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Linux Admin Interview Questions and Example Answers

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As you are preparing for your interview, you might consider practicing how you will answer LINUX admin questions as the interviewer presents them. Having your answers ready in advance can help ensure you fully explain or describe how you either accomplished a task in your previous experience or how you would do so for the company you're interviewing for. Using example LINUX admin interview questions and answers can also help you prepare your answers before your interview. In this article are common interview questions you may be asked related to the job, your skills and background and to see how you would fit the role.

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General interview questions

Interviewers may typically ask common or general questions as a way to initiate the interview and get to know job candidates. During your interview, you may be asked some of these general questions that include questions like the following examples:

- Tell me about yourself.
- How did you learn about this job opening?
- What do you know about our company?
- How will you benefit our company?
- How are your skills related to what's required for this job?
- Tell me about your greatest strength.
- What do you consider your greatest weakness?
- What are some of your career goals?
- How do your values relate to our company mission?
- Are there any questions you would like to ask me?

Read more: [21 Job Interview Tips: How to Make a Great Impression](#)

Questions about background and experience

Interview questions about your background and experience can include questions about your skills and education, too, especially if you recently graduated. Additionally, your answers can allow the interviewer to get a better sense of how your expertise and skill level will match the job requirements. Some of these interview questions can resemble the following examples:

- What degrees do you have?
- How would you describe your skill level in this field?
- Why do you want to work as a Linux administrator?
- What are some of your professional accomplishments?
- How did you help your past organization achieve goals?
- Do you have any career goals?
- Do you have any goals to continue your education in the future?
- Did you complete or participate in any industry-related projects during your education?
- How can you develop skills you might not have?
- Where do you see yourself in five years? In 10 years?

Related: [Interview Question: "Where Do You See Yourself in Five Years?"](#)

In-depth interview questions

During your interview, the interviewer may gradually lead to more complex and industry-specific questions related to your knowledge and expertise working in Linux admin. You can use your answers to show the interviewer the depth of your understanding of the field and how you apply your skills to meeting business objectives. The following in-depth interview questions can help you prepare your answers before encountering industry-specific questions:

- What are the differences between Linux and Windows OS?
- Explain the differences between a UNIX and LINUX system?
- What are the basic elements of LINUX?
- Can you explain what LILO is?
- Describe a service that you might disable on a LINUX server.
- How would you check memory and CPU statistics?

- Why would Logical Volume Manager (LVM) be required?
- Where are SAR logs stored?
- Describe how you would reduce the size of an LVM partition.
- Describe how you would increase the size of an LVM partition.
- Where would you locate kernel modules?
- Explain the different network bonding modes used in LINUX.
- What would you do to enhance the security of password files stored in LINUX?
- Describe which shell you would assign to POP3 mail-only account.
- Explain how you would create a partition from a raw disk.
- How is the umask command used in a LINUX system?

Read more: [How to Use the STAR Interview Response Technique](#)

LINUX system administrator interview questions and example answers

The Linux admin interview questions you may be asked can relate directly to your skills working as a Linux administrator as well as basic knowledge of the system. The interviewer may likely ask questions like the following examples to get a better sense of how your problem-solving, technical and analytical skills match with what you will be expected to do in the position should you be hired.

You can give examples of how you completed tasks or projects in your past roles when you answer, or you can explain how you would handle each scenario if you have little hands-on job experience. The following Linux admin interview questions and example answers can help you prepare for your interview:

- Explain how you would assign the umask to a user permanently.
- What would you do to change the default run level?
- Describe your process for creating an ext4 file system.
- How would you use NFS to share a directory?

• How would you use NFS to share a directory?

- What is a "/proc" file system?
- What are some differences between an ext2 and ext3 file system?
- Can you explain the differences between DOS and BASH?
- Explain the meaning of CLI.
- What is the meaning of GUI?
- How would you use Terminal to create a file in LINUX?

Explain how you would assign the umask to a user permanently.

The interviewer may ask process-specific questions to gauge your level of expertise working as a LINUX administrator. You can include examples of how you completed past projects with this process or how you would do it should you be responsible for this task working in the position. Here is an example:

Example: *"For me to set a permanent value for an individual user, I would have to place the umask into the proper profile file. The profile can depend on the default user shell, so I would find that data before making any user unmask permanently routed."*

What would you do to change the default run level?

During your interview, it is likely the interviewer may ask a mix of basic LINUX operational questions and more complex process-related questions. Questions like this one may be asked to judge your basic understanding of using commands in LINUX. Here is a sample answer to help you prepare your own:

Example: *"First, I would pull up the initial default file to edit it and change the entry to the pathname "id:5:initdefault:". Once the pathname entry is changed, I can use the "init" command to change the run level to the new designation."*

Describe your process for creating an ext4 file system.

This may also seem like a basic LINUX interview question, and the interviewer might ask you something related to file creations in the LINUX system to get a better understanding of how you make processes like this efficient. You might offer a quick and clear command in

your answer so the interviewer can see you have experience with the basics of LINUX commands.

Example: *"All that's really needed to create a separate ext4 file system is a single command. I would enter the command '# mke2fs -t ext4 /dev/DEV' into the entry lines and a new file system should open."*

How would you use NFS to share a directory?

Again, the interviewer wants to know your proficiency level with entering basic commands to complete tasks that might be expected of you should you be hired for the job. You can use your past experience as an example, or you can discuss how you use commands to complete the process. Here is a sample answer:

Example: *"To share a directory within NFS, the configuration file needs to be edited first. So I would do that by entering a command like ' / with the specified criteria. After entering the command, I'd have to restart the NFS service to finalize the share."*

What is a "/proc" file system?

The interviewer may ask this question to see how you distinguish between file systems in LINUX. You can answer with your understanding of what this file system means or what you would use it for. The /proc file system is a virtual file system that provides detailed information about Linux Kernel, hardware and running processes. Files under the /proc directory are named as virtual files.

Example: *"The '/proc' file system is actually a virtual file system. I used '/proc' file systems in prior roles to view LINUX kernels, hardware and the default running processes. Because these files are typically designated as virtual files, using '/proc' files can be a benefit because virtual file systems use less RAM than hard drive file systems."*

What are some differences between an ext2 and ext3 file system?

This question can allow the interviewer to see how you differentiate between different file systems within LINUX. You might use an example of how you used each separate file system in past roles or keep your answer to just the key differences between both file systems. Here is a sample answer:

Example: *"First, the ext3 file system is the updated version of an ext2 file system. The biggest difference is that ext3 can support journaling, while ext2 cannot. In my past role as LINUX admin, we had a system crash during a lightning storm and because I was running an ext3 file system I*

we had a system crash during a lightning storm, and because I was running an ext3 file system, I didn't need to run a lengthy file system check to access crashed files. Ext3 is definitely the more efficient file system to implement in a large network."

Can you explain the differences between DOS and BASH?

Your answer to this question can show the interviewer that you can distinguish between different command systems. Use your experience and skills to highlight your proficiency working as a LINUX admin. Here is an example answer:

Example: *"For one, DOS isn't case-sensitive where BASH is. DOS also follows a strict protocol for file naming and BASH doesn't have any file naming conventions. It's also important to note that using forward- and back-slashes will carry a different meaning in each command system."*

Explain the meaning of CLI.

These types of questions may be asked to test your knowledge of different aspects of LINUX commands, system and file names and designations. You can be brief with your answer by explaining the general meaning of the acronym.

Example: *"CLI is an acronym that stands for Command Line Interface. I commonly use CLI to enter operational commands. I also consider CLI to be more flexible than GUI, though it can be a bit more complex in command codes."*

What is the meaning of GUI?

Just like CLI, the interviewer may ask this to see how you relate to each command module, and maybe even to see if you have a preference between the two. If you do have a preference, or you have more experience with CLI or GUI, explain this in your answer. Here is a sample:

Example: *"GUI stands for Graphical User Interface, and I really don't think it offers as much flexibility as CLI does. That's just my opinion, as both command modules are equally efficient. However, because GUI uses icons, color and graphics to input commands, it can be much quicker to use."*

How would you use Terminal to create a file in LINUX?

This question can help the interviewer your efficiency and depth of understanding of some of the basic command functions for creating file systems, file names, path names and file folders within LINUX. You can keep your answer short with this question, explaining the exact command process you would use to complete the task.

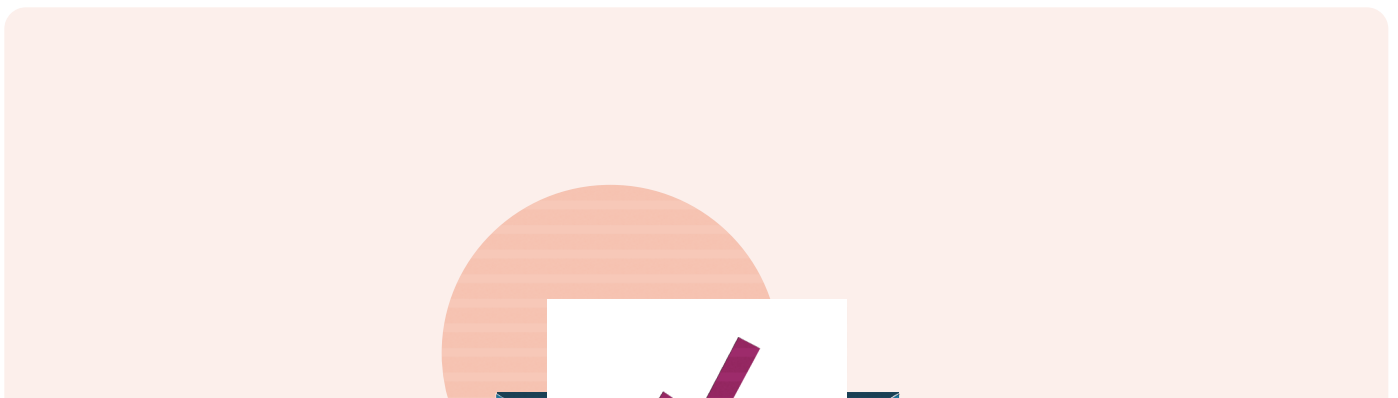
Example: *"In short, all I would really need to do is to enter the 'mkdir' command. This will create a new file folder that I can name. To name the file, I might enter a command like 'mkdir client directory' to create a folder specifically for storing client information in."*

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