

## Tell us whether you accept cookies

We use [cookies to collect information \(/help/cookie-settings/\)](/help/cookie-settings/) about how you use the National Careers Service. This information is used to make the website work as well as possible and improve our services.

[Accept all cookies](#)

[Set cookie preferences \(/help/cookie-settings/\)](/help/cookie-settings/)

## National Careers Service

[Menu](#)

**BETA** Complete [Ipsos MORI survey \(https://surveys.ipsosinteractive.com/mrIWeb/mrIWeb.dll?I.Project=S1039833&id=&cf=ovl\)](https://surveys.ipsosinteractive.com/mrIWeb/mrIWeb.dll?I.Project=S1039833&id=&cf=ovl) to give us your feedback about the service.

[Home \(/\)](#) > [Careers advice \(/careers-advice/\)](/careers-advice/) > Common interview questions

## Common interview questions: how to answer

Practice your answers to some of the main interview questions often asked.

### About the employer

Employers want to see that you have a genuine interest in working for them by asking questions like:

- what do you know about our company?
- why do you think you're a good fit for our company?
- why do you want to work for us?

To prepare for questions about the employer, you need to research the company. You should look at their website and 'about us' pages to find out more about their products, services and values.

Show what you've learned about the company throughout the interview.

### About you

Employers will want to get to know you and may ask things like:

- what do you do in your spare time?
- what are your hobbies and interests?

Show what kind of personal qualities, interests and skills you have. For example, you could talk about:

- cooking - to show you're organised and can follow instructions
- travel - to show you're adventurous and flexible
- team sports - to show you're a team player with good communication
- music - to show you're creative

If the job requires certain skills, you should demonstrate these in your examples.

#### Example

If it's a graphic designer role, you could talk about taking a desktop publishing course.

### Work history questions

Employers usually base questions on jobs you have done in the past. This gives you the chance to talk about your experience. For instance, they might ask:

- when have you faced a challenging situation?
- can you tell us about a personal achievement at work?
- have you ever taken the initiative?
- have you ever failed at a task?

Your answers should reflect the skills the employer wants. Be positive and tailor your examples to the job description.

If you don't have much work history, you can use examples from outside of work. You can also use examples from volunteering experience.

Use the [STAR method \(/careers-advice/interview-advice/the-star-method\)](/careers-advice/interview-advice/the-star-method) to help structure your answers.

## Strengths

The strengths employers look for will depend on the job role. They may ask you questions like:

- what are your main strengths?
- why should we hire you?

You can use specific examples to highlight your strengths, such as:

- communication - to show you get on with others
- problem solving - to show that you can find solutions
- enthusiasm - to show that you have a positive attitude to work
- flexibility - to show that you can adapt to different ways of working

Plan your answers around 2 or 3 examples that are relevant to the job. You can back these up with qualifications or training you've done.

## Weaknesses

You should be honest when answering questions on your weaknesses. Say how you're working to improve them.

### Example

Question - "Do you have any weaknesses?"

Answer - "I struggle with time management on projects. To make sure I stick to the time frame I'm creating a timetable of steps at the start of each project".

## Ask questions

At the end of a job interview, employers will usually ask if you have any questions for them. This is a good chance to show your interest in the company and your enthusiasm for the job.

For example, you could ask:

- what is it like to work here?
- what does a typical day involve?
- how do you see the company developing over the next few years?
- will there be any training opportunities after I start?

## Why you left your last job

The employer may ask you questions about leaving your last job.

If you've been out of work for a long time, explain why. Talk about the positive things you've done while away from work. For example, [networking \(/careers-advice/networking\)](/careers-advice/networking), retraining, [volunteering \(/explore-your-education-and-training-choices/volunteering\)](/explore-your-education-and-training-choices/volunteering) or keeping fit.

If you:

- **left by choice:** be positive about why you want a new job and describe why their company suits you better
- **got made redundant:** explain the situation, be positive and describe how you've responded since

- **were fired for misconduct or poor performance:** explain why your standards dropped, what you've learned and how you've improved since the experience

---

## Related content

[Video interview advice \(/careers-advice/how-to-do-well-in-video-interviews/\)](/careers-advice/how-to-do-well-in-video-interviews/).

[Phone interview advice \(/careers-advice/how-to-do-well-in-telephone-interviews/\)](/careers-advice/how-to-do-well-in-telephone-interviews/).

[Interview tips \(/careers-advice/interview-advice\)](/careers-advice/interview-advice/).

[Filling in an application form \(/careers-advice/application-forms\)](/careers-advice/application-forms/).

## Speak to an adviser

You can call [0800 100 900](tel:0800100900) or [use webchat \(/webchat/chat\)](/webchat/chat) to speak to an adviser.

We're open:

- **8am to 8pm** Monday to Friday
- **10am to 5pm** Saturday and [bank holidays \(https://www.gov.uk/bank-holidays\)](https://www.gov.uk/bank-holidays).

We're closed Sunday, Christmas Day and New Year's Day.

---

[Help \(/help\)](/help) [Privacy and cookies \(/help/cookies\)](/help/cookies) [Accessibility statement \(/help/accessibility\)](/help/accessibility)

[Terms and conditions \(/help/terms-and-conditions\)](/help/terms-and-conditions) [Information sources \(/help/information-sources\)](/help/information-sources)

## OGL

All content is available under the [Open Government Licence v3.0 \(https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3/\)](https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3/), except where otherwise stated

(<https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/information-management/re-using-public-sector-information/uk-government-licensing-framework/c>