

Handling questions in job interviews

COMMUNICATION

LEVEL

Upper-intermediate

NUMBER

EN_BE_3A12X

LANGUAGE

English

lingoda






Goals

- Can recognise and understand difficult questions typically asked in a job interview
- Can use advanced strategies and phrases to handle questions and stay calm during an interview





In job interviews you have the opportunity to **demonstrate** that your **suitability, knowledge** and **experience** is the right fit for an employer.

There are many ways to answer questions in an interview, and some are definitely more **effective** than others.

Let's learn the art of answering questions that you might **come across** in an interview.

job interviews

Job interviews can be stressful, but they are much easier with proper **preparation**.

One of the methods of preparation involves studying **common interview questions** and **preparing responses** beforehand.



Preparing in advance will help you feel more **composed** and **confident** in the interview itself.



Common interview questions

What is your greatest professional achievement?

Where do you see yourself in five years?

What's your dream job?

Can you tell me a little bit about yourself?



Why are you leaving your current job?

Why do you want this job?

What are you looking for in a new position?

How did you hear about this position?



Common interview questions



Why should we hire you?

What do you consider to be your weaknesses?



What are your greatest professional strengths?

Do you have any questions for us?





Common interview questions

Can you think of any other common interview questions?





Match the question with the best response strategy

A

Summarise your qualifications and skills and link them to the position you are applying for.

B

Ask questions that show you have done your research and that show interest in the company and what they do.

C

Explain how you want to continue to grow within your field, keep learning and stay self-motivated.

D

Try to turn your weaknesses into positives. How have you tried to overcome them or used them to develop yourself further?

1. Where do you see yourself in five years?

2. What are some of your weaknesses?

3. Can you tell me a little bit about yourself?

4. Do you have any questions for us?

anecdotes

It is common in interviews to be asked to tell an **anecdote** or story which relates to your **skills** or **experience**. However, it can be difficult to bring the most **relevant** example to mind when you are **in the moment**.

Let's consider the two **anecdotal** requests below.



Tell us about a time you faced a professional challenge and how you dealt with it.



Tell us about a time you showed leadership.



Preparing to answer an anecdotal question

Imagine you are applying for a promotion (related to your current job).
Now consider the following question: *Tell me about a time you faced a professional challenge and how you dealt with it.*

Before you answer the question, read through and follow the steps below.



1

Think about the types of problems you are likely to face in the position you are applying for.

2

Think of a relevant problem you have dealt with – one that demonstrates skills that relate to the position.

3

Explain how you overcame it with sincerity and confidence. Humour can be helpful too.



Answer the question

Now answer the question:

Tell your teacher about a time
you faced a **professional
challenge** and how you **dealt
with it.**





Answer the question

What is the most difficult question you have ever been asked in a job interview?



Tricky questions

- Some questions are designed to be **tricky**. They are not asked to force you to fail, but instead to give interviewers a sense of your **suitability**.
- These sorts of questions can **expose elements** of a person's **character**, **convictions** and **beliefs**.



Spend some time before the interview thinking about how to answer **tricky** questions.



Answering tricky questions

- The basic rule for any **tricky** question is to find a way to **twist** or **spin** the answer around in order to **emphasise a strength or positive characteristic**.



Although you should **spin** your answers **positively**, they should also reflect **earnestness** and **honesty**.



Tricky questions

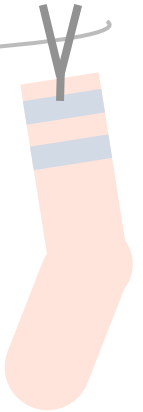
Look at the tricky questions below and answer the following questions:

- 1) What makes these questions difficult to answer?
- 2) What strategies would you employ in order to answer them?

■ What do you think your references would say about you?



■ Which part of the job description sounds most challenging and why?





Answering interview questions

**Analyse the questions and responses below.
Do you think the interviewee responded well? Justify your answer.**



Tell me about your dream job.

What I really want to do with my life is paint. I get lost in my oils for hours. Yes, my true passion lies on the canvas.



Where do you see yourself in five years?

In five years I can see myself in an upper-level of management within a company, making strong leadership decisions and garnering respect from my colleagues.



salary

Questions about salary can be among the hardest to answer without doing some **research**. You need to find out **how much the job is worth** and **how much your skills and experience are worth** to the employer.



Research this information before the interview to arrive at a **realistic offer**.

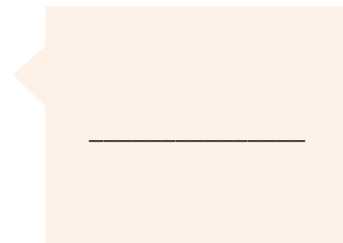


Questions about pay

You are interviewing for a job within your industry and you expect a competitive salary.

Explain how you would reply to the question below based on what you have just learnt and based on your own experience within your industry.

So, what sort of salary are you looking at?





Staying calm

- Being able to **calm your nerves** is important in interviews.
- Being **composed** makes it easier to answer questions in a calm manner, meaning it is less likely you will **panic** when faced with a difficult question.



Mindfulness techniques such as deep breathing can help you to **calm your nerves**.



Giving a confident answer

- It is important you appear **confident** and **calm** when answering questions.
- **Allowing yourself time to think** is useful. It is certainly not a good idea to try to answer a question **in a panic** or before you really know what you want to say.



Assertive body language can have a greater impact on your confidence than you think.



Tips for staying confident and calm

- It is completely normal to be more **nervous** than usual in an interview.
- Some of the tips below may be useful in order to **give yourself time to think** or to just **calm your nerves**.

- **Take a sip of water:** This allows you to think of a response, catch your breath or just calm your nerves. There is no need to rush.
- **Say a placeholder comment:** Phrases like *hmm, that's a good question* can be useful to give you a few moments to gather your thoughts.
- **Consider the interview as a conversation:** Try to maintain eye contact and remember they are probably anxious to make a good impression too.
- **Utilise the STOP method:** Stop what you are doing and focus your thoughts. Take a few deep breaths, observe how your body is feeling and then proceed.
- **Smile:** Smiling really does make you feel more confident, and also gives the interviewer a better impression of you.



Discuss

Discuss the importance of each of these practices when handling questions in a job interview.

staying calm

smiling

responding with confidence



Mind blank

You've been asked a question by an interviewer and your mind has gone blank. You are not sure what to answer.



What will you do next?

Explain some useful tips on how to remain calm and composed.



Listen carefully



The next slide will test your listening comprehension.



Take notes on what the candidate does well and what they could improve on for next time.

could improve

What was the trickiest part of the interview?





Discuss



Now discuss your notes with your teacher or classmates.



Reflect on the lesson

Take a moment to review any new **vocabulary, phrases, language structures** or **grammar points** you have come across for the first time in this lesson.

Review them with your teacher one more time to make sure you don't forget!





Answer key

Exercise p. 8
1c, 2d, 3a, 4b



Transcription

Exercise p. 25

Interviewer: Welcome to the interview! Tell me a little bit about yourself.

Applicant: I'm a recent graduate from Newtown Tech College. I've been working as an intern in some visionary startup companies and I'm now looking for a company with a shared vision to support them in their mission.

Interviewer: How would you add value to our company?

Applicant: During my experience as an intern I regularly worked overtime on a number of personal projects which ended up securing new funding and opportunities for the company.

Interviewer: That's great. What do you think is your greatest weakness?

Applicant: I don't have many that are relevant for this position. I can work too hard sometimes.

Interviewer: Ok, you will be sure to hear from us. Do you have any questions for us?

Applicant: No, I can't think of any. Thank you. When can I expect to hear from you?





Tricky questions

Write down three questions mentioned in the lesson that you think would be the hardest to answer.

Practise writing a successful response to each of them.

○
○
○

tricky question 1

What is your biggest weakness?

My biggest weakness is...

○
○



Write an e-mail

Write an e-mail to a friend giving them tips about answering tricky questions for an upcoming interview.

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□

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To: johnny@lingoda.com

Subject: Answering tricky questions in your interview

Hey Johnny,

Good luck in your interview next week. I thought I would send you some tips on how to answer tricky questions if they come up.

Firstly...



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