: print(a, end=' ') a, b = b,  
a + b
```

24. Explain the difference between `==` and `is` in Python.

Why you might get asked this: Interviewers may ask you to explain the difference between == and is in Python to assess your understanding of object comparison and identity, which is crucial for roles that involve precise data handling, such as software development or data analysis.

How to answer:

Define == as the equality operator that checks if the values of two objects are equal.

Explain that is is the identity operator that checks if two objects refer to the same memory location.

Mention that == compares values, while is compares identities.

Example answer:

"An amazing answer would define == as the equality operator that checks if the values of two objects are equal. It would then explain that is is the identity operator that checks if two objects refer to the same memory location."

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Why you might get asked this: Interviewers may ask you to write a Python script to scrape data from a website using BeautifulSoup to evaluate your web scraping skills and understanding of HTML parsing, which are crucial for roles that involve data extraction and analysis, such as data engineering or web development.

How to answer:

Explain the use of the requests library to fetch the HTML content of the webpage.

Mention parsing the HTML content using BeautifulSoup to extract the desired data.

Provide a simple example demonstrating the extraction of specific elements from the webpage.

Example answer:

"An amazing answer would explain the use of the requests library to fetch the HTML content of the webpage. It would then provide a concise example demonstrating the extraction of specific elements from the webpage using BeautifulSoup."

```
import requests

from bs4 import BeautifulSoup

response =
requests.get('http://example.com')

soup =
BeautifulSoup(response.content,
'html.parser')
```

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Tips to prepare for Python questions

Understand Python's Data Structures:

Be well-versed in Python's built-in data structures like lists, tuples, dictionaries, and sets. Know their properties, use cases, and how to manipulate them efficiently.

Master List Comprehensions: Practice writing list comprehensions for creating and transforming lists. This concise syntax is often favored in Python interviews for its readability and efficiency.

Get Comfortable with Python's Standard Library:

Familiarize yourself with commonly used modules in Python's standard library, such as `collections`, `itertools`, and `functools`. These modules can simplify complex tasks and are often referenced in interview questions.

Practice Writing Clean and Readable Code:

Python emphasizes readability and simplicity. Ensure your code follows PEP 8 guidelines and uses meaningful variable names, proper indentation, and comments where necessary.

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(GIL). This knowledge can help you answer questions related to performance and optimization.

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