Tips for Interview Questions

DON'T ask questions that are too general

- "How do you study foreign languages?"
- "Where do you do online shopping?"

DON'T ask hypothetical or "Why not?" questions

People are bad at predicting their own behavior!

- "You just mentioned that you are interested in learning French. We are building a language learning app, do you think this is something you will use every day?"
- "Would you pay for a video streaming service for only $4.99/month?"
- "How do you feel about a bigger storage space on the new phone?

DON'T ask leading questions

Leading questions imply a desired type of answer or "lead" users in a particular direction—like here, implying that the user finds the app to be frustrating:

- "What frustrations did you experience the last time you used your company chat program?"

DO ask users about their most recent experience

By asking about their most recent experience, you're asking for something specific, concrete, and easy to remember.

- "In the past week, how often did you study French? What did you study?"
- "When was the last time you paid your credit card bill on your phone?"
- "What was the last time you bought shoes online?"

DO ask users to show, not just tell

- "Could you walk me through how you created flashcards on LangLearn for your final exam?"
- "Could you show me some of the notes you took while taking the online course?"
- "Could I take a photo of these notes?"

Ask why users like a solution

Try to find the needs or pain points that are the root cause

- User: "The flashcard app should give me points when I get the right answer."
- Interviewer: "Why do you want to get points?"
- User: "Because I like seeing my progress. I like knowing that I've achieved something."

More examples and Tips

Problematic question	What's wrong with it?	Suggestions
What were your frustrations with paying bills online?	The question is **too general**. What type of bills? Phone bills? Credit card bills? And would the user be paying on a desktop computer? On a phone? And what if the participant has had different experiences paying different types of bills? It's also a **leading question**. It implies that users have had a frustrating experience, which may or may not be true; they may talk about very different things than they would with a neutral (non-leading) question.	Instead, ask questions that are **specific** and **neutral** (non-leading). You can ask a series of them to get all the info you need, like this: • Do you pay bills online? • What types of bills? • What types of devices did you use? • When was the last time you paid your credit card bill on your phone? • Could you walk me through how you did it?
We know filing taxes online is a painful experience. Right now, our team is creating an app to make filing taxes super easy. Would you use the app?	This is a **hypothetical/"why not?"** question. Of course users will say yes. Why would anyone say no to a perfect product? If your app is truly easy to use, then users will like it—but the reality is that we don't know if their experience will be as user-friendly as advertised. This question does not generate any useful data.	Instead, **ask concrete, specific questions** to **get at the underlying needs and pain points**, such as: • When was the last time you filed your own taxes? • Did you file your taxes using an app? What app? • What types of devices did you use? • Could you walk me through

We are creating an online coding bootcamp. Would you like to learn how to code online?	**People are not good at predicting their own behavior.** Someone may make serious plans to gain new skills next month or next year, but that does not mean they will actually do it.	Ask about **past behaviors** instead: • Did you attend any online coding bootcamp in the past year? • What did you study? • How many courses did you take? • What were your learning objectives?
How do you normally buy shoes online?	This question is **too general**.	Ask a series of **specific** questions, such as: • What was the last time you bought shoes online? • What did you buy? • Where did you buy your shoes? • Why did you choose to buy shoes from Zappos? • What prompted you to do shoe shopping on that day?
Do you like the header to be blue or purple?	Ask design preference questions with caution, because: 1. A lot of users don't really have a preference for small UI elements unless there is a big usability problem. 2. User John might say he likes the blue header simply because blue is his favorite color. It does not mean John would quit using your app if the header were purple.	It is better to use A/B tests to test the performance of UI elements. Don't rely on users to make all design decisions.