

HR Questions & Key Points

(Manual - I)

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HR Questions & Key Points

Self Introduction

a. Structuring your introduction

- *Beginning* - If you're wondering how to start an introduction about yourself, the best thing to do is keep it simple. Greet your conversation partner or audience, state your name, and mention why you're there, if relevant.
- *Background* - Let your audience know where you're from and what you've been up to recently. Customize this to the situation - for eg: where you went to school and your profession will be your focus, for now.
- *Skills* - In professional settings, mention any relevant skills and offer context by discussing why you're mentioning them or where you gained them.
- *Achievements* - In most professional intros, it's helpful to note things you've accomplished.
- *Try to end with a question* - A great way to show your interest in the person on the other end is to complete your introduction with a question. In a professional setting, this might be asking something about a job description or enquiring about the next steps.

b. How to create a great self-introduction

- *Tell a story* - Instead of summarizing easily accessible online information about you, engage your audience by sprinkling in new details and formatting your intro like a story.
 - *Communicate your values* - Communication skills are essential to making a good first impression. Demonstrate your confidence with good posture, show your values by remaining sincere, and express your consideration for others by actively listening.
 - *Showcase your personality* - Even in professional settings, your audience wants to know what kind of person you are. A hiring manager cares about your qualifications but also wants to ensure you'll get along with your coworkers and enjoy the company culture.
 - For more reference:
 1. <https://www.betterup.com/blog/how-to-introduce-yourself>
 2. <https://techjobsfair.com/introduce-yourself-professionally>
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What are your Strengths?

5 Tips to Talk About Your Strengths

- *Be relevant* - You should mention strengths that are relevant to the job you're applying for. Take a close look at the job description and company values to identify them. Make sure to mention them when asked about your strengths (as long as you possess them, of course).
- *Back up your claims* - To make an impression, back up everything you say with evidence. Instead of saying "I'm a great leader," say something like: "I'd say my strength is being a team

leader. In my previous role, I led a team of five that increased company sales by 20% in seven months.”

- *Show humility* - While it’s beneficial to “show off” your strengths, it’s just as important to show humility and acknowledge you still have room - and willingness - to learn and grow.
 - *Be authentic* - Don’t exaggerate or embellish your strengths and, most importantly, don’t lie about them. Sooner or later, your employer will know and that’s not a situation that you want to be in.
 - *Emphasize how your strengths can benefit the company* - As much as you can, tie your strengths back to how they can benefit the company and contribute to its success. For example, “Creativity is one of my biggest strengths and I think it will help me create more successful and engaging advertising campaigns for your products.”
 - When answering the interview question: What Are Your STRENGTHS? Or, What is Your GREATEST STRENGTH? It is ESSENTIAL to prepare ahead of time, so DO NOT get caught off guard. Keep your answer RELEVANT to the job role you are interviewing for so you can demonstrate to the hiring manager how you will be an ASSET to their company.
 - For more reference:
 1. <https://novoresume.com/career-blog/what-are-your-strengths-and-weaknesses-interview-questions>
 2. <https://careers.publichealth.iu.edu/blog/2023/05/11/what-are-your-strengths-15-greatest-strengths-with-sample-answers/>
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What is your greatest weakness?

“What are your weaknesses?” can be challenging to answer. But it’s not just an obstacle to clear or a pitfall to avoid. It’s an opportunity to show the employer how you can learn from constructive criticism, how you’re willing to make changes when you face challenges, and how you can pick yourself up and dust yourself off when you falter.

a. What to avoid in your answer

- Your first reaction may be to say, “I have no weaknesses, and nothing will keep me from doing a great job.” But no one’s perfect, and hiring managers know that. If you respond to this question with an enthusiastic denial, the interviewer will probably write you off as someone with a lack of self-awareness or someone who is overconfident or unable to understand and learn from their mistakes.
- Hiring managers are also wise to responses that attempt to frame a positive trait as a weakness in a job interview. Classic examples include “I’m a perfectionist,” “I’m competitive,” and “I just work too hard.” Interviewers are on to these stock answers, but they can still be effective if you add details relevant to the job to show you’ve put real thought into it.

Vague Non-Answers	Statements like, “I’m a perfectionist,” or “I work too hard” are common stock responses that show a lack of forethought about the question.
Cocky Answers	Saying, “I can’t think of any weaknesses” makes it seem like you are dodging the question. It can also make

	the interviewer think that you have a smug attitude and are unwilling to reflect on your shortcomings.
Self-Sabotaging Answers	Answers that highlight your inability to do a necessary task for the job can disqualify you from the hiring process. Avoid bringing up weaknesses that affect your ability to perform essential duties.

- **There are two steps to giving a strong reply when an interviewer asks about your weaknesses:**

Step 1- *Recognize a Legitimate Weakness:*

Identify a personal trait or issue that has been difficult for you to overcome in the past. Make sure this weakness is relevant to the job you are applying for.

Step 2- *Discuss Plans for Improvement:*

Talk about the methods you use to overcome your weaknesses and discuss how those skills will make you a better employee.

- **Don't choose a job skill that's related to the role.** For example, if the job description says you need to know Ruby on Rails, you wouldn't want to say you're terrible at Ruby on Rails!

- **The trick is to pick a weakness that won't directly impact your ability to do the job** unless you can explain how you're improving that weakness.

- For more reference:

1. <https://www.cloverhr.co.uk/6-great-answers-to-the-what-are-your-weaknesses-interview-question/>

2. <https://www.roberthalf.com/us/en/insights/landing-job/how-to-talk-about-your-weaknesses-in-a-job-interview>
 3. <https://www.theforage.com/blog/interview-questions/weakness-job-interview#:~:text=Yes%2C%20but%20with%20care.,one%20you're%20interviewing%20for.>
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Why should we hire you?

When the interviewer asks “Why should we hire you?”, they want to measure exactly how qualified you are for the job and what makes you a good fit for the company.

Step 1 - *Show off your skills and experience*

Step 2 - *Highlight your ability to fit in and work in a team*

Step 3 - *Explain how you can help the company do more*

Step 4 - *Express dedication and enthusiasm*

Step 5 - *Be honest*

If it's a fresher, you can answer this question by emphasizing your relevant skills, qualities, and strengths that make you a strong candidate for the job. Some possible points to include in your answer are:

- Your strong work ethic and willingness to learn new things.
- Your relevant academic background or training, such as coursework or extracurricular activities related to the job.
- Any relevant work experience, even if it's not directly related to the job, such as internships or volunteer work.

What to avoid in your answer (especially if you're a fresher)

- *Don't say things like "I need a job" or "I need money."* While it's true that you may be looking for a job for these reasons, they aren't compelling reasons for the interviewer to hire you.
 - *Avoid being negative or complaining about previous experiences*, such as saying things like "I was unhappy in my previous job" or "I didn't like my manager."
 - *Don't over-emphasize your salary expectations or other benefits.* This can make it seem like you're only interested in the job for the money.
 - *Don't make exaggerated claims about your skills or abilities*, such as saying things like "I'm the best candidate for this job" or "I can do this job better than anyone else."
 - For more reference:
 1. <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/how-answer-why-should-we-hire-you-sindhu-chandra/>
 2. <https://shailesh-sharma.medium.com/winning-answer-why-should-we-hire-you-f243fb4ee2a8>
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What inspired you to pursue a career in software development?

(or in other words, What made you decide to choose the software development field?)

If a fresher has jumped from a different field to pursue a career in software development, they can answer this question by discussing what inspired them to make the switch. Here are a few possible points to include in your answer:

- You were interested in the challenge and problem-solving nature of software development.
- You were inspired by the potential impact that software can have on people's lives.
- You were drawn to the creativity and innovation involved in software development.
- You saw software development as a growing and dynamic field with many opportunities.
- You saw software development as a way to make a difference in the world by creating products that improve people's lives.
- You wanted to work in a field that allows for constant learning and growth, which is something that software development offers.
- You were inspired by the collaborative nature of software development and the opportunities it provides for working with other talented individuals.

What to avoid in your answer (when discussing the reasons for switching careers)

It's important to avoid mentioning any negative experiences or expressing any dissatisfaction with your previous career. Here are a few things to avoid saying in an HR interview:

- *Avoid complaining about your previous career or employer.* Instead, focus on the positive aspects of your new career choice.
- *Don't say things like "I hated my previous career" or "I couldn't stand my old boss."* This can make you appear negative or difficult to work with.
- *Don't say things like "I didn't know what I wanted to do when I started my previous career."* This can make it seem like you lack focus or direction.
- *Avoid saying things like "I didn't realize how hard my previous career would be."* This can make you appear inexperienced or unprepared.
- *Avoid saying things like "I just wanted to try something new."* This can make it seem like you lack commitment or focus.
- *Avoid mentioning financial motivations as your primary reason for switching careers.*
- *Avoid saying things like "I just wanted to make more money."* This can make it seem like you're only interested in the job for the salary.
- *Avoid talking about how you didn't like the work environment in your previous career.* This can make it seem like you're difficult to work with or that you're not adaptable to different work environments.
- For more reference:
 1. <https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/interviewing/why-do-you-want-to-be-software-developer>
 2. <https://www.routerfreak.com/why-are-you-interested-in-career-as-software-developer/>

How do you handle Stress?

a. Reflect on how you address stress

- Think about how you handle stress and which strategies help you remain calm.

Common stress management strategies include:

- Staying positive.
- Using stress as a motivator.
- Accepting what you can't control.
- Practicing relaxation methods, like yoga or meditation.
- Choosing healthy habits.
- Learning how to manage time better.
- Making time for your personal life.
- Talking to a mental health professional you trust.

b. Share examples of how you manage stress

- In your answer, share a time when you overcame stress in a professional setting.
- Discuss which specific strategies you used and how they led to a positive end result.

Although you can discuss overcoming an obstacle, make sure to show you were always in control of your stress levels.

c. Show you can handle multiple tasks at once

When answering this question, expect the interviewer to ask follow-up questions to get a better gauge on how you handle stress. They may include the following:

- Are there any benefits to stress?
- Does stress ever cloud your judgment?

- How do you handle stress when you need to make tough decisions?
- How do you manage stress when it involves other people?

What to avoid when answering 'How do you handle stress?'

- *Avoid saying things like "I don't handle stress well" or "I get overwhelmed easily."* This can make you appear unprepared or unable to handle challenging situations.
- *Don't say things like "I avoid stress by taking time off."* This can make it seem like you're not a hard worker or that you don't take your job seriously.

Reason:

Taking time off during stress can be a double-edged sword when it comes to HR's perspective. On the positive side, it can show that you prioritize self-care and recognize the importance of taking breaks to avoid burnout. On the negative side, it can be perceived as a lack of commitment or dedication to the job. It really depends on the context and how you frame your answer.

If you're talking about taking time off during periods of stress, it's important to emphasize that you use this time to recharge and refocus so that you can be more productive when you return to work.

- *Avoid saying things like "I get stressed out easily."* This can make it seem like you're unable to cope with challenges or that you're easily overwhelmed.
- *Avoid mentioning negative coping mechanisms*, such as drinking or partying, as a way to deal with stress.
- *Avoid saying things like "I've never experienced stress in my life."* This can make you appear inexperienced or unprepared for the realities of a job.

- For more reference:
 - 1. <https://www.glassdoor.com/blog/guide/how-do-you-handle-stress/>
 - 2. <https://www.topinterview.com/interview-advice/how-to-answer-how-do-you-handle-stress-question>
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How would you describe yourself?

The question “*How would you describe yourself?*” is one of the most commonly asked interview questions, and it offers an excellent opportunity for candidates to showcase their personal and professional qualities. To answer this question effectively, candidates should focus on their strengths and relevant experiences that align with the position they are applying for. It is also essential to provide specific examples of how these qualities have helped them succeed in their past roles. This question can also be considered to be another version of “Introduce yourself” with a slight variation.

Here are some tips to keep in mind:

- *Be honest:* While it’s tempting to paint yourself as the perfect candidate, honesty is always the best policy. You don’t have to reveal your weaknesses, but be genuine about your strengths and what you can bring to the role.
- *Focus on relevant skills:* Think about the skills and experience you have that relate to the job you’re interviewing for. Highlight these skills and explain how they make you a good fit for the position.
- *Be concise:* Keep your answer short and to the point. You don’t want to ramble on or give too much information, which can make you come across as unfocused.

- *Use examples:* Provide concrete examples to back up your claims. This can help you demonstrate your skills and experiences and show the interviewer that you're a good fit for the job.

What to avoid in your answer

- *Avoid being overly vague or generic in your answer.* Instead, try to give specific examples of your strengths or qualities.
- *Don't be too self-deprecating or modest in your answer.* While it's important to be humble, you also want to showcase your skills and abilities.

Reason:

If you're too self-deprecating or modest in your answer to the question "How do you describe yourself?" in front of HR, it can make you appear unsure of your own abilities or unconfident. This can be a problem for several reasons:

1. First, it can make the HR person question your suitability for the job. If you can't confidently talk about your own strengths and abilities, how can they trust you to handle the responsibilities of the role?
 2. Second, it can give the HR person the impression that you're not really interested in the job.
- *Avoid using negative or self-critical language when describing yourself.* Instead, focus on your strengths and what you bring to the table.

- For more reference:

1. <https://www.jobsite.co.uk/advice/how-to-answer-how-would-you-describe-yourself-interview-question>
2. <https://www.multirecruit.com/knowledge-base/interview-question-how-would-you-describe-yourself-with-examples/>

Where do you see yourself in the next 5 years?

When an interviewer asks you, "Where do you see yourself in five years?", they want to know one thing -- whether your goals align well with the potential career path of the role for which you're applying.

Ultimately, they're asking this question to gauge whether you'll likely want to stay with the company for a long time and whether the company can fulfill some of your long-term needs.

What to avoid in your answer

Here are a few things to avoid saying when answering the question "Where do you see yourself in the next 5 years?" in an HR interview:

- *Don't say things like "I don't know" or "I haven't thought about it."* This can make you seem unprepared or uninterested in the job.

Reason:

There are a few potential drawbacks to answering "I don't know" or "I haven't thought about it"

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1. It can make the HR person wonder if the candidate has any specific goals or ambitions, which is an important trait for many employers.
2. It can make the HR person question the candidate's ability to set and achieve goals, which is a key skill for any employee.
3. Finally, it can make the candidate seem unprepared or unprofessional, which is a turn-off for many employers.

- *Avoid being too vague or general in your answer.* Instead, try to be specific about what you hope to accomplish and how you plan to get there.

- *Don't say that you see yourself in a different industry or position within the company in 5 years -*

Reason:

If a candidate says that they see themselves in a different industry or position within the company, it can raise some red flags for the interviewer. Here's why:

1. First, it can make the interviewer wonder if the candidate is truly committed to the current job and if they're only planning to stay for a short time. This can make the interviewer hesitant to invest time and resources in training and developing the candidate if they might leave soon.

2. Second, it can make the interviewer question the candidate's loyalty to the company.

- For more reference:

1. <https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/where-do-you-see-yourself-5-years>
2. <https://www.glassdoor.com/blog/guide/where-do-you-see-yourself-in-5-years/>

What motivates you?

When interviewers ask “What motivates you?” they are trying to learn more about what drives and inspires you. This question can be challenging to answer, but it's a great opportunity to share your values and aspirations with the interviewer.

Your answer to this question should be honest and reflect what truly motivates you. To prepare for this question, think about what drives you at work and what motivates you to do your best. Some common motivators include challenging work that allows you to learn and grow, feeling appreciated by your colleagues, or making a difference in the lives of others.

Many different factors can motivate people at work. Some examples include:

- Challenging assignments that allow you to learn and grow
- A positive and supportive team environment
- Feeling like you are making a difference in the lives of others
- A clear path for career growth and advancement
- Compensation and benefits that are competitive and fair
- Flexible hours or the ability to work from home
- To effectively answer this question, it is important to be truthful and consider what truly motivates you.



The Best Way To Answer This Question

1. One of the best ways to answer this question is by using specific examples. This can help the interviewer get a better sense of what drives and inspires you at work, as well as what kind of role or environment would be a good fit.

2. Additionally, it can be helpful to think about what kinds of assignments or projects you find most engaging, as this can help you provide a more detailed and targeted response during the interview.

What To Avoid Saying

- *Providing an overly vague or generic response.* It is important to be thoughtful and specific when responding and avoid giving answers that lack detail.

- *Giving answers that are not relevant to the job or company you are interviewing for.* For example, if you are applying for a job as a teacher, it would be important to focus on what motivates you when working with students, rather than what motivates you in other aspects of your life.

- *Giving negative answers, or answers that could reflect poorly on you as a candidate.* For example, avoid saying that you are motivated by money or power, as this could give the impression that you are not motivated by the work itself or by making a difference in the lives of others.

- For more reference:

1. <https://www.thebalancemoney.com/job-interview-question-what-motivates-you-2061272>
2. <https://cultivatedculture.com/what-motivates-you/>

How do you work under pressure?

What employers want to hear are some examples of how your ability to handle pressure has helped you to overcome obstacles and provide value for your previous employers. In addition, they're interested in learning about your overall approach to managing pressure at work.

To prepare your response to this type of question prior to your interview, you first need to spend some time thinking about all the ways you manage pressure and stress.

The Best Way To Answer This Question

- Focus on a specific example of working under pressure
- *Use the STAR method to tell a story*

The STAR method is a great way to formulate responses to interview questions, so we recommend employing it whenever possible. It's a simple and straightforward storytelling technique that you can use to answer almost any interview question

- *Mention your stress management skills*

You should also take the opportunity to describe some of your favorite and most reliable stress management skills. Every job can be stressful at times, and that stress can increase workplace pressure if you're not adept at managing it properly.

- *Maintain a confident body posture and tone of voice*

Finally, don't neglect your body language and vocal presentation. Unless you look and sound confident, your example of working under pressure is likely to fall flat with the interviewer.

What To Avoid Saying

- Don't say things like "I don't do well under pressure" or "I tend to panic when things get stressful." This can make you seem like you don't have the ability to handle challenging situations.
- Avoid being too vague in your answer, such as saying "I just try my best" or "I do whatever needs to be done."
- Don't brag or over-exaggerate your ability to work under pressure.
- For more reference:
 1. <https://getmarlee.com/blog/work-under-pressure>
 2. <https://www.topinterview.com/interview-advice/interview-question-how-do-you-work-under-pressure>

