**So, tell me a little about yourself.**

I'd be very surprised if you haven't been asked this one at every interview. It's probably the most asked question because it sets the stage for the interview and it gets you talking. Be careful not to give the interviewer your life story here. You don't need to explain everything from birth to present day. Relevant facts about education, your career and your current life situation are fine.

The most often asked question in interviews. You need to have a short statement prepared in your mind. Be careful that it does not sound rehearsed. Limit it to work-related items unless instructed otherwise. Talk about things you have done and jobs you have held that relate to the position you are interviewing for. Start with the item farthest back and work up to the present.

**Why are you looking (or why did you leave you last job)?**

This should be a straightforward question to answer, but it can trip you up. Presumably you are looking for a new job (or any job) because you want to [advance your career](http://career) and get a position that allows you to grow as a person and an employee. It's not a good idea to mention money here, it can make you sound mercenary. And if you are in the unfortunate situation of having been downsized, stay positive and be as brief as possible about it. If you were fired, you'll need a good explanation. But once again, stay positive.

Stay positive regardless of the circumstances. Never refer to a major problem with management and never speak ill of supervisors, co- workers or the organization. If you do, you will be the one looking bad. Keep smiling and talk about leaving for a positive reason such as an opportunity, a chance to do something special or other forward- looking reasons.

Why left ABB?

Wanted to work in latest technologies and also in finance domain.

Why left TCS?

Promised to release from project after 1 year working as contractor. They could not keep up the promise. Also, it requires working late night. I’m looking for work life balance. I’m looking to work in product development finance company.

**What experience do you have in this field?**

Speak about specifics that relate to the position you are applying for. If you do not have specific experience, get as close as you can.

**Do you consider yourself successful?**

You should always answer yes and briefly explain why. A good explanation is that you have set goals, and you have met some and are on track to achieve the others.

**Tell me what you know about this company.**

Do your homework before you go to any interview. Whether it's being the VP of marketing or the mailroom clerk, you should know about the company or business you're going to work for. Has this company been in the news lately? Who are the people in the company you should know about? Do the background work, it will make you stand out as someone who comes prepared, and is genuinely interested in the company and the job.

**Why do you want to work at X Company?**

This should be directly related to the last question. Any research you've done on the company should have led you to the conclusion that you'd want to work there. After all, you're at the interview, right? Put some thought into this answer before you have your interview, mention your career goals and highlight forward-thinking goals and career plans.

This question is one reason to do some research on the organization before the interview. Find out where they have been and where they are going. What are the current issues and who are the major players?

**What relevant experience do you have?**

Hopefully if you're applying for this position you have bags of related experience, and if that's the case you should mention it all. But if you're switching careers or trying something a little different, your experience may initially not look like it's matching up. That's when you need a little honest creativity to match the experiences required with the ones you have. People skills are people skills after all, you just need to show how customer service skills can apply to internal management positions, and so on.

**If your previous co-workers were here, what would they say about you? Or what would your previous supervisor say your strongest point is?**

Ok, this is not the time for full disclosure. If some people from your past are going to say you're a boring A-hole, you don't need to bring that up. Stay positive, always, and maybe have a few specific quotes in mind. "They'd say I was a hard worker" or even better "John Doe has always said I was the most reliable, creative problem-solver he'd ever met."

Be prepared with a quote or two from co-workers. Either a specific statement or a paraphrase will work. Jill Clark, a co-worker at Smith Company, always said I was the hardest workers she had ever known. It is as powerful as Jill having said it at the interview herself.

There are numerous good possibilities: 

* *Energy,*
* *Loyalty*
* *Positive attitude,*
* *Leadership,*
* *Expertise,*
* *Initiative,*
* *Patience,*
* *Hard work,*
* *Creativity,*
* *Problem solver,*
* *ability to perform under pressure and meet tight deadlines,*
* *Positive Team Player*
* *A highly-motivated individual*
* *Confident, Proactive, Enthusiastic and willing to learn.*
* *Demonstrates initiative*
* *Dedicated and reliable*
* *Detail Oriented*
* *An effective communicator. Should have excellent written and verbal English language skills*
* *Capable of dealing with diversity*
* *Ability to work in a virtual team, across boundaries*
* *Results Driven*
* *Attention to detail*

**What major challenges and problems did you face? How did you handle them?**

When asked the job interview question "How did you handle a challenge?" be sure to include specific examples of how you handled a particular difficult situation. Discuss how you researched the issue and contributed to finding a solution. Examples of good responses include:

* During a difficult financial period, I was able to satisfactorily negotiate repayment schedules with multiple vendors.
* When the software development of our new product stalled, I coordinated the team which managed to get the schedule back on track. We were able to successfully troubleshoot the issues and solve the problems, within a very short period of time.
* A long-term client was about to take their business to a competitor. I met with the customer and was able to change how we handled the account on a day-to-day basis, in order to keep the business.

*My answer: Design of complex number library, Simplify interaction of objects using Façade pattern in layered architecture with Business Logic layer, Implement algorithms that is extendable using strategy pattern, Creation of objects using factory method while creating objects for different proxies of web services.*

**What Are Your Goals for the Future?**

The best way to respond to the interview question "What are your goals for the future?" or "Where do you see yourself in five years?" is to refer to the position and the company you are interviewing with.

Don't discuss your goals for returning to school or having a family, they are not relevant and could knock you out of contention for the job. Rather, you want to connect your answer to the job you are applying for. Examples of good responses include:

* My long-term goals involve growing with a company where I can continue to learn, take on additional responsibilities, and contribute as much of value as I can.
* I see myself as a top performing employee in a well-established organization, like this one. I plan on enhancing my skills and continuing my involvement in (related) professional associations.
* Once I gain additional experience, I would like to move on from a technical position to management.
* In the XYZ Corporation, what is a typical career path for someone with my skills and experiences?

The interviewer will often ask how you plan on achieving those goals. A good answer to this question will speak specifically about what you are going to accomplish and how you are going to accomplish it. Examples of good responses include:

* I plan on gaining additional skills by taking related classes and continuing my involvement with a variety of professional associations.
* I noticed that XYZ company (the company you are interviewing with) provides in-house training for employees and I would certainly be interested in taking classes that would be relevant.
* I will continue my professional development my participating in conferences, attending seminars, and continuing my education.

*My answer: Attending trainings/seminars/conferences on improvement in presentation skill, Communication skill, domain related trainings, new technical skills.*

**What Do People Most Often Criticize About You?**

It is asked to find out how sensitive to you are and how you accept criticism. There's no on-going criticism. I'm open to personal and professional growth and welcome the opportunity to improve.

If humour is appropriate, this is a good time to use it. Example: I have a teenage daughter - few things I do are okay on her radar screen.

**Do You Prefer to Work Independently or On a Team? Or Are you good at working in a team?**

When the interviewer asks "Do you prefer to work independently or on a team?" he or she wants to know if you're a team player or would rather work on your own.

I am equally comfortable working as a member of a team and independently. In researching the LMN company, your mission statement and the job description, I could see similarities to my previous position where there were some assignments that required a great deal of independent work and research and others where the team effort was most effective. As I said, I'm comfortable with both.

In high school, I enjoyed playing soccer and performing with the marching band. Each required a different kind of team play, but the overall goal of learning to be a member of a group was invaluable. I continued to grow as team member while on my sorority's debate team and through my advanced marketing class where we had numerous team assignments. I'm very comfortably working on a team, but I can also work independently, as well.

Unless you have the I.Q. of a houseplant, you'll always answer YES to this one. It's the only answer. How can anyone function inside an organization if they are a loner? You may want to mention what part you like to play in a team though; it's a great chance to explain that you're a natural leader.

**Are you a team player?**You are, of course, a team player. Be sure to have examples ready. Specifics that show you often perform for the good of the team rather than for yourself are good evidence of your team attitude. Do not brag; just say it in a matter-of-fact tone. This is a key point.

**What Motivates You?**

There isn't a right or wrong answer to [interview questions](http://jobsearch.about.com/od/interviewquestionsanswers/a/toughquest.htm) about what motivates you. The interviewer is trying to understand the key to your being successful in the job he is interviewing for, and wants to make sure it's a good fit. Consider, in advance of interviewing, what actually does motivate you and come up with some specific examples to share during the interview.

Your response will vary based on your background and experiences, but, you will want to share your enthusiasm and what you like(d) best about your job. Here are some examples:

* I was responsible for several projects where I directed development teams and implemented repeatable processes. The teams achieved 100% on-time delivery of software products. I was motivated both by the challenge of finishing the projects ahead of schedule and by managing the teams that achieved our goals.
* I've always been motivated by the desire to do a good job at whatever position I'm in. I want to excel and to be successful in my job, both for my own personal satisfaction and for my employer.
* I have always wanted to ensure that my company's clients get the best customer service I can provide. I've always felt that it's important, both to me personally, and for the company and the clients, to provide a positive customer experience.
* I have spent my career in sales, typically in commission-based positions, and compensation has always been a strong factor in motivating me to be the top salesperson at my prior employers.

The answer to this one is not money, even if it is. You should be motivated by life's noble pursuits. *You want recognition for a job well done. You want to become better at your job. You want to help others or be a leader in your field.*

**What Can You Contribute to the Company? Or why should we hire you?**

A typical interview question to discover how hiring you would benefit the company is "What can you contribute to this company?"

The best way to answer questions about your contributions to the company is to give examples of what you have accomplished in the past, and to relate them to what you can achieve in the future.

Describe specific examples of how effective you have been in your other positions, change you have implemented, and goals you have achieved. Talk about the depth and breadth of related experience that you have.

Also, relate your abilities to the employer's goals. You will want to let the interviewer know that you have the skills necessary to do the job they are hiring for, the ability effectively meet challenges, and the flexibility and diplomacy to work well with other employees and with management.

Sample Answers

* I'm a hard worker with the experience to get things done efficiently.
* I can contribute my organizational skills and my ability to work well in a group.
* I have the experience, contacts, and knowledge to contribute to the rapid growth of this business.
* Vision. I am experienced in the areas this company needs to grow, and my ability to plan ahead will help facilitate that growth.
* Able to supervise or support new staff members
* Very well past performance, ability to perform under pressure and meet tight deadlines
* To be part of interview panel and very well capable to conduct technical interviews related to .NET

As I'm sure you know, "because I'm great" or "I really need a job" are not good answers here. This is a time to give the employer a laundry list of your greatest talents that just so happen to match the job description. It's also good to avoid taking pot-shots at other potential candidates here. Focus on yourself and your talents, not other people's flaws.

Point out how your assets meet what the organization needs. Do not mention any other candidates to make a comparison.

**What were your responsibilities at your current (or last) positions?**

When you are asked questions related to your current or previous positions, it's important to be specific and to be positive about what you did in your previous position(s).

The best way to respond is to describe your responsibilities in detail and to connect them to the job you are interviewing for. Try to tie your responsibilities in with those listed in the job description for the new position. That way, the employer will see that you have the qualifications necessary to do the job. Focus most on your responsibilities that are directly related to the new job's requirements.

It's also important to be honest. Don't embellish your job, because you don't know who the hiring manager will be checking with when they check your references.

**What are the Most Difficult Decisions to Make?**

There is no right or wrong answer to questions like "What are the most difficult decisions to make?" or "Describe a difficult work situation / project and how you overcame it." These are [behavioural interview questions](http://jobsearch.about.com/cs/interviews/a/behavioral.htm) designed to discover how you handled certain situations. The logic behind these types of questions is that how you behaved in the past is a predictor of what you will do in the future.

Give concrete examples of difficult situations that actually happened at work. Then discuss what you did to solve the problem. Keep your answers positive ("Even though it was difficult when Jane Doe quit without notice, we were able to rearrange the department workload to cover the position until a replacement was hired.") and be specific. Itemize what you did and how you did it.

The best way to prepare for questions where you will need to recall events and actions is to refresh your memory and consider some special situations you have dealt with or projects you have worked on. You can use them to help frame responses. Prepare stories that illustrate times when you have successfully solved a difficult situation.

**Have you done anything to further your experience?**

This could include anything from night classes to hobbies and sports. If it's related, it's worth mentioning. Obviously anything to do with further education is great, but maybe you're spending time on a home improvement project to work on skills such as self-sufficiency, time management and motivation.

**What have you done to improve your knowledge in the last year?**

Try to include improvement activities that relate to the job. A wide variety of activities can be mentioned as positive self-improvement. Have some good ones handy to mention.

**Do you know anyone who works for us?**

Be aware of the policy on relatives working for the organization. This can affect your answer even though they asked about friends not relatives. Be careful to mention a friend only if they are well thought of.

**Where else have you applied?**

This is a good way to hint that you're in demand, without sounding like you're whoring yourself all over town. So, be honest and mention a few other companies but don't go into detail. The fact that you're seriously looking and keeping your options open is what the interviewer is driving at.

**How are you when you're working under pressure?**

Once again, there are a few ways to answer this but they should all be positive. You may work well under pressure, you may thrive under pressure, and you may actually PREFER working under pressure. If you say you crumble like aged blue cheese, this is not going to help you get your foot in the door.

**What's your greatest strength?**

This is your chance to shine. You're being asked to explain why you are a great employee, so don't hold back and stay do stay positive. You could be someone who thrives under pressure, a great motivator, an amazing problem solver or someone with extraordinary attention to detail. If your greatest strength, however, is to drink anyone under the table or get a top score on Mario Kart, keep it to yourself. The interviewer is looking for work-related strengths.

*Numerous answers are good, just stay positive. A few good examples: Your ability to prioritize, Your problem-solving skills, Your ability to work under pressure, Your ability to focus on projects, Your professional expertise, Your leadership skills, Your positive attitude.*

**What's your biggest weakness?**

If you're completely honest, you may be kicking yourself in the butt. If you say you don't have one, you're obviously lying. This is a horrible question and one that politicians have become masters at answering. They say things like *"I'm perhaps too committed to my work and don't spend enough time with my family."* Oh, there's a fireable offense. I've even heard "I think I'm too good at my job, it can often make people jealous." Please, let's keep our feet on the ground. If you're asked this question, give a small, work-related flaw that you're working hard to improve. Example: "I've been told I occasionally focus on details and miss the bigger picture, so I've been spending time laying out the complete project every day to see my overall progress."

**Let's talk about salary. What are you looking for?**

Run for cover! This is one tricky game to play in an interview. Even if you know the salary range for the job, if you answer first you're already showing all your cards. You want as much as possible, the employer wants you for as little as you're willing to take. Before you apply, take a look at salary.com for a good idea of what someone with your specific experience should be paid. You may want to say, "well, that's something I've thought long and hard about and I think someone with my experience should get between X & Y." Or, you could be sly and say, "right now, I'm more interested in talking more about what the position can offer my career." That could at least buy you a little time to scope out the situation. But if you do have a specific figure in mind and you are confident that you can get it, I'd say go for it. I have on many occasions, and every time I got very close to that figure (both below and sometimes above).

A loaded question. A nasty little game that you will probably lose if you answer first. So, do not answer it. Instead, say something like, That's a tough question. Can you tell me the range for this position? In most cases, the interviewer, taken off guard, will tell you. If not, say that it can depend on the details of the job. Then give a wide range.

**How long would you expect to work for us if hired?**

Specifics here are not good. Something like this should work: I'd like it to be a long time. Or As long as we both feel I'm doing a good job.

**Tell me a suggestion you have made that was implemented.**

It's important here to focus on the word "implemented." There's nothing wrong with having a thousand great ideas, but if the only place they live is on your notepad what's the point? Better still, you need a good ending. If your previous company took your advice and ended up going bankrupt, that's not such a great example either. Be prepared with a story about an idea of yours that was taken from idea to implementation, and considered successful.

*My answer: Asking for to create a reusable library like complex number.*

**Has anything ever irritated you about people you've worked with?**

Of course, you have a list as long as your arm. But you can't say that, it shows you as being negative and difficult to work with. The best way to answer this one is to think for a while and then say something like "I've always got on just fine with my co-workers actually."

**Is there anyone you just could not work with?**

No. Well, unless you're talking about murderers, racists, rapists, thieves or other dastardly characters, you can work with anyone. Otherwise you could be flagged as someone who's picky and difficult if you say, "I can't work with anyone who's a Bronco's fan. Sorry."

**Tell me about any issues you've had with a previous boss.**

Arrgh! If you fall for this one you shouldn't be hired anyway. The interviewer is testing you to see if you'll speak badly about your previous supervisor. Simply answer this question with extreme tact, diplomacy and if necessary, a big fat loss of memory. In short, you've never had any issues.

**Would you rather work for money or job satisfaction?**

It's not a very fair question is it? We'd all love to get paid a Trump-like salary doing a job we love but that's rare indeed. It's fine to say money is important, but remember that NOTHING is more important to you than the job. Otherwise, you're just someone looking for a bigger pay check.

**Would you rather be liked or feared?**

I have been asked this a lot, in various incarnations. The first time I just drew a blank and said, "I don't know." That went over badly, but it was right at the start of my career when I had little to no experience. Since then I've realized that my genuine answer is "Neither, I'd rather be respected." You don't want to be feared because fear is no way to motivate a team. You may got the job done but at what cost? Similarly, if you're everyone's best friend you'll find it difficult to make tough decisions or hit deadlines. But when you're respected, you don't have to be a complete bastard or a lame duck to get the job done.

**Are you willing to put the interests of X Company ahead of your own?**

Again, another nasty question. If you say yes, you're a corporate whore who doesn't care about family. If you say no, you're disloyal to the company. I'm afraid that you'll probably have to say yes to this one though, because you're trying to be the perfect employee at this point, and perfect employees don't cut out early for Jimmy's baseball game.

**Finally, do you have any questions to ask me?**

I'll finish the way I started, with one of the most common questions asked in interviews. This directly relates to the research you've done on the company and also gives you a chance to show how eager and prepared you are. You'll probably want to ask about benefits if they haven't been covered already. A good generic one is "how soon could I start, if I were offered the job of course." You may also ask what you'd be working on. Specifically, in the role you're applying for and how that affects the rest of the company. Always have questions ready, greeting this one with a blank stare is a rotten way to finish your interview. Good luck and happy job hunting.

Always have some questions prepared. Questions prepared where you will be an asset to the organization are good. *How soon will I be able to be productive? What type of projects will I be able to assist on? What would be my role and responsibilities in this job?*

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**How long would you expect to work for us if hired?**

Specifics here are not good. Something like this should work: I'd like it to be a long time. Or As long as we both feel I'm doing a good job.

**14. Have you ever had to fire anyone? How did you feel about that?**

This is serious. Do not make light of it or in any way seem like you like to fire people. At the same time, you will do it when it is the right thing to do. When it comes to the organization versus the individual who has created a harmful situation, you will protect the organization. Remember firing is not the same as layoff or reduction in force.   
  
**15. What is your philosophy towards work?**

The interviewer is not looking for a long or flowery dissertation here. Do you have strong feelings that the job gets done? Yes. That's the type of answer that works best here. Short and positive, showing a benefit to the organization.

**16. If you had enough money to retire right now, would you?**

Answer yes if you would. But since you need to work, this is the type of work you prefer. Do not say yes if you do not mean it.

**17. Have you ever been asked to leave a position?**

If you have not, say no. If you have, be honest, brief and avoid saying negative things about the people or organization involved.  
  
**18. Explain how you would be an asset to this organization.**

You should be anxious for this question. It gives you a chance to highlight your best points as they relate to the position being discussed. Give a little advance thought to this relationship.  
  
**20. Tell me about a suggestion you have made.**

Have a good one ready. Be sure and use a suggestion that was accepted and was then considered successful. One related to the type of work applied for is a real plus.

**21. What irritates you about co-workers?**

This is a trap question. Think real hard but fail to come up with anything that irritates you. A short statement that you seem to get along with folks is great.

**23. Tell me about your dream job.**

Stay away from a specific job. You cannot win. If you say the job you are contending for is it, you strain credibility. If you say another job is it, you plant the suspicion that you will be dissatisfied with this position if hired. The best is to stay genetic and say something like: A job where I love the work, like the people, can contribute and can't wait to get to work.

**24. Why do you think you would do well at this job?**

Give several reasons and include skills, experience and interest.  
  
**25. What are you looking for in a job?**

See answer # 23

**26. What kind of person would you refuse to work with?**

Do not be trivial. It would take disloyalty to the organization, violence or lawbreaking to get you to object. Minor objections will label you as a whiner.   
  
**27. What is more important to you: the money or the work?**

Money is always important, but the work is the most important. There is no better answer.

**30. What has disappointed you about a job?**

Don't get trivial or negative. Safe areas are few but can include:  
Not enough of a challenge. You were laid off in a reduction Company did not win a contract, which would have given you more responsibility.

**32. Do your skills match this job or another job more closely?**

Probably this one. Do not give fuel to the suspicion that you may want another job more than this one.  
  
**33. What motivates you to do your best on the job?**

This is a personal trait that only you can say, but good examples are: Challenge, Achievement, Recognition  
  
**34. Are you willing to work overtime? Nights? Weekends?**

This is up to you. Be totally honest.  
  
**35. How would you know you were successful on this job?**

Several ways are good measures:  
You set high standards for yourself and meet them. Your outcomes are a success.Your boss tell you that you are successful  
  
**36. Would you be willing to relocate if required?**

You should be clear on this with your family prior to the interview if you think there is a chance it may come up. Do not say yes just to get the job if the real answer is no. This can create a lot of problems later on in your career. Be honest at this point and save yourself uture grief.

**37. Are you willing to put the interests of the organization ahead of your own?**

This is a straight loyalty and dedication question. Do not worry about the deep ethical and philosophical implications. Just say yes.  
  
**38. Describe your management style.**

Try to avoid labels. Some of the more common labels, like progressive, salesman or consensus, can have several meanings or descriptions depending on which management expert you listen to. The situational style is safe, because it says you will manage according to the situation, instead of one size fits all.

**39. What have you learned from mistakes on the job?**

Here you have to come up with something or you strain credibility. Make it small, well intentioned mistake with a positive lesson learned. An example would be working too far ahead of colleagues on a project and thus throwing coordination off.

**40. Do you have any blind spots?**

Trick question. If you know about blind spots, they are no longer blind spots. Do not reveal any personal areas of concern here. Let them do their own discovery on your bad points. Do not hand it to them.

**41. If you were hiring a person for this job, what would you look for?**

Be careful to mention traits that are needed and that you have.  
  
**42. Do you think you are overqualified for this position?**

Regardless of your qualifications, state that you are very well qualified for the position.  
  
**43. How do you propose to compensate for your lack of experience?**

First, if you have experience that the interviewer does not know about, bring that up: Then, point out (if true) that you are a hard working quick learner.  
  
**44. What qualities do you look for in a boss?**

Be generic and positive. Safe qualities are knowledgeable, a sense of humor, fair, loyal to subordinates and holder of high standards. All bosses think they have these traits.

**45. Tell me about a time when you helped resolve a dispute between others.**

Pick a specific incident. Concentrate on your problem solving technique and not the dispute you settled.  
  
**46. What position do you prefer on a team working on a project?**

Be honest. If you are comfortable in different roles, point that out.  
  
**47. Describe your work ethic.**

Emphasize benefits to the organization. Things like, determination to get the job done and work hard but enjoy your work are good.  
  
**48. What has been your biggest professional disappointment?**

Be sure that you refer to something that was beyond your control. Show acceptance and no negative feelings.  
  
**49. Tell me about the most fun you have had on the job.**

Talk about having fun by accomplishing something for the organization.