



Would **YOU** get the job?

Interviews are a source of anxiety for most job-seekers. Job website Glassdoor has created a list of some of the toughest interview questions from the elite companies where they were asked, and offers an expert opinion on the best possible answers.

1 ☐ G (The Phoenix Partnership)

How to answer: If you answer 'nothing', then you may look too defensive, as if you are hiding something, even if you are innocent. The best tactic would be to reply that everyone presents the best side of themselves on a CV – that is the point of the document – but that you think lying, and even exaggeration, is wrong.

2 ☐ C (Condé Nast)

How to answer: You could just tell the interviewer that you are not the sort of person to make enemies, but that sometimes you've enjoyed a good-natured rivalry with someone, for example, in a sport. This will show your competitive side and your drive to succeed.

3 ☐ E (Page Group)

How to answer: This is an occasion when you could give a light-hearted response. Something like, 'I don't consider myself to be selfish, but I always make sure I have some time in the week for myself, so I can practise art / tennis / football / singing.'

4 ☐ B (Palantir Technologies)

How to answer: Everyone should be prepared to answer this question, whatever job you're interviewing for. There's no foolproof answer – it's a good idea to have thought about a list of areas that are not your biggest strengths, but that wouldn't affect the role that you are interviewing for.

- A What do you usually do after a bad day at work?
- B What's your biggest weakness?
- C How would your enemy describe you?
- D You have 50 red and 50 blue balls. How could you divide these between two containers to give the maximum probability of picking one of the colours?
- E What's the most selfish thing you've ever done?
- F Are you a nice person?
- G What on your CV is the closest thing to a lie?

5 ☐ D (Clearwater Analytics)

How to answer: If you are a serious maths geek, then you might have a decent chance of answering this one. One answer would be to put a single red ball in one container and all of the other balls in the other container.

6 ☐ A (Switch Consulting)

How to answer: Don't be afraid to talk about what you do to relax, and show how you have a healthy work-life balance. It's also a chance to say something about your personal life, which could be very helpful for making a good impression. For example, you could mention how you go to the gym to relax.

7 ☐ F (Badoo)

How to answer: Don't just answer 'yes' or 'no'. Think about your personality type and the culture of the company where you are interviewing. What is your gut feeling about the type of people that do well at the company? This should help you to give an appropriate answer.

Useful vocabulary from the text

- 1 **gut feeling** (*noun*) a reaction based on feelings and emotions rather than thought and reason
- 2 **foolproof** (*adj.*) designed so that it cannot fail
- 3 **light-hearted** (*phrase*) an answer which is intended to be amusing rather than serious
- 4 **geek** (*noun, informal*) a person who is very interested in and who knows a lot about a particular subject
- 5 **work-life balance** (*phrase*) the number of hours per week you spend working compared with the number of hours you spend with your family, relaxing, etc.
- 6 **the point of** (*phrase*) the main reason for something
- 7 **rivalry** (*phrase*) friendly competition
- 8 **job seekers** (*noun*) people who are looking for a job



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What company would you like to work at?

Mentimeter



- f Look at some more genuine interview questions. What do you think they would tell you about the candidate? Why? Do you think these kinds of questions really help interviewers to choose the best person for the job?
- What would you do if you were the one survivor in a plane crash? (Airbnb)
 - Who do you think would win in a fight between Spider-Man and Batman? (Stanford University)
 - What did you have for breakfast? (Banana Republic)
 - Describe the colour yellow to somebody who's blind. (Spirit Airlines)
 - How many people flew out of Chicago last year? (Redbox software)
 - What am I thinking right now? (TES Global)
 - Who is your hero, and why? (General Electrics)
 - Tell me something about your childhood. (Next)

How to buy some time when asked a difficult question?

Comment on the question

That's an interesting question.
I've never really thought about it before! I guess I would say...
Off the top of my head...
Let me think... / Let me see...
I think it really depends on a couple of things.
as for me...

Ask for some time to think

Let me just take a moment to consider your question.

That's a really deep question. Let me just take a moment to collect my thoughts.

Rephrase/repeat the question

What would I do if I was the only survivor of a plane crash? Well...

So you'd like to know how I would act in a situation like that...

Ask the interviewer to repeat the question :)

Sorry, I didn't quite catch that. Could you repeat please?

I'm sorry, I'm not sure what you meant by that. Can you repeat your question please?

6 SPEAKING

- a  **Communication** Tough questions **A** p.106 **B** p.110 Ask your partner some difficult interview questions.

- 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 kinds of things make you angry?
- 5 If you had to spend the rest of your life on a desert 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?

- 1 Which three adjectives describe you best?
- 2 If you were a car, what type of car would you be?
- 3 How do you normally treat animals?
- 4 Who do you admire most, and why?
- 5 If you could be a superhero, what would your superpowers be?
- 6 Tell me about something in your life that you're 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?