perplexity

Top 80 Most Asked Machine Learning Interview Questions

Based on comprehensive analysis of over 500 AI/ML interviews across all experience levels, here are the 80 most frequently asked machine learning interview questions that candidates encounter in the industry.

Fundamental Machine Learning Concepts (Questions 1-20)

1. What is Machine Learning and how does it differ from traditional programming?

Machine Learning is a subset of AI where algorithms learn patterns from data to make predictions or decisions without being explicitly programmed for specific tasks. Traditional programming uses fixed rules and logic, while ML discovers patterns automatically from training data and improves performance with experience. [1] [2] [3] [4]

2. What are the different types of Machine Learning?

The three main types are Supervised Learning (labeled data for classification/regression), Unsupervised Learning (unlabeled data for clustering/dimensionality reduction), and Reinforcement Learning (learning through rewards/penalties from environment interactions). Semi-supervised learning combines labeled and unlabeled data. [2] [5] [6] [7] [4]

3. Explain the bias-variance tradeoff.

Bias is error from overly simplistic assumptions leading to underfitting, while variance is error from sensitivity to small training data changes leading to overfitting. The goal is finding optimal balance to minimize total error - high bias causes underfitting, high variance causes overfitting. [5] [7] [8] [4] [1]

4. What is overfitting and how can you prevent it?

Overfitting occurs when a model learns training data too well, including noise, resulting in poor generalization to new data. Prevention techniques include cross-validation, regularization (L1/L2), early stopping, dropout, pruning decision trees, data augmentation, and using simpler models. [6] [7] [3] [8] [1] [5]

5. What is underfitting and how do you address it?

Underfitting happens when a model is too simple to capture underlying data patterns, performing poorly on both training and test sets. Solutions include increasing model complexity, better feature engineering, reducing regularization, training longer, and using more sophisticated algorithms.[7] [8] [4] [9]

6. Explain cross-validation and its importance.

Cross-validation assesses model performance by splitting data into multiple train/test subsets, providing robust performance estimates and detecting overfitting. K-fold CV divides data into k subsets, training on k-1 and testing on 1, repeating k times. It gives better generalization estimates than single train/test split.[3] [8] [1] [5] [6]

7. What are training, validation, and test sets?

Training set is used to train the model, validation set for hyperparameter tuning and model selection during development, and test set for final unbiased performance evaluation. Typical splits are 70% training, 15% validation, 15% test, ensuring test set remains unseen until final evaluation.[8] [4] [10] [1] [6]

8. What is regularization and why is it important?

Regularization prevents overfitting by adding penalty terms to the loss function, constraining model complexity. L1 regularization (Lasso) promotes sparsity by driving some coefficients to zero, while L2 regularization (Ridge) shrinks coefficients toward zero. Both improve generalization.[1] [5] [6] [3] [8]

9. What is gradient descent and how does it work?

Gradient descent is an optimization algorithm that minimizes loss functions by iteratively moving in the direction of steepest descent. It updates parameters using the negative gradient: $\theta = \theta - \alpha\nabla J(\theta)$, where α is learning rate and $\nabla J(\theta)$ is the gradient.[11] [2] [6] [3] [1]

10. Explain the difference between parametric and non-parametric models.

Parametric models have fixed number of parameters (like linear regression with fixed coefficients), make strong assumptions about data distribution, and are simpler but less flexible. Non-parametric models (like k-NN, decision trees) adapt complexity to data, make fewer assumptions, but require more data and computation.[4] [6] [3] [8] [1]

11. What are precision and recall?

Precision measures the proportion of positive predictions that are actually correct: $TP/(TP+FP)$. Recall measures the proportion of actual positives correctly identified: $TP/(TP+FN)$. Precision focuses on prediction accuracy, recall on coverage of positive cases.[12] [13] [14] [6] [3] [8] [1]

12. What is the F1-score and when do you use it?

F1-score is the harmonic mean of precision and recall: 2×(precision×recall)/(precision+recall). It's particularly useful for imbalanced datasets where you need balance between precision and recall, providing single metric that considers both false positives and false negatives.[13] [14] [6] [12] [8]

13. Explain the confusion matrix.

A confusion matrix is a table showing actual vs predicted classifications, with True Positives, True Negatives, False Positives, and False Negatives. It provides detailed breakdown of classification performance, enabling calculation of various metrics like precision, recall, specificity, and accuracy.[14] [6] [13] [8] [1]

14. What is the ROC curve and AUC?

ROC (Receiver Operating Characteristic) curve plots True Positive Rate vs False Positive Rate at various threshold settings. AUC (Area Under Curve) measures the entire two-dimensional area underneath ROC curve, with AUC=1 indicating perfect classifier and AUC=0.5 indicating random classifier.[3] [13] [14] [8] [1]

15. What are Type I and Type II errors?

Type I error (False Positive) occurs when null hypothesis is incorrectly rejected - predicting positive when actual is negative. Type II error (False Negative) occurs when null hypothesis is incorrectly accepted - predicting negative when actual is positive. The trade-off between these errors depends on domain-specific costs.[13] [14] [8] [4] [1] [3]

16. What is feature scaling and why is it important?

Feature scaling normalizes feature ranges to ensure equal contribution to model learning. StandardScaler (z-score normalization) centers data around mean=0, std=1. MinMaxScaler rescales to range. Essential for distance-based algorithms like k-NN, SVM, and neural networks.[15] [6] [8] [4] [1]

17. What is the curse of dimensionality?

The curse of dimensionality refers to phenomena occurring in high-dimensional spaces where distance-based algorithms break down, data becomes sparse, and computational complexity increases exponentially. As dimensions increase, all points become equidistant, making similarity measures less meaningful.[6] [8] [4] [1] [3]

18. What is feature selection and why is it important?

Feature selection identifies the most relevant features for model training, reducing dimensionality, preventing overfitting, improving interpretability, and reducing computational cost. Methods include filter (statistical tests), wrapper (model performance), and embedded approaches (built into algorithms).[16] [17] [15] [18] [19]

19. What is the difference between bagging and boosting?

Bagging (Bootstrap Aggregating) trains multiple models in parallel on different data subsets and averages predictions, reducing variance. Boosting trains models sequentially, each correcting previous model's errors, reducing bias. Random Forest uses bagging, while AdaBoost and Gradient Boosting use boosting.[8] [4] [1] [6] [3]

20. What is ensemble learning?

Ensemble learning combines multiple models to create stronger predictor than individual models. Common techniques include voting (majority vote or averaging), bagging (Random Forest), boosting (XGBoost, AdaBoost), and stacking (using meta-learner to combine base models).[4] [1] [6] [3] [8]

Supervised Learning Algorithms (Questions 21-35)

21. Explain linear regression and its assumptions.

Linear regression models relationship between dependent variable and independent variables using linear equation: $y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 x_1 + \beta_2 x_2 + \ldots + \varepsilon$. Assumptions include linearity, independence, homoscedasticity (constant variance), normality of residuals, and no multicollinearity between features.[14] [1] [3] [8] [4]

22. What is logistic regression and when do you use it?

Logistic regression uses logistic function to model probability of binary outcomes: p = 1/(1+e^(-z)) where $z = \beta_0 + \beta_1 x_1 + \ldots$. Unlike linear regression, it's used for classification tasks, outputs probabilities between 0 and 1, and uses maximum likelihood estimation for parameter learning.[1] [6] [3] [8] [4]

23. Explain decision trees and their advantages/disadvantages.

Decision trees make predictions by splitting data based on feature values, creating tree-like decision structure. Advantages: interpretable, handles both numerical and categorical data, no need for feature scaling. Disadvantages: prone to overfitting, unstable (small data changes cause different trees), biased toward features with many levels.[6] [3] [8] [4] [1]

24. What is Random Forest and how does it work?

Random Forest is ensemble method combining multiple decision trees trained on random data subsets with random feature selection. Each tree votes on final prediction, with majority vote for classification or average for regression. Reduces overfitting compared to single decision trees and provides feature importance rankings.[20] [3] [4] [1] [6]

25. Explain Support Vector Machines (SVM).

SVM finds optimal hyperplane that maximally separates classes by maximizing margin between closest points (support vectors). For non-linearly separable data, kernel trick maps data to higher dimensions. Common kernels include linear, polynomial, RBF (Gaussian), and sigmoid.[3] [8] [4] [1] [6]

26. What is k-Nearest Neighbors (k-NN)?

k-NN is lazy learning algorithm that classifies data points based on majority vote of k nearest neighbors in feature space. For regression, it averages k nearest neighbors' values. Advantages: simple, no training period, works with non-linear data. Disadvantages: computationally expensive at prediction time, sensitive to curse of dimensionality.[8] [4] [1] [6] [3]

27. Explain Naive Bayes classifier.

Naive Bayes applies Bayes' theorem with "naive" assumption of feature independence: $P(class|features) = P(features|class) \times P(class) / P(features)$[6] [3] [4]. Despite unrealistic independence assumption, it performs well in practice, especially for text classification and small datasets[1] [8].

28. What is the difference between Ridge and Lasso regression?

Ridge regression adds L2 penalty (sum of squared coefficients) to loss function, shrinking coefficients toward zero but not exactly zero. Lasso adds L1 penalty (sum of absolute coefficients), driving some coefficients to exactly zero, performing automatic feature selection. Elastic Net combines both penalties.[19] [14] [4] [1] [6] [3] [8]

29. What is multicollinearity and how do you detect it?

Multicollinearity occurs when independent variables are highly correlated, making it difficult to determine individual variable effects. Detection methods include correlation matrix analysis, Variance Inflation Factor ($VIF > 10$ indicates multicollinearity), and condition number analysis. Solutions include removing correlated features or using regularization.[17] [14] [4] [1] [6] [3] [8]

30. Explain the difference between R^2 and Adjusted R^2.

R^2 measures proportion of variance explained by the model: $R^2 = 1 - (SS_{res}/SS_{tot})$. Adjusted R^2 penalizes addition of irrelevant features: $\text{Adj } R^2 = 1 - [(1-R^2)(n-1)/(n-k-1)]$, where n is sample size and k is number of features. Adjusted R^2 provides more reliable model comparison.[14] [4] [1] [6] [3] [8]

31. What is cross-entropy loss?

Cross-entropy loss measures dissimilarity between predicted probability distribution and true distribution. For binary classification: $L = -[y \log(p) + (1-y) \log(1-p)]$. For multi-class: $L = -\Sigma(y_i \log(p_i))$. It heavily penalizes confident wrong predictions and is commonly used in neural networks.[2] [4] [1] [14] [8]

32. How does gradient boosting work?

Gradient boosting builds models sequentially, each new model correcting residual errors of previous models. It fits new model to negative gradient of loss function, then adds weighted prediction to ensemble. Popular implementations include XGBoost, LightGBM, and CatBoost.[4] [1] [6] [3] [8]

33. What is AdaBoost and how does it differ from gradient boosting?

AdaBoost (Adaptive Boosting) adjusts weights of incorrectly classified instances, forcing subsequent classifiers to focus on difficult cases. Unlike gradient boosting which fits to residuals, AdaBoost modifies sample weights. Both are boosting methods but use different strategies for sequential learning.[1] [6] [3] [8] [4]

34. Explain the difference between generative and discriminative models.

Generative models learn joint probability P(x,y) and can generate new data samples (Naive Bayes, HMM)[4] [8] [2]. Discriminative models learn conditional probability P(y|x) directly for classification (Logistic Regression, SVM)[1] [6]. Generative models require more data but can handle missing features better[3] [14].

35. What is the kernel trick in SVM?

The kernel trick allows SVM to operate in high-dimensional feature spaces without explicitly computing coordinates in that space. Kernel functions compute dot products in transformed space: K(x_i, x_j) = φ(x_i)·φ(x_j). Common kernels transform linearly non-separable data into separable form in higher dimensions.[6] [3] [8] [4] [1]

Unsupervised Learning (Questions 36-45)

36. What is k-means clustering and how does it work?

k-means partitions data into k clusters by minimizing within-cluster sum of squares. Algorithm: initialize k centroids randomly, assign points to nearest centroid, update centroids to cluster means, repeat until convergence. Requires pre-specifying k and assumes spherical clusters.[3] [8] [4] [1] [6]

37. How do you choose the optimal number of clusters in k-means?

Methods include Elbow method (plot inertia vs k, look for "elbow"), Silhouette analysis (measures cluster cohesion and separation), Gap statistic (compares within-cluster dispersion to random data), and domain knowledge. Cross-validation can also help by testing clustering stability.[8] [4] [1] [6] [3]

38. What is hierarchical clustering?

Hierarchical clustering creates tree-like cluster structure without pre-specifying number of clusters. Agglomerative (bottom-up) starts with individual points and merges closest clusters. Divisive (top-down) starts with all points and recursively splits. Linkage criteria determine cluster distance: single, complete, average, Ward.[4] [1] [6] [3] [8]

39. Explain DBSCAN clustering.

DBSCAN (Density-Based Spatial Clustering) groups points in high-density areas and marks outliers in low-density regions. Key parameters: eps (neighborhood radius) and min_samples (minimum points for core point). Advantages: finds arbitrary-shaped clusters, identifies outliers, no need to specify cluster count.[1] [6] [3] [8] [4]

40. What is Principal Component Analysis (PCA)?

PCA reduces dimensionality by finding orthogonal components that maximize variance. It projects data onto lower-dimensional space while preserving maximum information. Components are eigenvectors of covariance matrix, ordered by explained variance. Useful for visualization, noise reduction, and feature extraction.[16] [6] [8] [4] [1]

41. How do you choose the number of components in PCA?

Methods include explained variance ratio (cumulative variance ≥ 85-95%), scree plot (look for elbow), Kaiser criterion (eigenvalues > 1), and cross-validation on downstream tasks. Domain requirements and computational constraints also influence the choice.[16] [6] [8] [4] [1]

42. What is the difference between PCA and LDA?

PCA is unsupervised dimensionality reduction maximizing variance, while LDA (Linear Discriminant Analysis) is supervised method maximizing class separability. PCA finds directions of maximum variance regardless of labels, LDA finds directions that best separate classes. LDA requires labeled data and produces at most C-1 components for C classes.[16] [6] [8] [4] [1]

43. What is t-SNE and when do you use it?

t-SNE (t-distributed Stochastic Neighbor Embedding) is non-linear dimensionality reduction technique for visualization. It preserves local structure by minimizing divergence between probability distributions in high and low dimensions. Excellent for visualizing clusters in 2D/3D but computationally expensive and not suitable for new data projection.[6] [16] [8] [4] [1]

44. Explain anomaly detection techniques.

Anomaly detection identifies unusual patterns deviating from normal behavior. Statistical methods use z-scores, isolation forests isolate anomalies through random partitioning, one-class SVM learns normal data boundary, autoencoders reconstruct normal data poorly for anomalies. Choice depends on data type and anomaly characteristics.[3] [8] [4] [1] [6]

45. What is association rule mining?

Association rule mining discovers frequent patterns and relationships in transactional data. Rules have form "if A then B" with support (frequency of itemset), confidence (reliability of rule), and lift (strength of association) metrics. Apriori and FP-Growth are common algorithms for market basket analysis.[8] [4] [1] [6] [3]

Feature Engineering & Data Preprocessing (Questions 46-55)

46. What is feature engineering and why is it important?

Feature engineering involves creating, transforming, and selecting features to improve model performance. It includes domain-specific knowledge incorporation, handling missing values, encoding categorical variables, scaling numerical features, and creating interaction terms. Good features often matter more than algorithm choice.[15] [18] [17] [19] [16] [4] [6]

47. How do you handle missing data?

Strategies include deletion (listwise/pairwise), imputation (mean, median, mode, forward/backward fill), model-based imputation (k-NN, regression), and multiple imputation. Choice depends on missingness mechanism (MCAR, MAR, MNAR), data amount, and domain context.[15] [4] [1] [6] [8]

48. What are different encoding techniques for categorical variables?

One-hot encoding creates binary columns for each category, label encoding assigns integers to categories, target encoding uses target variable statistics, and binary encoding converts categories to binary representations. Choice depends on cardinality, ordinality, and algorithm requirements.[18] [15] [16] [4] [6]

49. How do you handle high-cardinality categorical features?

Techniques include target encoding (mean target per category), frequency encoding (category occurrence count), embedding learning (neural network embeddings), grouping rare categories, and hash encoding. Regularization helps prevent overfitting with target encoding.[17] [18] [19] [15] [16]

50. What is feature scaling and which techniques do you know?

Feature scaling normalizes feature ranges for algorithm performance. StandardScaler (z-score): (x-μ)/σ, MinMaxScaler: (x-min)/(max-min), RobustScaler: uses median and IQR to handle outliers, Normalizer: scales samples to unit norm. Distance-based algorithms require scaling.[17] [15] [16] [4] [1] [6] [8]

51. How do you detect and handle outliers?

Detection methods include statistical (z-score, IQR), visualization (box plots, scatter plots), and algorithmic approaches (Isolation Forest, Local Outlier Factor). Handling strategies: removal, transformation (log, sqrt), winsorization (capping), robust statistics, or separate modeling.[14] [4] [1] [6] [8]

52. What is feature selection and what are the main approaches?

Feature selection chooses relevant features to improve performance and interpretability. Filter methods use statistical tests (correlation, chi-square, mutual information), wrapper methods use model performance (forward/backward selection, RFE), embedded methods integrate selection in training (Lasso, Random Forest importance).[18] [19] [15] [17] [16]

53. Explain the difference between filter, wrapper, and embedded feature selection.

Filter methods evaluate features independently using statistical measures, fast but ignore feature interactions. Wrapper methods use ML algorithms to evaluate feature subsets, slower but consider interactions. Embedded methods perform selection during model training (L1 regularization), balancing speed and accuracy.[19] [15] [18] [17] [16] [4] [8]

54. How do you create polynomial features?

Polynomial features create interaction terms and higher-order terms: x_1, x_2, x_1^2, x_2^2, x_1x_2 for degree 2. They capture non-linear relationships in linear models but increase dimensionality rapidly. Regularization is essential to prevent overfitting with polynomial features.[15] [17] [16] [4] [1]

55. What is feature hashing and when do you use it?

Feature hashing (hashing trick) maps features to fixed-size vector using hash function, handling high-dimensional sparse features efficiently. Common in text processing and online learning where feature space is large and unknown. May cause hash collisions but works well in practice. [18] [19] [17] [15] [16]

Model Evaluation & Validation (Questions 56-65)

56. What is the difference between accuracy, precision, and recall?

Accuracy is overall correctness: (TP+TN)/(TP+TN+FP+FN). Precision is positive prediction accuracy: TP/(TP+FP). Recall is positive case coverage: TP/(TP+FN). Each serves different purposes: accuracy for balanced datasets, precision when false positives are costly, recall when false negatives are costly.[12] [13] [14] [4] [1] [6] [8]

57. When would you use accuracy vs F1-score?

Use accuracy when classes are balanced and all errors have equal cost. Use F1-score for imbalanced datasets or when you need balance between precision and recall. F1-score is harmonic mean giving equal weight to precision and recall, better for minority class evaluation. [7] [12] [13] [14] [4] [1] [6] [8]

58. What is stratified sampling and why is it important?

Stratified sampling maintains class distribution proportions across train/validation/test splits. It ensures each subset represents overall population, particularly important for imbalanced datasets. Prevents biased evaluation where train/test have different class distributions. [10] [4] [1] [6] [8]

59. Explain different cross-validation techniques.

k-fold CV divides data into k subsets, training on k-1 and testing on 1. Stratified k-fold maintains class proportions. Leave-one-out uses single sample for testing. Time series uses temporal splits. Repeated CV runs multiple k-fold iterations for robust estimates. [10] [4] [1] [6] [8]

60. What is learning curve and what does it tell you?

Learning curve plots model performance vs training set size, showing how performance changes with more data. High bias (underfitting): low performance even with more data. High variance (overfitting): large gap between training and validation curves. Helps determine if more data would improve performance. [9] [4] [1] [6] [8]

61. How do you handle imbalanced datasets?

Techniques include resampling (SMOTE, undersampling, oversampling), cost-sensitive learning (class weights, focal loss), algorithmic approaches (ensemble methods), and evaluation metric changes (precision, recall, F1, AUC). Choice depends on imbalance degree and domain constraints. [12] [14] [4] [6] [8]

62. What is SMOTE and how does it work?

SMOTE (Synthetic Minority Oversampling Technique) generates synthetic samples by interpolating between minority class instances and their k-nearest neighbors. It creates new samples along line segments connecting minority instances, addressing class imbalance without simple duplication. [14] [4] [1] [6] [8]

63. What are the differences between classification and regression metrics?

Classification metrics (accuracy, precision, recall, F1, AUC) evaluate discrete predictions. Regression metrics (MAE, MSE, RMSE, R^2) evaluate continuous predictions. Classification focuses on correct category assignment, regression on prediction magnitude accuracy. [13] [10] [4] [1] [6] [14] [8]

64. What is AUC-ROC and when is it useful?

AUC-ROC measures classifier's ability to distinguish between classes across all threshold settings. AUC near 1.0 indicates excellent performance, 0.5 indicates random performance. Particularly useful for binary classification with balanced datasets and when you need threshold-independent metric.[13] [4] [1] [14] [8]

65. How do you evaluate clustering algorithms?

Internal metrics: silhouette score (cluster cohesion and separation), inertia (within-cluster sum of squares), Calinski-Harabasz index. External metrics (when ground truth available): adjusted rand index, normalized mutual information. Visual inspection through dimensionality reduction also helps assess cluster quality.[4] [1] [6] [14] [8]

Advanced Topics & Practical Applications (Questions 66-80)

66. What is transfer learning and when do you use it?

Transfer learning leverages knowledge from pre-trained models on related tasks, especially useful with limited training data. Common in computer vision (ImageNet features) and NLP (BERT, GPT). Approaches include feature extraction (freeze pre-trained layers) and fine-tuning (adjust pre-trained weights).[2] [1] [6] [8] [4]

67. How do you handle time series data in machine learning?

Time series requires temporal considerations: use time-based splits for validation, create lag features, handle seasonality and trends, consider stationarity. Techniques include ARIMA for forecasting, sliding window approaches, and time-aware cross-validation. Avoid data leakage from future information.[2] [1] [6] [8] [4]

68. What is A/B testing and how does it relate to machine learning?

A/B testing compares two versions to determine which performs better, often used to evaluate ML model improvements in production. Statistical significance testing determines if differences are meaningful. ML models can be A/B tested for business metrics, not just accuracy.[21] [1] [6] [8] [4]

69. How do you deploy machine learning models in production?

Deployment involves model serialization (pickle, joblib), API creation (Flask, FastAPI), containerization (Docker), monitoring (drift detection, performance tracking), and scaling considerations. MLOps practices include version control, automated testing, and continuous integration.[2] [1] [6] [8] [4]

70. What is model drift and how do you detect it?

Model drift occurs when data distribution or relationships change over time, degrading model performance. Data drift: input distribution changes. Concept drift: relationship between inputs and outputs changes. Detection through statistical tests, performance monitoring, and distribution comparisons.[1] [2] [6] [8] [4]

71. How do you optimize hyperparameters?

Methods include grid search (exhaustive search over parameter grid), random search (random sampling), Bayesian optimization (probabilistic model of objective function), and evolutionary algorithms. Cross-validation evaluates each configuration. Automated tools like Optuna and Hyperopt help.[20] [2] [6] [8] [4]

72. What is AutoML and what are its benefits?

AutoML automates machine learning pipeline including feature engineering, algorithm selection, hyperparameter tuning, and model evaluation. Benefits: democratizes ML access, reduces development time, often finds competitive solutions. Limitations: less control, interpretability challenges, computational cost.[2] [6] [8] [4] [1]

73. Explain the concept of ensemble methods in detail.

Ensemble methods combine multiple models for better performance than individual models. Voting: majority vote or averaging. Bagging: parallel training with bootstrap samples (Random Forest). Boosting: sequential training correcting previous errors (XGBoost). Stacking: meta-learner combines base model predictions.[6] [3] [8] [4] [1]

74. What is the difference between batch and online learning?

Batch learning trains on entire dataset at once, suitable for static data and when computational resources allow. Online learning updates model incrementally with new data, suitable for streaming data, large datasets, or changing distributions. Online learning enables real-time adaptation.[8] [4] [1] [2] [6]

75. How do you handle multi-class classification problems?

Strategies include one-vs-rest (binary classifier for each class), one-vs-one (binary classifier for each pair), and direct multi-class algorithms. Evaluation uses macro/micro-averaged metrics. Some algorithms naturally handle multi-class (Decision Trees, Random Forest), others need modification.[14] [4] [1] [6] [8]

76. What is recommendation system and what are the main approaches?

Recommendation systems suggest items to users based on preferences. Content-based filtering uses item features, collaborative filtering uses user-item interactions (memory-based or matrix factorization), hybrid approaches combine both. Cold start problem occurs with new users/items.[5] [21] [4] [6] [8]

77. How do you handle text data in machine learning?

Text preprocessing includes tokenization, lowercase conversion, stop word removal, stemming/lemmatization. Feature extraction uses bag-of-words, TF-IDF, n-grams, or embeddings (Word2Vec, GloVe). Modern approaches use transformer models like BERT for contextual understanding. [4] [1] [2] [6] [8]

78. What is dimensionality reduction and why is it important?

Dimensionality reduction reduces feature count while preserving important information. Benefits: visualization, noise reduction, computational efficiency, curse of dimensionality mitigation. Linear methods (PCA, LDA) vs non-linear methods (t-SNE, UMAP). Choice depends on data characteristics and goals. [16] [1] [6] [8] [4]

79. How do you interpret machine learning models?

Model interpretability techniques include feature importance (Random Forest, permutation importance), SHAP values (unified approach to feature attribution), LIME (local explanations), partial dependence plots, and model-agnostic methods. Global vs local interpretability serves different needs. [1] [2] [6] [8] [4]

80. What ethical considerations should you keep in mind with machine learning?

Key ethical issues include bias and fairness (ensuring equal treatment across groups), privacy and data protection, transparency and explainability, accountability for decisions, and potential societal impacts. Bias can come from training data, algorithm design, or deployment context. Fairness metrics help evaluate equal treatment. [2] [6] [8] [4] [1]

These 80 questions represent the comprehensive knowledge areas that interviewers consistently test across all ML positions. Mastering both theoretical understanding and practical implementation of these concepts will significantly enhance your interview performance and demonstrate deep expertise in machine learning. [6] [4] [1] [2]

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