

# Extreme interviews

WHAT sort of dinosaur are you? If you answered Tyrannosaurus rex, then the bad news is that you probably won't get the job you're applying for.

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1 Welcome to the strange world of 'extreme interviewing', the latest trend from America in which interviewers throw **bizarre** questions at candidates to see how they react.

5 It may seem like a game, but extreme interviewing is deadly serious. The idea is to see how quickly job-seekers **think on their feet** and, at a time when 25% of recent graduates are unemployed, it offers employers a new way of separating the brilliant candidates from the merely very good.

This new **approach** to selecting candidates comes from Silicon Valley in California — where else? Google, famous for its **demanding** interview process, asked a recent candidate: 'You are stranded on a desert island. You have 60 seconds to choose people of 10 professions to come with you. Who do you choose? Go!'

One of the early pioneers of extreme interviewing was Steve Jobs, co-founder of Apple, who could be famously cruel with **job seekers**. Faced once with a candidate he considered boring, Jobs suddenly pretended to be a chicken, **flapping** his arms and making clucking noises round the unfortunate applicant, waiting to see what he would do. In fact, the secret to extreme interviewing is neither in the question nor the answer. It is in the candidate's reaction.

David Moyle, a headhunter with the **recruitment agency** Eximius Group in London, who admits to using the dinosaur question when selecting candidates, said: 'Essentially, that kind of interviewing is used by us to give someone an opportunity to show they are smart and not easily **flustered**.'

'Most candidates actually get something out of it, it's not about trying to **crush** them. We are trying to give them an opportunity to show their personality, **rather than** just showing how they perform in an interview.'

Of course, getting the job is just the start. In the modern business world, survival will depend on what sort of dinosaur you **really** are.



## Glossary

**Silicon Valley** the informal name for the region in northern California where many of the world's largest technology corporations are based

**headhunter** a person whose job it is to find people with the necessary skills to work for a company (often in executive posts), and to persuade them to join that company

A) Read text. Using your own words, answer these questions.

1. What are extreme interviews?
2. What kind of companies first started using them?
3. Why do some people think that they are better than normal interviews?

## Vocabulary:

to think on one's feet (idiom = feste Redewendung): to be able to think and react to things very quickly without any preparation

approach: way of doing or thinking about something

demanding: needing a lot of effort and skill

flustered: nervous and confused

rather than: instead of

B) Listen to give people talking about a strange question they were asked in job interviews and complete the chart. Which questions do you think are good or bad to ask at an interview?

What strange question were they asked?	How did they answer?	Did they get the job?
1 Do you still .....? .....?		
2 What would make you .....? .....?		
3 ..... are you? How much .....?		
4 ..... would you like to be reincarnated as?		
5 Are you planning to .....? .....?		

C) Training:

#### Student A

**a** You are giving **B** an extreme interview for a job in your company. Ask **B** the questions and ask him / her to give reasons for his / her answers. Then say if you would give him / her the job and why (not).

- 1 Which one aspect of your personality would you change if you could, and why?
- 2 If you could have dinner with anyone from history, who would you choose?
- 3 If you were an animal, which animal would you be?
- 4 What kind of things make you angry?
- 5 If you had to spend the rest of your life on a deserted island (with plenty of food and water), what two things would you want to have with you?
- 6 Which TV or film character would you most like to be?
- 7 What's the best (or worst) decision you've ever made?
- 8 If I came to your house for dinner, what would you cook for me?

**b** Now answer **B**'s questions. Try to think quickly and make a good impression. Give good reasons for your answers.

#### Student B

**a** **A** is going to give you an extreme interview for a job in his / her company. Answer the questions. Try to think quickly and make a good impression. Give good reasons for your answers.

**b** Now give **A** an extreme interview for a job in your company, using the questions below. Ask him / her to give reasons for his / her answers. Then say if you would give him / her the job, and why (not).

- 1 Which three adjectives describe you best?
- 2 If you were a type of food, what type of food would you be?
- 3 How do you normally treat animals?
- 4 Who do you admire most, and why?
- 5 If you could be a super hero, what would you want your superpowers to be?
- 6 Tell me about something in your life that you are really proud of.
- 7 If Hollywood made a movie about your life, who would you like to see play the lead role as you?
- 8 If you could have six months with no obligations or financial limitations, what would you do with the time?