

30 Basic Job Interview Questions & How To Answer Them

1. Can you tell me more about yourself?

“Tell me about yourself” should be [expected in job interviews](#), but talking about yourself can feel uncomfortable. It’s often asked as a first question or an icebreaker. Your answer gives the interviewer a sense of who you are and your background beyond your resume. When answering this question, **focus on experiences that highlight your qualifications.**

It’s OK to mention personal interests that will [help the hiring manager connect with you](#), such as a shared alma mater or a [nonprofit interest](#). But for the most part, you should steer your response toward how you’ll contribute to the organization. Gather specific skills and accomplishments that make you a strong candidate. Take the opportunity to start the interview off with points that paint a positive picture.

Example Answer:

I’m a recent college graduate with a degree as a certified accountant from Kentucky State University. I also completed an internship at a financial management firm, where I got hands-on experience in financial analysis. During my time at the firm, I discovered that I enjoyed managing finances and creating investment plans for retirees, which led me to apply for this role.

2. What do you think your greatest weakness is?

Every candidate puts their best foot forward during the hiring process. Hiring managers are looking for a glimpse of your self-awareness and how you [manage constructive criticism](#). When answering this question, it’s essential to **be honest but frame your response positively**. Phrase your answer in a way that shows you’re actively seeking personal and [career growth and development](#).

Example Answer:

I think my greatest weakness is that I struggle a bit with balancing multiple priorities. I can lose myself in a project, which can make me feel overwhelmed and stressed when numerous tasks are on my to-do list. To manage this, I’ve

been setting smaller goals and creating better task management and daily workflow routines.

3. What do you feel your greatest strength is?

The hiring manager is curious about **how well you know yourself** and why you think you'll excel in this role. This is a great opportunity to **show how passionate you are about the job** and explain why your experience makes you a great fit.

Example Answer:

I'm incredibly excited about this role because I'm passionate about seeing the big picture and finding more efficient workflows. For example, in my previous role, I identified opportunities to streamline a simple daily process in how tasks were communicated and completed. Ultimately, those tiny savings added up, and they saved the company an hour per day, which added up to savings of over 250 hours of labor yearly. This role is an excellent fit for me because it allows me to use those same analytical and problem-solving skills within a larger organization.

4. Why are you interested in this role?

Hiring managers are looking to discover how well you **researched the company**. Are you looking for any open position, or are you excited about the opportunities this particular role and organization offer? Here, you can **share specifics about the company and why this job is the perfect fit for your career goals**.

Example Answer:

I'm interested in this role because it offers me the chance to combine my marketing knowledge with my passion for helping others. I learned about the organization's mission and how it helps people improve their lives through education and financial literacy. I've watched the jobs page for roles fitting my skill set, and I was delighted when this position was posted. I know I can be an asset to the team, and I'm excited about this role's potential opportunities.

5. Where do you see yourself in five years?

Hiring and turnover are costly. When you're applying, responsible leaders are looking to **ensure that your goals and plans align with the company's visions and**

career paths. The best way to answer this question is to clearly understand your **long-term development goals** and how this position can help you achieve them.

Example Answer:

*In five years, I hope to become an industry expert that inspires school-aged kids from all backgrounds to pursue an **engineering** career. Ideally, I'd love to use this role as a platform to learn and grow to become a company leader where I can mentor new team members. As I mentioned previously, the company's culture and mission statement align closely with my values, and in five years, I'm hoping to be here, growing my career.*

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6. Why are you looking for a new role?

Don't air all of your dirty laundry here. You want to steer away from focusing on any negative aspects of your current role. Instead, **focus on why you're excited about the new job and how it fits into your career path.** Compare the two companies if you can find a way to do so that doesn't sound like you're throwing your current company under the bus.

Example Answer:

I'm looking for a new role because I want to pursue an opportunity that will help me expand my skill set and build upon what I've learned so far. The company I work for has a well-established senior team, so there's less room for growth. One of the things I love about my current job is the ability to impact small business success with efficient web design. This position is the perfect combination. I'll have the chance to challenge myself in a new way while working more closely with the customer to bring their vision to life.

7. What motivates you on a daily basis?

Employers are looking to **ensure that your intrinsic motivations align with long-term company values and goals.** If **your motivation** is a specific benefit or salary range, that will wear off at some point, and your job performance will suffer. On the other hand, if you're passionate about the mission or find the duties creative and challenging, you're more likely to be a consistently high-performing employee.

Example Answer:

As a care advocate, I am passionate about helping patients navigate the complicated insurance and medical system. On a personal level, I've seen the devastating impact that occurs when patients postpone routine care. I look forward to the ability to personally support others' health in positive ways.

8. Why are you the best candidate for this role?

This question can feel like you're walking a tightrope. You don't know the other candidates and don't want to sound arrogant by saying you're the best. But on the other hand, you need to **communicate your confidence and job fit**. The solution is rooted in your research and **reframing your response into one that shows you're uniquely qualified**. You can tie in previous experiences and skill sets with the job duties to highlight your excellent fit.

Example Answer:

What makes me uniquely qualified for the role is my experience leading a high-performing sales team at a larger agency. We consistently led the company and exceeded our goals. Not only that, but we had exceptional customer service reviews with a high ratio of returning customers. Blending that experience with my time spent mentoring new team members makes me an excellent fit for this role.

9. What three words would your most recent teammates use to describe you?

Even when a role is relatively independent, you'll still need to **interact and collaborate with others**. Hiring managers are looking to discover **how well you work within the boundaries of a team**. Consider the traits and skills you've been praised for and feedback you've received during performance reviews.

Example Answer:

My current teammates would describe me as reliable, adaptable, and proactive. I understand that meeting my personal goals can't get me very far without us succeeding as a team. Because of that, my teammates' feedback is consistently that I am an excellent team player who takes initiative and is open to feedback.

10. Describe your ideal company culture.

In recent years, U.S. companies have [spent over \\$223 billion due to employee turnover](#). Much of that stems from a poor cultural fit. Even if the organization doesn't have [a toxic culture](#), ensuring applicants mesh with the team and thrive personally helps lower that number substantially. Not only that, but if they have an excellent reputation and a unique culture, they will be rigorous in defending it. Do your research and **be specific in explaining why you'll enhance the company culture.**

Example Answer:

In my experience, I've thrived at companies that balance team goals with opportunities for personal development. I'm excited about working in a smaller team with a diverse group. I believe encouraging employees to bring their unique perspectives and share ideas will lead to creative solutions. I also look forward to learning from teammates with different backgrounds, experiences, and skill sets. Ultimately, my ideal company culture values collaboration, creativity, and learning from diverse perspectives.

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11. What would you do in your first 90 days in this role?

Will you be able to hit the ground running? **Hiring managers want to know that you can strategize and plan.** When discussing goals, focus on topics such as integrating yourself with the team, developing relationships with other departments, and learning more about the role. Keep it specific by describing projects or tasks you think you'll prioritize within those 90 days.

Example Answer:

In my first 90 days in this role, I will focus on learning more about the team and our unique contribution to the industry. I plan to meet with key stakeholders, review current projects, understand our process flow, and build relationships with other departments. Additionally, I think it's essential to gain a thorough understanding of our product offering so that I can support our customers and ensure we meet their needs. As part of this, I'd like to review

customer feedback and develop a plan to ensure I'm consistently exceeding their expectations.

12. Give an example of when you received negative feedback and how you responded.

Hiring managers are seeking to understand whether or not you have a growth mindset. Negative feedback is inevitable, and leaders are looking for those who understand that criticism isn't personal. Instead, you want to **communicate that you'll use feedback to improve your skills**. Use [the STAR method](#) to describe a situation, the feedback you received, and how you applied it to achieve a better outcome.

Example Answer:

Recently, I was given negative feedback about a large project I completed as a virtual assistant. My supervisor noted that the formatting of my presentation needed to be in line with company standards and clarified for the audience. I took this feedback and spent several days revising the presentation by making sure all elements were cohesive and easy to understand. I also contacted my supervisor to ensure that we updated the style guide to clarify their standards moving forward. In the end, they were happy with the project and appreciated that I took the initiative to improve the document for everyone on the team.

13. Describe a problem you solved in a creative way.

Creative thinking is a tremendous asset in today's workforce. Business continues to get more competitive, and thinking outside the box can ensure the company stays on the leading edge of the industry. Consider the role you're applying for and **highlight a time you solved a problem the position would have to deal with**.

Example Answer:

As a marketing manager, I was tasked with increasing our online presence without increasing our budget. I identified an opportunity to leverage influencers in a few other industries who had an engaged and growing audience. By forming creative partnerships with these influencers, we

increased our brand's visibility and drove more traffic to our website without investing in ad spending.

14. Describe a time when you had to make a decision without time to research.

When you're interviewing, **hiring managers often want to understand your ability to think on your feet**. Especially **in leadership roles**, you'll need to use the information you have at the time to make the best decision possible. Depending on the situation, you can touch on how you'd make a different decision in the future now that you have more information.

Example Answer:

When I was managing a hospitality team, a time-sensitive issue with a customer's room cleanliness needed to be addressed due to their travel constraints. I had to decide on the best course of action, as the housekeeping manager needed to be available to gather more information. After brief consideration, I offered them a refund, which wasn't policy. After they left, we determined that they were placed in a room that hadn't been cleaned due to a computer error. As such, it was the right course of action. Regardless, it's always best to use the available information to give the best possible customer service for the situation.

15. Why are you leaving your current job?

No matter how toxic your current work environment is, it will still reflect poorly on you if you focus on the negative. Instead, you can **talk about how you're looking for new challenges or a better fit for your skill set**, but **avoid being hostile toward your current workplace or colleagues**. Even if there's drama or you have a horrible leader, you'll want to reframe your answers positively.

Example Answer:

I'm currently at a point in my career where I want to take on new challenges and grow my skill set further. My current role has been a great learning experience, but I'm intrigued by the opportunity that this position provides to utilize my expertise differently. I'm eager to expand my knowledge and grow professionally, which is why I'm excited about this opportunity.

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16. Describe a time when you went above and beyond for a customer or client.

Showing you can take the initiative and are willing to go the extra mile speaks volumes about your character and professionalism. When describing a time you went above and beyond, try to **focus on what drove you to go above and beyond**. Was it a concern for the customer? A desire to ensure everything went smoothly?

Example Answer:

As an event planner, I had a customer with incredibly high expectations for their event. Because of the complexity of their requests and timeline, I knew it would be challenging, but I could also see that they felt pressured to put on a memorable event. To ensure everything went smoothly, I put in extra time and effort beforehand to create a detailed plan and ensure the staff was fully prepared. I also kept the customer updated on the status of various details. That required extra communication and time, but it helped them relax and feel confident in the outcome. My hard work paid off, as the customer was delighted with how everything turned out. It was a great feeling to have exceeded their expectations.

17. Why do you want to work remotely?

Remote work can be a bit glorified in the media and modern culture. Hiring managers want to ensure **you have realistic expectations** and a plan to address the challenges. **Keep your answer focused on the professional benefits**. Explain how working remotely can help you meet your development goals and would work well with your personality type.

Example Answer:

I'm a self-starter motivated to stay productive and reach my goals. I find that having the flexibility to work from different locations increases my productivity, allowing me to avoid office distractions and politics. Additionally, working remotely allows me to work in a custom-tailored environment to boost my productivity. I'm also looking forward to using the

time I'm saving by not commuting to fit in more exercise, which boosts my creativity.

18. How will you handle or minimize distractions when you work remotely?

Recruiters are hesitant to hire remote workers who aren't realistic about the distractions you'll face working and living in the same location. It is essential to **show the interviewer that you can work productively even when you are not in a traditional office setting.**

An excellent way to do this is by outlining a few strategies that help you stay on track and focused. You can share things like setting up specific hours for working, turning off notifications and other distractions, and setting boundaries for yourself and others.

Example Answer:

I realize it can be easy to get distracted by the things around you, especially when you're at home. To combat this, I plan to use a few strategies that help me stay focused and on track. First, I'll set up and post specific hours for my workday next to my desk. That way, my family will know when I'm available and when I need to focus. Second, I'll turn off all notifications and distractions to stay focused. Finally, I will be diligent about prioritizing my tasks to ensure I stay on top of my deadlines. By using these strategies, I'll be able to maximize my productivity.

19. How do you stay connected to your teammates when you don't work in the same location?

Despite working alone, leaders need team members who **facilitate communication and collaboration** despite distances and varying time zones. You'll need to **demonstrate that you're knowledgeable, capable of using communication tools, and driven** to reach out.

Example Answer:

I'm very familiar with collaboration platforms, such as Zoom and Slack, and I'm comfortable participating in virtual meetings and team projects. I also actively seek time for informal conversations, so I schedule weekly coffee or lunch sessions with my colleagues. That way, we can catch up, have

meaningful conversations, and brainstorm ideas. I respect everyone's communication preferences and give them space to respond as they need.

20. How do you set boundaries between your home life and your work tasks while working remotely?

Working from your home office can have many perks. But it also comes with a higher risk of burnout if you're not intentional about setting boundaries. It's all too easy to slip into a mode where you're always working. You need to **demonstrate that you are capable of establishing and maintaining boundaries.**

Example Answer:

I know that it can be challenging to separate home life from work when working remotely, so I take proactive steps to ensure I'm not working around the clock. To do this, I have a dedicated office space, set specific hours for my workday, and maintain a routine that helps me shift from work mode to home mode. During my off-work hours, I turn off any notifications related to work and disconnect from my computer. Additionally, I take regular breaks throughout the day and steer clear of eating lunch at my desk.

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21. Do you consider yourself a self-starter?

Without a manager stopping by your desk, you'll need the ability and motivation to take charge of your workload. Working remotely, **leaders will be relying on you to take the initiative** to **manage your projects** and stay on top of your deadlines.

Share traits that reinforce that you're a self-starter.

Example Answer:

I've always had an entrepreneurial spirit and am highly motivated to complete tasks independently. I enjoy challenging myself to complete tasks by a specific time or with a set outcome. I'm also highly organized and can prioritize my work tasks to finish everything on time.

22. What does a typical day look like for you? What is your daily routine when you work remotely?

It might not seem vital, but your daily routine can make or break your success while working from home. Without social cues, you can quickly develop bad habits that **lead to burnout** and significantly impact your wellness. Outline any routines that **demonstrate how you prioritize and manage your tasks while working remotely.**

Example Answer:

My day starts with a cup of tea and a short workout to get my head in the best space. After that, I maintain my morning routine the same way I would if I worked in an office. I clock in at my set hours, check my emails, and review any new daily tasks. I use a planner and goal-setting sheet to set my daily goals. Using the Pomodoro Technique, I work in increments that allow me to stay focused and alert, taking small breaks every hour or so. When the day is done, I log off and take time for myself and my family. This helps me reset my mind and prepare for the next day. Overall, having a daily routine has been highly beneficial in helping me stay productive and organized when working remotely. It allows for sufficient breaks, so I stay energized and motivated.

23. How have you managed to stay productive while working from home?

When your team isn't in the same location, it can be challenging to stay productive. From distractions to technical difficulties, plenty of things can get in the way of your workflow. **Share specific examples of how you protect your focus despite distractions.**

Example Answer:

Admittedly, I learned the hard way that working from home isn't easy if you don't have a routine set in place or the right tools to stay motivated. Working remotely requires a certain level of self-discipline, and I initially struggled to avoid distractions. Recognizing that I wasn't thriving, I put new workflows in place to keep myself on track. I practice good time management skills, set realistic daily goals, and use task lists to prioritize my work. Also, I've scheduled a routine check-in with my manager, which helps me stay connected and in the loop on changing priorities.

24. What is your expected salary?

Beyond wondering if they can afford you, **interviewers want to see if you've thoroughly researched the industry and the position.** If you don't value yourself and your work, that might signal a lack of confidence in your performance. It's tricky since duties can vary between roles and geography. If you still need to learn all the specifics, you can either give a salary range based on research or answer that you'd like more information before **negotiating specific salary and benefits.**

Example Answer:

After researching the industry and taking my experience and education into account, I'm targeting a salary between \$50,000-\$60,000. However, I'd like to learn more about the position's specific duties and benefit offerings before we discuss a fair amount for the role.

25. Can you talk me through your career gap, the reasons you left the workforce, and how you feel it's affected you professionally?

If you were out of the workforce for extended periods, it's essential that you can explain why and how it impacted your career. You'll want to **show that your gap was due to intentional and responsible decision-making**, rather than an inability to focus or commit to a career path. Tie in professional growth, such as **volunteer or freelance work**, that you completed during your gap.

Example Answer:

I was out of the workforce for five years while raising a family after graduating college. With my partner in the military, we decided that the timing was best for our careers and families as we anticipated several moves. Now that my partner has left active duty and our children are a bit older, we're ready to move to the next stage. I am quite thankful I had that time to focus on volunteer work and exploring different career paths related to my degree. With some hands-on work, I discovered my passions, which led me to this role.

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26. Can you share a time you had a conflict with a teammate and how you handled it?

You've inevitably had a difference of opinion with someone in the workforce. It's essential to show that you can **handle it skillfully** and professionally without

devaluing other ideas. **Interviewers want to see how you approach difficult conversations and your ability to defuse tensions** while maintaining professional composure.

Example Answer:

I recently had a conflict with my teammate over an upcoming project. He wanted to tackle it with a method that I felt was outdated. We discussed our ideas at length. I could see that he didn't understand my vision, so I found a new way to explain it and shared some similar examples. With some additional explanation, he opened up to my suggestions, and we were able to blend both of our approaches for the best outcome.

27. What skills from your previous industry do you feel translate to this position?

When you're looking to change careers, you'll need to connect the dots for the hiring manager. They'll often need you to **explain how your skills and experience translate to the new role or field**, especially if they're not familiar with your previous duties. Highlight ways you can bring a fresh perspective while drawing on aspects of your experience.

Example Answer:

In my previous role as an account manager, I worked closely with customers to identify their needs and offered solutions. This translates well into this HR position because it's a role that supports our internal customers, just in a different way. Additionally, the data analysis skills I gained while working with customer feedback have been invaluable in creating reports on employee satisfaction. Furthermore, my familiarity with identifying trends and developing solutions to business challenges can benefit the team in various ways. Overall, I believe many of my skills will transfer to this role and fill any gaps.

28. Why are you looking to leave your current industry?

When you're transitioning to a new career, it's essential that you come across as motivated, rather than desperate. You want to make sure that the interviewer understands that you're eagerly moving toward something, rather than simply

escaping a poor job fit. You'll need to **reassure the interviewer that your move is intentional because you think you'll thrive** instead of moving blindly away from your previous career.

Example Answer:

I'm looking to move away from my current industry because I've achieved all I can. I'm passionate about my company, and my role has been enriching. However, I've reached a ceiling with my current position and need to find an opportunity that will challenge me further. That's why this new position is so attractive to me—it offers an exciting chance to learn new skills and use the experience I've gained to develop further. Plus, I believe it will allow me to grow professionally and personally in ways that my current job doesn't provide.

29. Describe your ideal work environment.

Your interviewer wants to know if you'll **fit their corporate culture** well. Use your research into the company culture and notes from the job posting. But be cautious that you're not simply quoting what you read. Instead, **reframe culture cues as personal motivations.**

Example Answer:

*I thrive in an environment that encourages learning and ideas. I'm always looking for new challenges, so having a goal-oriented workplace where everyone works together to meet deadlines and service targets is essential. My **ideal work environment** also values collaboration and open communication. This is something that lays the foundation for success as we can come up with better solutions, rather than aggressively competing. At the end of the day, the sales numbers don't matter if we lose customers due to toxic competitiveness.*

30. What questions do you have for me?

It may seem like this is just a bonus question that might not matter that much, but it's actually an essential part of the interview. **Your questions will show how engaged you are in the role**, how much research you've done, and of course, if there's anything else you want to know. This is your chance to **impress the hiring**

manager and ensure they remember you. Of course, your question will depend a bit on what's already been covered.

Example Answers:

I'm interested in learning more about what success looks like in this role. Do you have any clear objectives or metrics I could use to measure progress?

What are your team's biggest challenges, and how can someone in this role help overcome them?

I saw from your LinkedIn profile that you've been with the company for over 10 years. What culture attributes have inspired you to stay with the company?

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Basic Interview Questions

It's nearly impossible to prepare completely for each question, as there are endless ways a hiring manager can word their inquiries. But the majority of questions fit into a few different categories.

Think through your experiences and **prepare to discuss situations that highlight your team and culture fit, your relevant skills, and your ability to apply essential characteristics**. You may need to reframe them to fit the exact phrasing, but you'll be ready for just about anything if you start with these questions and then expand to some broader experiences you can reference.

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through all the common interview c

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2. Checking out the situational interview questions section and learning how to answer questions that are relevant for you
3. Learning what's the idea behind behavioral interview questions, so you're prepared to answer whatever the HR manager shoots at you

From Awkward to Awesome

How to Nail Job Interview Questions

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Most Common Job Interview Questions:

1. Tell me something about yourself.
2. How did you hear about this position?
3. Why do you want to work here?
4. Why did you decide to apply for this position?
5. What is your greatest strength?
6. What are your strengths and weaknesses?
7. What do you know about this company/organization?
8. Why should we hire you?
9. What is your greatest accomplishment?
10. What are your salary requirements?
11. Do you have any questions for us?
12. What are you looking for from a new position?
13. Are you considering other positions in other companies?
14. What is the professional achievement you're most proud of?
15. What kind of working environment do you work best in?
16. Where do you see yourself in 5 years?

Situational Job Interview Questions:

1. Why haven't you gotten your Bachelor's Degree/Master's Degree/Ph.D.?
2. Why have you switched jobs so many times?

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5. Why is there a gap in your work experience?
6. Why were you fired?
7. How do you feel about working weekends or late hours?
8. How would your boss describe you?
9. Do you have any serious medical conditions?
10. What would your first 30, 60, or 90 days look like in this role?
11. Are you a team player?
12. Are you a risk-taker?
13. How do you deal with pressure or stressful situations?
14. Do you think there is a difference between hard work and smart work?
15. How quickly do you adapt to new technology?
16. Do you have any interests outside of work?
17. What do you think our company/organization could do better?

Behavioral Questions in a Job Interview:

1. Give an example of how you have handled a challenge in the workplace before.
2. Give an example of when you performed well under pressure.
3. Give an example of when you showed leadership qualities.

How to Answer 14 Most Common Job Interview Questions [+ Sample Answers]

These questions are the ones you're bound to hear at [just about any job interview](#), whether you're an intern or a senior professional with a decade of work experience.

All of these questions are used to learn more about you, both as a person and a professional.

You might have heard the popular idea that there's no right or [wrong answers for interview questions](#).

Well, while that might be true, there ARE a set of rules you need to follow when answering these questions.

Jobseeker's Dream Duo:



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If you understand what, exactly, the interviewer is looking for with each question you'll be able to give the right answer (and rock that interview!)

In this section, we're going to go through 14 of the most common job interview questions and answers. We're going to explain what the HR manager wants to see you, as well as give you sample answers you could use.

So, let's get started!

1) Tell me something about yourself.

How hard can it be to talk about yourself? We do it on a daily basis without much thought to it.

However, recruitment managers are not looking for your whole life story, your third grade achievements, or what you had for dinner last night. Instead, **they are looking for a pitch.**

This is usually the first question asked in an interview, so it acts as your introduction. Make sure your answer is **relevant to the position** you are applying for. What you should be aiming for here is to **present yourself** as the ideal candidate for the job.

A good rule of thumb is to structure your talking points as follows:

- **Briefly introduce yourself:** What's your name? How long have you been working in [profession]?
- **What do you love about your job?**



` are your top 2-3 achievements that

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apply

Now, let's go through some examples:

Possible Answers for "Tell me About Yourself":

Sample Answer 1:

Hey! So, my name is John Doe and I've worked as a business analyst for 5+ years in Company X and Company Y.

I have some background in data analysis, having studied Information System at [Made-Up] University.

Throughout my career, I've done some pretty impressive stuff (if I do say so myself, haha).

For example, at Company X, I led a project for migrating all operations data to a new data warehousing system to cut down on costs. The new solution was a much better fit for our business, which eventually led to savings of up to \$200,000 annually.

Sample Answer 2:

I am Jane Doe, a recent college graduate from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

I have just graduated with honors in Biochemistry. I know my way around a lab and have had multiple opportunities to put my knowledge into practice as a chemistry research assistant.

The lab felt like home, which is why I'd love to work as a lab assistant. I am passionate, hard-working, and extremely responsible. I am also looking forward to putting to practice all the things I learned during my time at university.

2) How did you hear about this position?

Although at first glance this might seem like a straightforward question, you should grab any opportunity you can to **show your interest** in the company.

Even if you haven't been continuously refreshing the company's website for job listings, make it seem like you have (in a professional way, of course). Show **excitement** and curiosity.

If someone inside the company told you about the position or **recommended** the company, definitely make sure to mention that.

You'll have a much better chance at getting hired if someone credible can vouch for your skills.

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their reasoning for inviting or recommending you to apply for the position. Tell the hiring managers what excites you about the job opportunity or what exactly caught your eye.

Possible answers for "How did you hear about this position?":

Sample answer 1:

"I've known about [MadeUpTechnologies] for a long time - I'm a big fan of your products. I even own one of your latest phone models!"

I love the company's passion for creating super intuitive, beautiful hardware, and I would love to be a part of it.

So, when I saw your job ad at [RandomJobBoardWebsite], even though I wasn't actively looking for a job at the time, I couldn't help but apply!"

Sample answer 2:

"I heard from Jim Doe, my old colleague and college friend, that [Company X] was looking for a new sales director. He encouraged me to apply, saying that my experience managing a sales team at [Some Software Company] would be helpful for [Company X]."

I've heard a lot about [Company X] from Jim, and I'm a big fan of the way you do things there. I've always wanted to work for a company with a flat organizational structure."

3) Why did you decide to apply for this position?

Through this question, the interviewers want to assess how passionate you are about the position. And no, the answer isn't:

"Well, I'm very passionate about not starving to death."

Or...

"Well, I needed the money, and you guys tend to pay a lot."

What the interviewer is looking for here is to see how passionate you are about the job or the company. After all, job performance is directly linked to job satisfaction. The happier you are about your position at the company, the more productive you will be.

And here's the kicker - your passion will be very evident during the interview.

When you're talking to a person that's passionate about something, you can pretty much feel them glow as they talk. And if you're an HR manager who's interviewed hundreds of people, this is a very good sign to hire the candidate.



his knowledge to your advantage.

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When asked this question, your answer should include 2 things:

1. What motivated you to apply for this position, **specifically**.
2. Why this company? Have you heard of them before?

Sample Answer 1:

I'm very passionate about sustainability and renewable energy. In fact, I minored in Environmental Science at [XYZ University].

I've always wanted to put my engineering degree to a good cause - and the position as a Sustainability Coordinator at [Company XYZ] is just the right thing.

I've been following your company for the past few years, and I love how you're changing the renewable energy landscape in America.

Keep in mind, though, that if you don't know much about the company or the position - that's OK too. Just be honest and show your passion for the job. However, it's always better to do your homework before going to an interview..

Possible answer 2:

I've always wanted to get into marketing. Having done promotional jobs here and there, I never had an opportunity to do something more serious.

I do believe, though, that I have just the right skills to get started: copywriting, basic photoshop, and of course, lots of creativity.

So, I thought that [an internship](#) at [Company X] would be an awesome start to my career in marketing.

Want to find more samples answers to this question? Check out our article on 10+ answers to "Why do you want to work here?"

4) What are your biggest strengths?

There are two answers you could go for here: what your actual strengths are, and what you think the hiring manager or HR representative wants to hear. We would most certainly suggest you go with the first answer.

For this question, you would want to narrow your answer down to **at most three strengths**. Pick 1 or 2 skills that would help you really excel at the job, and 1 or 2 personal (more or less unrelated) skills.



which ones are your top strengths?
one's perfect for your field:

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Analytical Jobs Analyst, Software Dev, etc.	Critical Thinking	Analytical Thinking	Problem-Solving	Detail-oriented	Logical	
Creative Jobs Designer, Marketer, Advertiser, etc.	Creative	Originality	Open-Mindedness	Detail-oriented	Curiosity	
Management Jobs Pretty much anything related to managing a team	Leadership	Organization	Communication Skills	Persuasion	Teamwork	Detail-Oriented
Hands-On Jobs Waiter, Cashier, etc.	Hard-working	Detail-Oriented	Motivated	Multi-tasking	Problem-Solving	Punctual
Communication Jobs Sales, Customer Support, etc.	Charisma	Communication Skills	Energetic	Persuasion	Witty	Social

After picking your strengths, **back it up with a situation** or story that shows how you have used it to benefit you on the job.

After all, words are just that - words. The HR can't know whether your "natural leadership" is an actual strength, or just means that you were super active in your high school class.

As you probably already know, this is one of the most common interview questions out there, so make sure you're prepared for it before facing the HR manager!

Possible answers:

Sample Answer 1:

My biggest strength is that I'm good at picking up new skills. I've worked a variety of different odd jobs - things like working as a waiter, house-keeper, cook, and a lot more (as you've probably seen on my resume).

For most of those jobs, I ended up picking up all the needed skills within 1 or 2 weeks (with basically no previous experience).

So, I'm pretty sure while I don't have any experience as a bartender, I have the right certification, and I believe I can get good at it within a week or two.

Possible answer 2:

My biggest strength is that I'm very efficient at working under pressure. No matter the crisis or stress, I can make the right decisions on-the-spot.

As an event manager at Company X, we were organizing an IT conference for a client. There were a ton of last-minute hiccups - some speakers canceled and the catering company said they'd be late for the lunch break. On top of that, we were understaffed because 2 of our volunteer organizers got sick and couldn't show up.

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at point, things looked so bleak that I considered quitting or leaving the event or postponing it. Instead, I took the initiative in my hands and sorted through the problems one by one.

□ 5) What is your biggest weakness?

Ah, this is always a tricky one!

After all, you don't want to mention your flaws during an interview, so it's guaranteed to be a tough question.

The trick to answering this one is realizing that the interviewers don't expect you to be perfect. Everyone has flaws, weaknesses, and things to improve on.

When asking this question, the HR manager is actually seeking to learn:

- Whether you have the right skills for the job. If you're applying for the position of server in a busy restaurant, and you say your biggest weakness is performing under pressure, then you're definitely not getting a callback.
- If you're self-aware and really know what your sticking points are.

And NO: **fake humble-brag** weaknesses don't count as weaknesses. You can't just say that your biggest weakness is that you work too hard, or that you're a perfectionist.

The key here is to **mention a weakness that's real**, but not something that would get in the way of you doing your job. You wouldn't want to say you're bad at math if you're applying for an accountant position, would you?

It's also good practice to mention how **you are working towards** overcoming this weakness and realizing how it affects you negatively. If you can, **just balance it with a positive side effect**: treat it like two sides of the same coin.

Possible answers:

Sample answer 1:

My biggest weakness has always been my communication skills. I've been pretty shy and anxious as a kid. Over the years, however, I've been really working on the issue.

At this stage, I'm much better than I've ever been, but I'm still far from perfect.

This, however, won't have any impact on my job as a programmer. Despite lacking communication skills, I'm very good at working in a team.

Sample answer 2:

Well, as a recent graduate, I'd say my biggest weakness is the lack of real-life



experience.

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While I've worked on a dozen software projects in the university, I don't have the experience of working in a fully agile environment with an experienced team.

I am, however, willing to do my best and catch up as fast as I can.

Looking for more samples answers about your [strengths and weaknesses](#)? Check our full guide!

6) What do you know about this company/organization?

A quick search in the "About" page of the company/organization you are applying for should be enough, right? Well, yes and no.

Think of this as an open-ended question. There's no real wrong answer here, other than:

Incorrect Example

I don't know anything about this organization. In fact, how did I end up here? Can you guys call me a cab real quick?

However, the more you actually know about the company, the better your chance of getting hired.

Imagine 2 equally competent candidates:

1. One who doesn't particularly care much about your company, and is only applying because they know you pay good salaries
2. Another who's been following your company blog for ages, loves your product, and has several friends already working in the company

Which one would you pick? Exactly, the second one!

So, with this job interview question, you want to convince the recruiter that you're candidate #2.

Now, how do you do that? Well, a rule of thumb here is to do some Googling before the interview and learn the following about the company:

- What does their product or service do?
- What impact does the product / service have?
- What's the company culture like?
- What are the latest news about the company? How are they performing?



Possible answers:

Sample Answer 1:

I hadn't heard about you until recently, actually. I found out about [Company] through your job ad on RandomJobBoard.

After doing some brief research on you guys, I ended up falling in love with yo software and your mission.

Now, I've worked with a ton of different project management software - Example Software 1, Example Software 2 - but none of them were as intuitive and as Example Software 3.

Sample Answer 2:

Well, I know that you're one of the biggest investment banks in [town / state / country]. Company X pops up on news pretty often - I've read that you've invested in some of the hottest tech IPOs, and have several up-and-coming biotech companies in your portfolio.

I got particularly interested by your recent investment in [Startup X], I found that interesting because of [Y Reason].

□ 7) Why should we hire you?

Ah, the ultimate humble-brag question.

Now, the real question is, how do you sell yourself without trying to look arrogant desperate, or needy?

A good rule of thumb here is to stay away from the extremes. Think you're a good for the job? Say that "you have the right experience."

Whatever you do, don't oversell yourself:

"I'm the best salesman you've ever met!"

Instead, make a general statement (I'm a great fit for the position because...) and about your experiences and achievements.

Here are 3 general points you can mention:

1. How you're super passionate about working for the company (and why).
2. How your skills fit their requirements.
3. How you're going to help the company solve their existing problems. Improve a metric, setup a process, etc.

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Possible answers:

Sample Answer 1:

Well, as a start, I have all the skills and work experience required for the job. I've worked as a Sales Manager for 5+ years, and over the past 2, I've closed several deals totalling in 6-figures.

Oh, and on top of that, I have experience working with tech companies, so I'll be able to pick up all the product specifics much faster than the other candidates.

Sample Answer 2:

I have just the right skill-set to excel as an executive assistant. While I haven't previously worked as a personal assistant, I pretty much fit the bill for the role

I'm extremely organized, having managed several project teams in my university. I led the organization of Event #1 and Event #2. This involved continuous communication with 12+ companies, 30 speakers, and 15+ sponsor

I'm very meticulous and organized, and I'm more than capable of helping the CEO get the most out of their free time.

Looking for more sample answers? Check out these 10+ answers to "[Why should I hire you?](#)"

8) What are your salary requirements?

This is always a tricky question. You don't want to lowball yourself, but at the same time, you don't want to be told "No" because you gave such an outrageous num

When answering, keep these 3 things in mind:

- What's the average salary for someone of your skill-level?
- How much does the company pay employees of your skill level? [GlassDoor](#) should be super helpful here.
- Finally, how much are you getting paid in your current company? In most cases you can probably negotiate a pay bump from what you're currently getting.

The final number you tell them should incorporate all 3 of the points we just mentioned. Do you know for a fact that the company is doing well (and compenses employees accordingly)? You'd quote a higher salary.

Is your skill-level above average? This should be reflected in your salary.

As a rule of thumb, you can figure out 2 numbers: what's the "good" scenario, and what's the "best" scenario?

Answer the interviewer with your "best" pay, and worst case scenario, they'll negotiate it down.



can also answer with a range, and c somewhere in the middle.

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er

Possible answers:

Sample Answer 1:

My salary expectation is around \$70,000 annually.

Sample Answer 2:

My salary requirement is in the \$30,000 - \$40,000 range annually.

9) Do you have any questions for us?

You'll hear this question in **every interview** you will attend.

While there isn't a right answer, there IS a wrong answer:

Nope, all good! Thanks, I'll go show myself out.

Instead, with this question, you want to show your enthusiasm about the company. Imagine they've already hired you and you're starting tomorrow - what would you like to know about them?

Keep in mind, though, that the questions shouldn't be too easy (So, what does your company do?).

Other than showing the recruiter that you're really interested in working for them, this is your opportunity to really find out more about the ins and outs of the place.

The answers you get from the interviewer could also be an indicator of **whether they really want to work there or not**.

So, what kind of questions can you ask? Here are some of the most essential ones:

Possible questions to ask at the end of an interview:

1. What does a regular day in this company look like?
2. What's the best thing about working for the company?
3. What's the worst thing about working for the company?
4. What would you say are the biggest challenges a person in this position



t face?

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What are the most important skills and qualities a person in this position needs to have?

6. What do you like best about working in this company?
7. What are the most pressing issues and projects that need to be addressed?
8. Do you have training programs available to employees?
9. What sort of budget is there for my department?
10. What kind of opportunities do you have for future development?
11. What are the performance expectations for someone in this position?
12. Do departments usually collaborate with one another?
13. Do you celebrate birthdays or retirements in the office?
14. Do employees usually hang out with each other outside of work?
15. Is there anything else I can help you with at this stage?
16. What is the next step in the hiring process?

For the complete list of [all the questions you can ask the interviewer](#), check out our article!

10) What are you looking for in a new position?

The easiest way to answer this question would be to simply say that you're looking for whatever the company is offering.

Look at it from the point of view of the potential employer. Would they hire someone if they answered this question with:

A good salary. And uhh, well, that's about it!

This answer pretty much says that the moment they get a higher paying offer, they're going to jump ship!

Instead, explain to the interviewer that **this job at this company** is the perfect fit for you. Mention what your short-term and long-term [career goals](#) are, and how this position ties to them.

Possible answer:

I'm looking to further apply my machine learning skills that I developed during my 2+ years of work at [Startup X]. There, I used to do programmatic ads modeling and design.

Now, I'm looking for an opportunity to work on a larger scale project that involves setting up programmatic ads for audiences of more than 10 million people.

I believe that worked with such a large-scale project will allow me to progress

*I significantly faster in my career.*[Register](#)[Sign In](#)

11) Are you considering other positions in other companies?

Here's a tricky one: How much does the HR manager need to know here?

If you admit to having interviews with other companies, it might look like you're not 100% dedicated to this one.

On the other hand, if you say you are not considering other positions, it might make you seem like you don't have other options (and the company has the upper hand in salary negotiations).

The right way to go about here is to find common ground between the two answers.

The interviewer is probably asking because they want to know whether they have competition in hiring you. They also want to know if you are serious about the interview and are legitimately looking to be employed in this field of work.

If you do have other interviews lined up for other companies, express that you are **keeping your options open** but that you favor this job in comparison to the other ones.

Don't have many other options? Stick to the same approach.

Whatever you do, don't make it seem like you're desperate or that you don't have other options.

Possible answers:

Sample Answer 1:

I have had two interviews during the past week with companies in X and Y industries.

However, as I'm very passionate about both your industry and the work you have done during the past several years, I am more inclined toward working for you, if everything works out.

Sample Answer 2:

Not yet - I wasn't really actively looking for a job until my friend, [name], recommended your company. I'm not looking for just any company - I'm interested in an interesting, engaging project such as yours.

12) What is the professional achievement you're most proud of?

This is another version of the "Why should we hire you" question, but with a focus



→ specific achievement.

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This one's pretty straightforward, just mention your #1 professional achievement you're good to go.

As a given, the achievement has to be related to the job you're applying for. Let's say you're applying for the position of **Sales Manager**:

- **[Incorrect Example]**

"I'm very good at underwater basket-weaving, having woven 20+ baskets in the past year."

- **[Correct Example]**

"In my previous sales position, I managed to hit and exceed department KPIs by 50%+ for 6 months in a row"

Keep in mind, though, that you want to be very specific with your answer. To get it right, try using the **STAR method**. It goes something like this:

S: Situation - Set the scene and context.

T: Task - Describe what your challenge or responsibility was.

A: Action - List and dwell on all the actions you took towards addressing the challenge or responsibility.

R: Result - Explain what the outcomes were and how they fit with the overall goal of the project or company.

So, find a work-related achievement that showcases your contribution through your skills and experience to something that matters to the company.

Possible answers:

Sample Answer 1:

My biggest achievement is the fact that I went from being an intern to managing company X's entire marketing over 2 years.

As an intern, I basically had 0 instructions on what to do - it went like "hey, go learn social media advertising and get it going." The founders didn't exactly expect me to achieve much, and didn't particularly care, as they were 100% focused on making the product work.

Instead of just complaining about a lack of direction, I started reading up on digital marketing - pretty much anything I could get my hands on. I learned

how to do content marketing for example, from Neil Patel's blog, and started putting everything into practice.

My first success was getting an article to go viral, generating over \$5,000 revenue in a single day. While that's not much for a software company, it felt



... a lot for an intern.

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After that, the founding team gave me a lot more trust, and assigned me a small marketing budget of \$1,000 per month. With a lot more confidence in my abilities, I started experimenting with other strategies.

Then, over the next 2 years, I got promoted to Head of Marketing. After making a couple of hires, I managed to scale up our marketing efforts, growing the company from \$2,000 to \$30,000 monthly recurring revenue.

Sample Answer 2:

My greatest accomplishment so far is graduating from [University X] within 4 years, with a GPA of 3.9. My family was unable to support me financially, so I had to take care of all the university bills on my own.

Through hard work and dedication, I ended up graduating with almost no student loans. I managed this through a combination of:

1. Working part-time while studying
2. Doing seasonal full-time work during the summer
3. Maintaining a high CGPA and winning 2 scholarships over 4 years

13) What kind of work environment do you like best?

The aim of this question is to assess whether you'll **fit in the company's working environment**.

For example, some organizations are pretty structured and hierarchical, they require tight organization and have a well-planned day filled with rules and guidelines on how to do things.

If you're the creative, think-out-of-the-box type who likes to break the rules and innovate, this is probably not going to cut it for you.

On the other hand, some companies are more laid back, with a lot less bureaucracy. "Go get us more sales" can actually be your main duty for the week if you're working in an early stage startup.

If you're the type who prefers to have strict to-dos and objectives, you probably enjoy such a job.

So, the takeaway? Different people work best in different environments, and that's okay.

Before you go to the interview, go through the company's website and **social media** pages to get a sense of the general **vibe** and **environment** there.

Look at **employee** reviews on GlassDoor, or if you know someone already working there, ask them.



Possible answers:

Sample Answer 1:

I work best in smaller companies. I really dislike the corporate world - rules, guidelines, SOPs, and so on. I perform best when I have a certain level of freedom to do things. Want to find innovative solutions to problems you didn't even know you had? I'm your guy.

Want someone to just blindly follow instructions and do what they're told? Then we'd probably not be a good fit.

Sample Answer 2:

I love working in a youthful, energetic environment. You know, when you're working on a common goal with a team of people who are as passionate as you are?

I like to think of my work as a second home, and my coworkers as family.

The last company I worked at had such an environment, and I excelled at the job.

I get that exact feeling about Company X, since the moment I walked in here for the interview. So, I'm pretty excited to get to know how you guys work!

14) Where do you see yourself in five years?

Sometimes the honest answer to this is “*Hopefully not doing this.*” especially with entry-level jobs.

Don’t think the hiring manager doesn’t know it, though. There are diplomatic ways to go around it.

In general, the motivation behind this question is for the interviewer to assess whether you are **an ambitious person** or not and whether you have **realistic expectations** for your career.

Make sure to avoid any of the cliche answers such as...

“*In your seat!*”

Or

“*As the big boss man*”

Instead, think realistically about what **the next step** after this position is, and whether it is possible to **reach it within the company** you are applying at.

**possible answers:**[Register](#)[Sign In](#)**Sample Answer 1:**

Within the next 5 years, I'd like to reach the position of a Senior Business Consultant. During the time period, I would like to accomplish the following:

Help 20+ organizations improve their business

Create a personal network of highly specialized professionals

Learn as much as I can about optimizing and improving clients' businesses, as well as the essentials of operating a company

Sample Answer 2:

As a start, I want to learn if accounting is the right field for me. While I loved what I studied at the university, I want to see if working in the field feels the same.

If I do end up enjoying it, I'd like to specialize in either internal auditing or forensic accounting, as I really like to discover and solve problems. From what I've seen from your job ads, you guys are hiring for both, so I hope it's going to be possible to move up from the position of an "intern" within the next few months!

Still not sure how to answer this one? We don't blame you! Sometimes, you might know what you're doing next week, let alone next year! Check out our guide to answering the "[Where do you see yourself in 5 years?](#)" job interview question to 1 more possible answers.

How to Answer 18 Situational Job Interview Questions

Congrats!

You're past the hard part.

You already know the most common job interview questions, and can probably deflect whatever the interviewer throws at you.

Depending on your specific situation, though, you might also need to learn how to answer these situational job interview questions...

1) Why haven't you gotten your Master's Degree/Ph.D.?

As a start, keep in mind that the interviewer isn't judging you for your decision.



if they were looking for someone w

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invited you to an interview. The degree is not the dealbreaker here, but your answer to the question might be.

When asking this question, the interviewer is trying to see your reasoning for pursuing a career instead of getting another degree.

Heck, there's a chance that if you give them the right answer, they're even going to like you more than someone with 3 Phds!

So, simply explain why you didn't think that another degree was the right thing for you at the time.

Don't say you were lazy or didn't feel like it, or that it's a waste of money (even if it might be the case).

Instead, give compelling arguments, such as...

- You wanted to see whether your field was the right one for you.
- You didn't have the financial resources at the time.
- You wanted to get some practical work experience before committing to another degree.

Possible answers:

Sample Answer 1:

At this stage of my life, I decided to pursue my career instead of further education. On the one hand, I want to make sure that Marketing is what I want to do with my life.

On the other hand, I believe that in my field, practical work experience is a lot more valuable than academic.

So far, my decision has paid off pretty well - I've already gotten a lot of experience doing online marketing for 3+ companies and delivering awesome results to boot.

I might eventually decide to pursue a masters, but at this point, I really don't see the point in that.

Sample Answer 2:

Because it's not in sync with my future career path. I believe that for software engineering, practical experience matters a lot more than having a degree.

I've already done an internship as a Junior Javascript Back-end Developer, and I believe that it gave me a lot more knowledge than my B.A. in Computer Science.

While I am eventually planning on getting a Masters, it's going to be in a more theoretical field, such as Artificial Intelligence.



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2) Why have you switched jobs so many times?

If you've switched jobs in a very short period of time (2 or more full-time positions per year), the interviewer is bound to ask about it.

After all, job-hopping is one of the biggest red flags for HR managers.

True, you might have had a reasonable cause. Maybe the second company you were hired in just wasn't a good culture fit for you.

Well, you'll have to communicate that.

Companies tend to be skeptical because of the following reasons...

- You might be a **job hopper**. Some people tend to switch jobs the moment they get a better salary offer.
- You might be **unqualified** for the job and you quit because you couldn't deliver.
- You get **bored easily** and your solution to that is quitting.

So, your job here is to convince the interviewer that you don't belong to any of these 3 categories.

You need to make them realize that **you will not jump ship** a few months after getting hired just because some recruiter PM'd you on LinkedIn with a better offer.

The best way to answer this question is to explain the reason you switched jobs. It could be one of the following:

- The company culture wasn't a good fit. This happens to the best of us - sometimes the company just isn't the right one.
- The job description was misleading and you ended up doing something you either didn't enjoy, or were not qualified for.
- You learned that you simply didn't enjoy the job, and are not willing to try out something different. While this isn't the best potential answer, it's honest and chances are, the HR manager will understand.

Possible answers:

Sample Answer 1:

The last company I got hired in just wasn't what I expected. The hiring manager didn't communicate the role well enough.

As you already know, I'm a copywriter - I write sales copy. I work with:

-Landing pages

-Email marketing

-And sales pages

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I'd a week after I started work at the company, I realized I was actually looking for something completely different. They asked me to write generic blog and social media posts, which is pretty far off from what I do.

This was really not what I expected, and not something I find interesting.

Sample Answer 2:

Well, as a start, my first job was in a big corporation straight out of university. While I did learn a lot there about Software Engineering practices, I also learned that a huge company with lots of regulations, rules, and the like isn't for me.

So, at the end of my internship there, I decided to try working at a startup. I enjoyed that job a LOT more, as it gave me a lot of freedom when it comes to problem-solving. I wasn't told HOW to do it. Rather, I was given the option of coming up with my own solution.

Unfortunately, the company went belly-up after failing to raise money, putting me back on the job market.

And here we are - [Company X] is pretty much THE place I've always wanted to work in. I've heard a lot about your company culture, and thought I'd really belong there.

□ 3) Why did you change your career path?

If you recently [changed your career path](#), the interviewer is sure to ask about it.

Don't worry - there's nothing wrong with this.

A lot of people go through a [career change](#). Some even do it several times in their lifetime!

As long as you're good at what you do, no one cares if you were a pediatrician in one year, and a professional chef in another.

When asked this question, all you have to do is answer truthfully. Explain how your job just wasn't for you, and how the job you're applying for is so much more interesting.

Possible answers:

Sample Answer

I realized that being a doctor is not for me. While I did enjoy my 3 years in medical school, the 6 year study period was too much.

I wanted to start making money and help out my family way before that, so I dropped out of university and started taking online courses in accounting.



...s point, I'm pretty good at it, having worked at Firm X and [Company Y].

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Sample Answer 2

Simply because I enjoy doing sales much more than accounting. After 5 years of working as an accountant for Firm X, I decided I wanted to try something new.

I asked my boss at the time to let me transition to the sales team, and I ended up liking it AND being pretty good at it.

4) Why did you decide to leave your previous/current job?

When asking this question, the interviewer wants to learn:

- **Did you have a good reason for leaving your last job? The HR manager doesn't want someone that just jumps ship the moment things go bad.**

Incorrect Example:

"Oh, well, the company started bleeding cash and was on its way to bankruptcy."

Correct Example:

"I felt like it was time - I got to a point where everything I was doing felt monotonous. I learned as much as I could at this position while delivering amazing results. It was, however, time to switch to something new."

- Did you leave on good terms? Meaning, did you go through the offboarding process, instructing your coworkers on how to take up your responsibilities? Or did you just say "Adios" and stopped showing up at work?

Incorrect Example:

"Things started to get really boring, and the boss man was kind of mean. I totally deserve better, so I just ghosted them and now I'm looking for a new company. Hi!"



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Correct Example:

"I didn't feel like the company's values coincide with mine. The management was too controlling and micromanaging. I prefer to have some control over my work, and being able to contribute by going above and beyond my requirements."

Of course, I went through the off-boarding properly. Meaning, gave a [timely resignation notice](#), and transferred all the essential company knowledge to my replacement.”

- Did you leave voluntarily, or were you fired?

Incorrect Example:

"I got fired for missing work for a week without an excuse."

Correct Example:

"I was fired, actually. The fault was in my communication skills at the time. I misunderstood my supervisor's instructions and ended up setting a higher monthly spend on ad account for the client. The losses were not more than 3-figures, but apparently, the relationship with the client was already strained, so they ended up leaving."

Of course, I really took this to heart and worked very hard on improving my communication skills, to ensure that I don't make any mistakes of this nature ever again."

5) Why is there a gap in your work experience?

In most cases, a gap in your work experience doesn't really mean anything. You probably have a very good reason for it.

The interviewer, however, will definitely ask about it, and you should answer adequately.

There's no secret sauce to answering this question, just let the recruiter know about your situation, whatever that may be:

- Maternity leave
- Health issues



g for a sick family member
off to pursue further education

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- Relocating to a different city
- Working on a personal project

Whichever the case may be, just explain the situation in brief and move on.

One thing to keep in mind, however, is that if you were laid off at work, or you quit and had trouble [getting a new job](#), you should be very subtle about it.

If the interviewer knows that you're struggling to [find a job](#), you're going to give them the upper hand in salary negotiations.

Possible answers:

Sample Answer 1:

"I had a baby and had to take maternity leave."

Sample Answer 2:

"My father was sick, so I had to be the one to take care of him full-time over a few months."

6) Why were you fired?

Now this is a tough one.

Getting fired is pretty much never good.

Keep in mind that we're talking about getting fired, not getting laid off. There's a huge difference between the two:

- **Getting laid off** means that you got let go for something that had nothing to do with your competence. *I.e. budget cuts, company down-sizing, etc.*
- **Getting fired**, on the other hand, means that you got let go for a reasonable cause. And chances are, it's probably your fault.

If you got fired and the interviewer asks you about it, you should be honest. After all, they can easily check-in with your previous employer.

Your best shot here is to be critical about your mistakes, and explain what you've done to improve.

Incorrect example:

"None of it was my fault. My boss is a total tool, and he hates me for no real reason. He yelled at me for no real reason!"



example above, the interviewee g
... for the HR manager.

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re

Instead, try saying something that shows that you're aware of your mistakes."

Correct example:

"The main fault was in miscommunication. The interviewer was unclear about the job responsibilities - from what I understood, they were looking for a senior level marketer to oversee their email marketing operations.

At the end of the day, though, it turned out that the company was looking to experiment with email marketing, and specifically for someone to set it up from scratch.

While I did my best to deliver, in the end it turned out that their niche doesn't actually need email marketing. This was against the management's vision, so that decided to let me go."

7) How do you feel about working weekends or late hours?

You're gonna get asked this question in one of the following 2 cases:

1) You're applying for a job that requires working odd hours.

In this case, your answer is pretty straightforward - since you're applying for such a job, you probably don't have any problems working odd hours.

Sample answer:

"Sure! I'm OK with working late hours or weekends, as long as you let me know about it at least a few days in advance."

2) You're applying for just about any other type of job.

Now, you should look at this as a red flag. Is the employer just checking your dedication, or are they looking for someone that's going to work 24/7 with no overtime pay?

In this case, ask them to clarify what they mean.

Sample answer:



n enough warning, sure. Is that som...
you offer overtime pay for this kind of situation?"

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8) How would your boss or coworkers describe you?

This question is pretty much the same as “[what are your greatest strengths](#),” the difference is that it should be from the point of view from your boss or coworkers.

Here, you want to focus on your traits and achievements that you’ve previously been praised for (After all, the interviewer might ask for a reference!).

There are at least 2 ways to answer this question:

1) Describe a specific situation where you excelled at work (and received praise from your boss and coworkers)

Sample Answer

“They’d say I’m super hard working. During my weekend-off, not one, but three of my coworkers got sick, and I had to spot for them.

The weekend was peak season in Nantucket, so the restaurant was getting seriously overwhelmed. All of a sudden, we went from being very prepared for the season, to complete panic.

Had to jump between serving, bussing, and line-cooking, but overall, managed to survive through the weekend successfully.”

2) Quote a performance review

If you’ve previously worked in an office job, you’re probably all too familiar with this question:

Did your boss give you a glowing performance review? Make sure to mention it here.

Sample answer:

“Well, in my last performance review in September, my boss described me as someone who takes initiative.

My position as a PR manager involves constantly keeping track of our clients’ brand reputation, and if something goes wrong, dealing with it as fast as possible.

In a lot of cases, you need to be very proactive - if you wait for your entire team to notice a problem, it’s already too late.

*I've had to have a meeting on how to deal with th*[Register](#)[Sign In](#)[Gate](#)

There were 4-5 different situations where I had to take charge and react to problems literally the moment they arose, whether it was during my work hours or not."

9) Do you have any serious medical conditions?

When asking this question, the interviewer wants to learn if you have any medical conditions that could impair your ability to do the job correctly.

In most cases, you're not obliged to give an answer. If you do have a health condition and it doesn't have anything to do with your career, you can simply choose not to answer, or to say "No."

However, you might want to disclose anything that could potentially have an impact on how you perform.

For example, if the job requires you to lift heavy boxes, for example, and you're unable to do so because of a condition, you should let the HR manager know.

Possible answers:

[Sample Answer 1]

"I don't have any serious medical conditions"

[Sample answer 2]

"I'm unable to lift heavy objects because of issues with my back, but it won't have any impact on how I perform at an office job"

10) What would your first 30, 60, or 90 days look like in this role?

If you're applying for a senior or leadership role, you're probably going to get asked this question.

Chances are, at this stage of the interview, you already know a lot about your future position and the company.

Now, it's time to show off your knowledge in your field, and explain how you're going to start making things happen at the company.

So, here's how to answer the question:

**For the first 30 days:**[Register](#)[Sign In](#)

You're probably going to need to get to know the company first. You're going to be learning as much as possible, including information on:

- What does the company do?
- What are the key processes?
- What does your department do?
- What are the current problems and challenges?
- Where can you help?

Then, during the 60 days:

You'll start making things happen. From all the info you gathered, suggest a handful (3 to 5) initiatives you could take on:

- You'd audit the company email marketing strategy and suggest improvements
- You'll help come up with better ad copies for Facebook marketing
- You'll help the team with their ongoing marketing initiatives

Within the first 90 days:

You're already have started making an impact. Describe several things you think are going to be functioning better:

- Online ads are going to be performing better by 10-20%
- Email marketing operations are going to be more streamlined, taking significantly less manpower

□ 11) Are you a team player?

Wherever you're applying, the answer to this question should be a “Yes!”

Even if you're applying for a completely solo role, chances are, you're still going to have to work in a team **occasionally**.

We'd recommend being very specific about your answer here - don't just say yes. Give the interviewer an exact example of when you excelled at working with a team.

Possible answers...



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Sample Answer 1:

"I'm much better at working in a team than alone, actually. That's what I love about working in advertising - everyone has their own specific type of a creative spark, and when you combine it all, magic happens!"

"I'm good at both leading and following in terms of creativity and brainstorming. I'm also super receptive to others ideas, and do my best to help them execute it without nay-saying or criticism."

Sample Answer 2:

"Yep, definitely. I excel at team-work."

This one time while working at [Company X], I was assigned to an existing team working on a web application for a business process management company.

They were working on a tight deadline, and needed help on the API side.

I optimised their development cycles and oversaw a team of three developers while collaborating with the other two dev teams.

Everything went pretty well, and we managed to finish the project on time."

12) Are you a risk-taker?

This one's pretty tricky, as the answer here depends on your profession and field.

Ask yourself - is risk-taking a valuable skill for the job?

If you're a pilot, for example, the answer should be a strict "No!"

If, on the other hand, you're a day trader, then risk is an essential part of your job

So, depending on how valuable risk is for your job, answer accordingly.

You could also give a more strategic answer. Let's say, for example, you work in investment banking. You need to be a risk taker to an extent, but being too risk-friendly might make the entire company go bankrupt.

The strategy in such a case would be to show that you're all about **calculated risk**. You're willing to take chances, but only when the odds are in your favor.

As with most interview questions, you should give examples of situations where you had to take risks, and what the end-results were.

Possible answers:

Sample Answer 1:



I'm a risk-taker. I believe that to act
I'm willing to take a certain level of risk.

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Pretty much any marketing initiative you launch is tied to risk. You can plan everything from beginning till the end, but no matter how well you plan it out, things might just not work out.

It's just part of the job - in order to succeed, you need to take launch risky campaigns on a regular basis, and hopefully, one in every 5 is going to bring you massive results."

Sample Answer 2:

"I'm not a risk-taker, I'm more of a risk-manager. As someone who's been in finance for years, I can say with a lot of confidence that there's risk in everything.

The most important things are to one, minimize your risks, and two, minimize potential damages if everything goes very, very wrong.

While working at Investment Bank X, we had a very interesting policy for investing in new fintech projects. We used to avoid moon-shots, high-tech projects, as well as anything that had an experimental business model.

Our strategy was to invest in proven tech. As in, proven product-market fit, business model, etc. In most cases, these were runner up companies. We wouldn't invest in that one innovative company that was all over the news - we'd instead invest in their latest competitor. More often than not, this ended up being more profitable, and significantly less risky."

□ 13) How do you deal with pressure or stressful situations?

If you're applying for a high-stress job, you're guaranteed to get asked this question.

The aim of this question is to see if you're the type of person who'd survive working the job, or fall through the cracks when the first signs of trouble show up.

Obviously, you wouldn't answer with the following...

"Well, I end up having a panic attack, crying, and running away from work."

Instead, answer as follows...

- Say that yes, you do tend to perform well during stressful situations
- Give 1-2 examples of a situation where you had to perform well under pressure

Now, let's go through some real-life examples:

Possible answers:

**Sample Answer 1:**[Register](#)[Sign In](#)

"Though I can't particularly say I enjoy stressful situations, I AM very good at working under pressure.

During chaos and panic, I tend to take a step back, think, plan, and prioritize.

For example, there have been times I've had to juggle multiple university projects and assignments at the same time. I would break up large assignments into small, individual tasks, and prioritize based on:

How fast I could complete each task

Figuring out which task would take the longest

Which project had the earliest deadline

This way, my work became a lot more manageable. The most times I had to experience such situations, the better I performed overall."

Sample Answer 2:

"I actually prefer working under pressure. I look at it as a challenge - a situation where I really have to up my game to succeed.

As a cook, working under pressure is pretty much part of the job. I've been in several situations where the restaurant was understaffed for the occasion. Heck, it's pretty much a constant thing during peak season.

When there's a ton of orders coming in and we can barely keep up, I tend to get significantly more productive than usual."

14) Do you prefer hard work, or smart work?

By definition, hard work is when you, well, work hard. It's when you're willing to put a lot of work to get the job done.

Smart work on the other hand, means doing the work efficiently. If you manage to get the job done in 2 hours instead of 5, with the same end-result, you're doing smart work.

Keep in mind, though, that by asking this question, the interviewer is looking to understand what your work ethic is like. Meaning, they're looking for a healthy combination of both, not just one.

That is, they want you to be the candidate who not only thinks smartly but works as well.

So, your answer here shouldn't be one-sided...

"Oh, I loooove smart work. That's when you come up with what to do, and make others people do it, right?"

Instead, explain how you excel at both:

**sample answer:**[Register](#)[Sign In](#)

"I don't particularly have a preference - I believe that both hard and smart work is important to get the best results."

Smart work, on one hand, lets you figure out the best and most efficient way to get things done.

Hard work, on the other hand, means that you'll do the job right. Even if there's no way to do it smart or efficiently, you'll be willing to put in long hours of work to get it done.

I'm the type that does both.

For an example of smart for, during my time at [Made Up Corporation], I was in charge of the sales department. As a process improvement initiative, I migrated from an outdated, in-house CRM, to Pipedrive. This improved the department's productivity by around 20%.

On the other hand, the whole migration process took around 3 months of hard work. As the software we were using was outdated, trying to learn how to map and migrate our data was a lot more complicated than we'd expected."

15) How quickly do you adapt to new technology?

Today, whether you're applying for a software engineering job, or as a cashier in a supermarket, you're going to need to use technology at least on some level.

It's very common for a company to adopt new tech - new point of service system check-out kiosks, customer management software, and whatever else.

So, you should be able to pick up **new tech ASAP**. Any new change shouldn't completely disrupt your work.

So, when answering this question, you should talk about how tech-savvy you are.

Possible answers:

Sample Answer:

"I'm pretty tech-savvy. I've worked with a lot of different Point of Service systems so far, and have zero difficulties learning how to use new ones."

As a given, I own a PC, have used Office 365, and all the usual stuff."

Sample Answer 2:

"I've always been interested in tech. In fact, I'm the type of person to actively seek out new software to help solve business problems at work."



orked with 3 different Customer Management Systems such as PipeDrive, SalesForce, and Zoho CRM."

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16) Do you have any interests outside of work?

If the interviewer asks you this question, take it as a good sign!

It means that they liked your professional background, and now they're just trying to get to know you and see if you're a good fit for the company culture.

It's pretty hard to go wrong here, unless you're going to answer something like:

"I have literally no hobbies."

or...

"All I do is play video games all day."

Just talk about your [hobbies and interests](#), and you're all set!

Bonus points if you can mention something that's also relevant to your job (creative writing if you're applying for a copywriting job, for example).

Possible answers:

Sample Answer 1

"I'm a big fan of creative writing. I have my own personal short-story blog, and I contribute actively to several online writing communities (such as Writing Prompts on Reddit).

Oh, and I'm also a huge fan of the New York Giants."

Sample Answer 2

"Well, I'm very interested in all sorts of sports. I like to keep active, as it really helps keep me productive. Over the past 2 years, I've done a bit of everything from fencing, archery, hiking, and several other things."

17) What do you think our company/organization could do better?

Well, this one's interesting!

While not too common for most organizations, it's a favorite amongst tech companies.



How come? Well, answering this question shows a couple of things:

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- That you're really passionate about the organization, and have done your research
- Are not afraid of giving feedback

Obviously, you should be very political about your feedback. You can't just say the

Incorrect example:

"Well, a lot of things really. I'm not enjoying this interview right here, for example.

And your product kinda sucks, no offense. But hey, there's always room for improvement, am I right?"

Instead, you want to show off the research you've done. Talk about anything that might seem off about their product or business:

Correct example:

"I actually went through your resume builder before coming to the interview, and found several things that seemed kinda counter-intuitive.

Not to say that it's too hard to understand, or something, but it took me a while to figure out some stuff.

If you want, I can open up my laptop and show you what I mean."

How to Answer 3 Most Common Behavioral Questions in an Interview [w/ Possible Answers]

Finally, **behavioral job interview questions** are questions that focus on how you've performed in the past, or how you'd perform in a specific situation.

They're used to understand your thinking patterns, and whether you can think on your feet.

Remember the [STAR interview method](#) we discussed all the way up? Well, it can be used to answer just about any behavioral interview questions.

To brush up your memory, the main idea behind the STAR method is that each answer should involve the following:



Question

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- **T: Task** - Describe what your challenge or responsibility was.
- **A: Action** - List and dwell on all the actions you took towards addressing the challenge or responsibility.
- **R: Result** - Explain what the outcomes were and how they fit with the overall goal of the project or company.

Here are 3 of the most common behavioral interview questions (with sample answers):

1) Give an example of how you have handled a challenge in the workplace before.

What the interviewers want to know in this case is how well you handle conflict and difficulties.

So, the answer here should be pretty straightforward. You should describe a challenge you faced at work, and explain how you solved it.

Possible answers:

Sample Answer 1

"During my last job as a Google Ads expert, one of the company clients had accidentally butchered their own ad account. I noticed this over the weekend and saw that they were basically wasting money on nothing.

I took the initiative and immediately got in touch with the client to let them know about the issue. Then, we set up an impromptu meeting on the same day and fixed the account before any real damage could be done."

Sample Answer 2

"During my last job, I was managing the creative and web dev team in charge of creating an online store for a client. Two days before deploying, we found a major bug that messed up the whole front-end user experience.

Now, we could have pushed the deadline a bit, but that would have messed up the relationship with the client. The project was already postponed once because of unforeseen circumstances, so this one was a do or die.

I assembled a task force consisting of web developers from my team, as well as some software engineers from another department. We focused 100% of our time on fixing the issue, and actually managed to launch on time at the end."

2) Give an example of when you performed well under pressure.

For any high-stress work environment, you're guaranteed to get asked this question.



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Possible answers:

Sample Answer 1

"I actually perform a lot better when under a lot of pressure. The sense of urgency and importance really motivates me to up my game and make sure everything works out right."

When I worked as a Financial Analyst at [MadeUpFinanceCompanyInc], most of the work was very high pressure. I had to go above and beyond the line of duty to make sure we met the tight deadlines set by our clients. This often meant working 12 hour work days, and sometimes, working over the weekend.

Sample Answer 2

"As a seasonal worker, my entire career is high-pressure, haha... My last position was as a line cook during the summer at the SomeRestaurant in JacksonHole, Wyoming.

Around 3 out of 4 of the months were super high stress - there was a LOT of work, and the restaurant was pretty much always full. Heck, I've even had to skip breaks just to make sure we wouldn't be understaffed."

3) Give an example of when you showed leaders qualities.

Applying for a leadership position? You'll definitely get asked this behavioral interview question.

Keep in mind, though, that this question doesn't necessarily mean that you should have held a managerial position.

What the interviewer is asking for is a situation when you took the initiative and led a project or an initiative.

Possible answer:

"As an entry-level marketer, there was not much expected of me at SoftwareCompanyInc.. My main to-dos involved doing research, and completing whatever tasks were assigned to me."

During a content marketing brainstorming session, I came up with an awesome idea to market the company. The gist of it was, we'd interview company clients who were very successful at using the software, create case studies on what exactly they're doing, and include it in our email marketing strategy.



Chief Marketing Officer loved the idea of my project, which I did with flying colors.

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[BONUS] Job Interview Infographic

Now, it's time for a quick recap! Check our our new infographic on some of the most common job interview questions (and how to answer them):





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11



Common interview **questions** and best **answers**



1. Why would you like to work here?

Mention what you like about the company and the position and how you can be a good addition to the work environment. This will show the interviewer that you have knowledge of the company and the job.



2. Why should we choose you?

Be confident when responding to this question. Have a short focused sales pitch where you say what you can offer the employer and how you can contribute to the success of the company.



3. Tell me about yourself

Share the right amount of personal information without getting into detail, especially about religious and political beliefs as they might cause contradictions. Talk about your education and motivation factors.



4. Where do you see yourself in 5 years?



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This is a tricky question. They are trying to figure out if you are going to run after the first better opportunity. It's best if your answer is focused on the company and the job you are applying for.



5. What are your strengths?

Discuss the skills and competencies that qualify you for the specific position and make you stand out from the other candidates. Prepare examples that will match your strengths to the job requirements prior to the interview.



6. What are your weaknesses?

Try to answer by turning weaknesses into positive experiences that made you a better professional. Frame your response around your skills and qualifications.



7. How do you handle stress?

A good way to answer this question is to tell a story of how you handled a stressful situation at your previous job. An example would be if you were given a difficult task with a short deadline and you managed to complete it.



8. What motivates you?

With this question the interviewer is trying to find out if your personal motivations match the company culture and the Job specifications. The best strategy is to be honest and tell what would excite and motivate you if you were hired for the position.



9. What is your dream job?

Do your best to relate your answer to the job you are applying for. A way to respond to this question is to mention a certain personal or professional goal you'd like to reach through your "dream job." Avoid mentioning specific titles and saying "this job" as it might sound insincere.





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10. What salary do you expect?

Remember, only offer a number that you will accept and be able to live with. Research salaries for similar positions. A safe answer would be "I would like to be compensated according to my qualifications and experience."



Additional Interview Preparation Tips

11. Why did you leave your last job?

Another tricky question where you should stick to the facts and focus your answer more on the future. The good response would give the impression that you are motivated by the opportunities provided rather than trying to run away from an unpleasant job.



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Follow basic interview etiquette. Make eye contact with the interviewer, say 'please' and 'thank you', and so on.

And finally, good luck on the interview! You got this!

Suggested readings:

- [How to Make a Resume & Land That Job](#)
- [How to Make a Cover Letter](#)
- [How to Ace a Video Interview](#)
- [Thank You Email After Interview](#)
- [Phone Interview Questions & Tips](#)

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Author

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Interviewers want:

- To know about the journey that led you right to their doorstep.
- A VIP pass to your past performances, seeking evidence of how you shone in real-world situations.
- To ensure that your toolbox is well-stocked with the necessary technical and **soft skills**.

And hey, let's not forget: an interview isn't just a solo performance – it's a dialogue. To truly prepare for your job interview, arm yourself with some smart, insightful questions of your own. Whether you're chatting with a recruiter or your potential new employer, the questions you ask can shine a light on your enthusiasm and strategic thinking.

Lastly, remember that it's not only important to consider the questions recruiters might ask you or you might ask them, but also to be aware of **questions that should not be asked**. Knowing how to recognize and handle illegal interview questions ahead of time can make an awkward situation much easier to navigate.

To learn how to answer common interview questions and discover over 20 good questions to ask in an interview, start right here.

Behavioral Interview Questions

These questions begin with phrases like "**Tell me about a time when...**" or "**Give me an example of...**". To tackle **behavioral interview questions**, paint a picture of how brilliantly you've handled previous challenges and sprinted toward success.

Use the **STAR Method** to give a better structure to your stories and share your experiences like a pro storyteller. Now, let's dive into the examples.

1. How Do You Handle Stress and Pressure?

If feeling the heat of an intense workday is part of the gig you're after, interviewers will most likely toss this question your way. They want to find out how your cool-headed strategies under fire can keep the team's spirits from going up in smoke.

Example of how to answer this interview question:

- *"I thrive under pressure, which I believe is as much about mindset as it is about action. For instance, during a critical product launch, I faced unexpected glitches. Instead of panicking, I prioritized my tasks, communicated transparently with my team about the challenges, and together we worked through the issue systematically. This approach not only resolved the problems efficiently but also strengthened our team's problem-solving skills for future projects."*

2. Describe a Time You Faced a Significant Challenge at Work.

Brace yourself for a question that's as common as coffee breaks in the workplace: describe a significant challenge you've faced. Interviewers ask this question to reveal how you turned obstacles into springboards for success.

Example of how to answer this interview question:

- *"Last year, our team was on the verge of missing a critical deadline for a new client, which could have derailed the entire project. I spearheaded an emergency plan that involved reassigning tasks based on each team member's strengths and streamlining our communication process. It was challenging, but by fostering a collaborative environment and keeping morale high, we delivered quality work on time. This experience taught me the importance of adaptability and clear communication in crisis management."*

3. Can You Provide an Example of When You Showed Initiative?

Let's talk about that spark of self-starter energy that can be the difference between a good employee into a great one. When interviewers ask you to share a time you showed initiative, they're on the lookout for a self-motivated person who doesn't wait for a green light to accelerate toward improvement and success.

Example of how to answer this interview question:

- *"There was a moment when I observed that many customer queries were about the same few issues, which was overwhelming our support staff. Without being asked, I took the initiative to create detailed FAQs and troubleshooting guides. I then collaborated with the product and customer service teams to ensure accuracy and accessibility. After we published these resources, customer complaints decreased by 25%, and our resolution time improved significantly."*

4. Talk About a Time When You Had to Work Closely with Someone Whose Personality Was Very Different From Yours.

Teamwork makes the dream work, but what if your teammate is more of a solo artist? Recruiters ask this question to learn how you interact with diverse personalities in the workplace. This is important because the ability to click with different people is what transforms a group of individuals into a power squad.

Example of how to answer this interview question:

- *"In my previous job, I partnered with someone who was incredibly detail-oriented, while I'm more of a big-picture thinker. Initially, our approaches clashed, but then I realized it was a gift-in-disguise. I proposed we divide tasks to play to our strengths. I would outline the project's vision, and my coworker would fine-tune the details. This synergy not only improved the project outcome but also our mutual respect and work relationship."*

5. Tell Me About a Time You Failed. How Did You Deal With the Situation?

Oh, the dreaded F word – Failure. But in an interview, think of it as F for fortune because this question is a golden opportunity to showcase your resilience and learning agility. Interviewers want to see that you've got the determination to get back up after a stumble.

Example of how to answer this interview question:

- *"In my role as an **event coordinator**, I once overlooked a critical vendor booking for a large conference. Although I tried to secure a last-minute replacement, unfortunately, the booking had to be postponed due to my error. However, to ensure this never happened again, I conducted a thorough investigation to understand the oversight and implemented a double-confirmation system for all future bookings. From this humbling experience, I learned the importance of meticulous cross-checking in event management."*

6. Discuss a Time When You Went Above and Beyond the Call of Duty.

Here's your chance to tell a cool story. One where you are a superstar who doesn't just do the job to a minimum but rises above. Show recruiters you are the type of employee who throws an extra scoop of awesome into the work sundae just because you can.

Example of how to answer this interview question:

- *"As an **assistant manager**, I noticed the team's morale was low following some economic layoffs. I initiated a weekly 'Good News' session, where everyone shared positive achievements, both personal and professional. It wasn't in my job description, but this effort boosted team spirit and, in turn, productivity. It showed me how little acts of leadership can have a big impact on workplace culture."*

7. Provide an Example of a Goal You Reached and Tell me How You Achieved It.

Got goals? We bet you do. And when an interviewer asks you about them, they're on a hunt for evidence of your drive and ability to turn plans into reality. They want to know if you've got the vision to set sail towards ambitious horizons, plus the methodology and commitment to achieve results.

Example of how to answer this interview question:

- *"In my previous role as a **content manager**, I aimed to increase our website's traffic by 30% within six months. Diving into keyword research, revamping our SEO strategy, and pioneering a series of collaborative guest posts, I tracked our performance meticulously. This hands-on adaptive approach paid off with a 45% traffic surge, surpassing our original goal and proving the power of a targeted content strategy."*

8. Tell Me About a Time When You Had to Deal With Conflict on the Job.

This **conflict-resolution question** is a recruiter's way of taking a sneak peek into how you navigate workplace drama. When answering this question, show off your soft skills. Recruiters will

be looking to evaluate your emotional intelligence, problem-solving abilities, and talent for maintaining professional composure under fire.

Example of how to answer this interview question:

- *"In my last role as a **customer service manager**, two team members clashed over how to handle a recurring problem with a product. I mediated the situation by arranging a meeting to discuss the issue openly. By encouraging a solution-focused dialogue, we identified the root cause and agreed on a customer-centric solution that satisfied everyone. This incident underscored the importance of open communication and teamwork in resolving conflicts."*

9. How Do You Handle a Situation Where You Have to Meet Multiple Deadlines?

Deadlines are the bread and butter of workplace productivity. Recruiters ask this question to assess your time-management skills. It's their way of figuring out if you can tackle the tick-tock of the clock and juggle, prioritize, and triumph without breaking a sweat.

Example of how to answer this interview question:

- *"When faced with simultaneous project deadlines, I lean on my prioritization skills. For instance, at my last job, I organized tasks by urgency and impact, allocating time to each based on their deadline and importance. I managed to submit all projects on time without compromising on quality."*

Situational Interview Questions

Think of these questions as a flight simulator for job candidates, where hiring managers can witness your piloting skills before you ever leave the ground. Situational job interview questions and answers like the following give your potential employer a preview of how you'd handle the twists and turns of real-life work situations. They want to test your **problem-solving**, critical thinking, **decision-making**, and adaptability skills.

10. How Would You Manage a Project With a Tight Deadline?

Can you juggle all the balls and keep them from falling? When interviewers ask you this question, they want to know about your project management skills. They're testing your organizational acumen, prioritization skills, and ability to remain calm when the clock is ticking ominously in the background.

Example of how to answer this interview question:

- *"When faced with a tight deadline, I immediately break down the project into manageable tasks and set mini-deadlines for each. For example, in my last role, I had to deliver a marketing campaign in two weeks. I delegated tasks according to my team's strengths, set up daily progress meetings, and we managed to complete the project two days early, with results that exceeded our targets."*

11. How Would You Handle a Difficult Client or Customer?

This is one of the recruiters' top interview questions when scouting for diplomacy skills. They most likely want a peacemaker who can turn tension into achievement. How you steer these difficult interactions says a ton about your patience, empathy, and customer service prowess.

Example of how to answer this interview question:

- *"I handle tough client situations by first actively listening to their concerns without interrupting. For instance, when addressing a former client's frustration over a delayed order, I apologized sincerely, explained the unforeseeable delay, offered a discount, and expedited shipping. The client was so pleased with the resolution, that they placed another order on the spot."*

12. What Would You Do If You Disagreed With the Way a Manager Wanted You to Handle Something?

Disagreeing with a boss is a delicate business - a dance between respect and assertiveness. Interviewers ask this question to assess your ability to navigate disagreement with tact, to be professional yet confident. They want to test your conflict resolution skills and see if you can disagree without discord, championing collaboration over confrontation.

Example of how to answer this interview question:

- *"If I disagreed with my manager's approach, I'd request a private meeting to discuss the problem openly. I'd preset my concerns clearly and respectfully, backed by concrete data or examples. For example, when I felt an alternative vendor could offer better service, I prepared a comparison report to discuss with my manager, which ultimately led us to a better partnership decision."*

13. If You Saw a Coworker Doing Something Dishonest, What Would You Do?

Honesty and integrity are the bedrock of a trustworthy employee. When interviewers ask this, they're probing your ethical standards, and assessing your judgment in handling sensitive situations.

It's not just about doing what's right but showing leadership even when you're not in charge. Recruiters want to see that you can balance personal and professional integrity without resorting to creating office drama.

Example of how to answer this interview question:

- *"If I observed a coworker engaging in dishonest behavior, I would follow the company's established protocols for such incidents. This typically means first trying to understand the situation more fully – perhaps the coworker is unaware that their actions are inappropriate. If a simple conversation does not resolve the issue, or if the dishonesty is significant, I would then report the matter to my manager or the appropriate department, like HR. I believe it's*

important to handle such situations sensitively and confidentially to maintain a positive and ethical work environment.”

14. If You Could Choose Any Company to Work For, Where Would You Go and Why?

If you're asked **questions about your ideal company**, it's a clever way for interviewers to peek into your career aspirations, values, and alignment with their company's culture and mission. It reveals much about what you prioritize in a job and if you're likely to stick around if they hire you.

Example of how to answer this interview question:

- *“I would choose Monster. The platform’s dedication to facilitating meaningful employment matches appeals to my passion for helping others achieve their professional goals. Working with Monster would allow me to be at the forefront of transforming job hunting into a more intuitive and satisfying experience. Their innovative approach to career development services aligns with my ambition to be part of a team that values impactful guidance and empowers job seekers through technology and resource accessibility.”*

15. How Would You Prioritize Your Work If You Had Multiple Tasks With the Same Deadline?

Balancing multiple tasks in a high stake environment is your jam, but how exactly do you decide what to do first and what to delegate or reevaluate? Explain your process of analyzing and organizing tasks based on urgency and importance. This is a chance to show recruiters that you thrive in a fast-paced environment.

Example of how to answer this interview question:

- *“In such situations, I prioritize work that is critical to customer satisfaction or operational continuity first. For example, in my last role, I found myself having to prepare a client’s order, finalize a quarterly report, and update the inventory all by the end of the day. I delegated the inventory task to a trusted colleague, completed the client order first due to its immediate revenue impact, and then compiled the report, as it had a direct influence on our next quarter’s strategy.”*

16. What Steps Would You Take If You Were Assigned to Work With a Difficult Team Member?

With this question, recruiters want to observe your approach to teamwork, conflict resolution, and interpersonal communication. They are looking for signs of your leadership potential and emotional intelligence in the face of adversity. Prove your ability to maintain a positive work environment and share your conflict-resolution tactics.

Example of how to answer this interview question:

- *"I would start by having a one-on-one conversation to understand their perspective and express my concerns calmly. For instance, at my last job, I worked with someone who seemed resistant to group ideas. By discussing the matter privately, we realized it was a misunderstanding. He felt his ideas were not being heard. We agreed to be more collaborative in future discussions and developed a new feedback system. As a result, our team dynamics improved significantly."*

17. How Do You Stay Motivated When Your Job Requires Repetitive Tasks?

Employers want to know how you keep your spirits high on the job because motivation is the fuel that keeps the productivity engine running smoothly. Can you sustain performance over the long haul without needing constant external stimulation? This question digs into your self-drive and whether you can find purpose and passion even in routine work.

Example of how to answer this interview question:

- *"I maintain motivation by setting personal goals and benchmarks for my performance, even in repetitive tasks. For example, when I worked as a **data entry clerk**, I would challenge myself to increase my typing speed and accuracy. I also tried to find ways to improve the process itself, which not only kept me engaged but also added value to my team."*

18. What Would You Do If You Were Asked To Perform a Task You Have Never Done Before?

This interview question is a test of your resourcefulness and adaptability. Employers ask it to uncover your problem-solving skills and your willingness to tackle challenges head-on, even when the path isn't clearly mapped out.

Example of how to answer this interview question:

- *"In my previous role, I took on the challenge of creating a social media marketing strategy from scratch, a responsibility I haven't faced before. I started by researching effective strategies in our industry and learning from existing successful campaigns. Then, I outlined a plan, sought feedback from knowledgeable colleagues, and iterated on the strategy based on their insight."*

19. How Would You Handle Receiving Constructive Criticism From Your Manager?

This is one of those typical interview questions recruiters ask to separate flexible and forward-thinking candidates from those who may resist change and growth. Employers value employees who can take criticism in stride, using it as fuel for professional development rather than a hit to their ego. Think about this as an opportunity to demonstrate your maturity and dedication to continual improvement.

Example of how to answer this interview question:

- *"In my last position, my supervisor noted that while detailed, my reports were frequently too lengthy for our fast-paced meetings. I appreciated this feedback as it aimed to improve efficiency. I responded by creating a template for concise reporting, which my manager and the team adopted company-wide."*

Culture Fit Interview Questions

Finding the right cultural fit means meshing well with a company's environment and values while contributing to your and the company's growth. Now, don't mistake 'cultural fit' with 'identical thinking'. Companies aren't looking for employee clones but individuals who can ride the company's wavelength while bringing their unique spice. It's about harmony, not uniformity. Showcase your values, work ethic, and social savvy in a way that says, "I belong here."

20. What Would Be Your Ideal Work Environment?

Employers ask the **ideal environment interview question** to understand your personal preferences and see if the office vibe will be music to your ears or just noise. Are you the missing puzzle piece in their workplace picture? They are fishing for clues to predict whether you'll fit, thrive, and stick around.

Example of how to answer this interview question:

- *"For me, the ideal environment balances autonomy with accountability. I appreciate having clear objectives and the freedom to figure out the best way to meet them, which was something I loved about freelancing. Yet, I also value a setting where feedback is frequent and performance is measured, ensuring we're all aligning with the company's vision."*

21. What Do You Know About Our Company Culture, and Why Do You Think You Would Fit In?

Always do your homework and **research the company before your job interview**. Recruiters will ask you this question to assess whether you've taken the time to get familiar with the company's values, work style, and atmosphere. This is your chance to demonstrate your alignment with the company's principles.

Example of how to answer this interview question:

- *"From my research and everything I have seen during the interview process, it's clear that your company values proactive communication and a team-oriented approach. I have always been proactive in my communications, often bridging gaps between different departments. I prefer environments where transparency and cooperation are the norm, and I am eager to contribute to and grow with such a team."*

22. Can You Tell Me About a Time When You Had to Adapt to a Significant Change at Work?

This common interview question is designed to assess your flexibility, your resilience, and whether you handle the winds of transformation with grace and efficiency. It's an insight into your problem-solving skills and your potential to grow with the company.

Example of how to answer this interview question:

- *"In my previous role, after our company's acquisition, we immediately shifted our project management tools and workflow. I took the initiative to organize group training sessions. Not only did I adapt to the new software quickly, but I also helped my team transition by creating how-to guides tailored to our projects."*

23. What Motivates You to Come to Work Every Day?

Are you in it just for the paycheck, or do you have a deeper connection with your work?

Recruiters use this question to assess whether you'll have the drive to push through on tough days and if your incentives align with the company's values and goals. Reflect on the aspects of your work that spark your enthusiasm.

Example of how to answer this interview question:

- *"Working towards a goal is what motivates me. The rush of meeting a target or exceeding expectations is thrilling. I thrive in a competitive atmosphere where my achievements can not only advance my career but also contribute to the company's success."*

24. How Do You Handle Working With a Team That Has Diverse Perspectives?

Diversity in the workplace is like assembling a vibrant, multifaceted mosaic— each unique piece contributes to a more compelling and complete picture in team projects. The question then becomes, how do you harmonize these diverse elements to craft a masterpiece that resonates with everyone, rather than creating a disjointed collage? Employers ask this question to see if you are the kind of team player who actively values and leverages differences to enhance creativity and innovation.

Example of how to answer this interview question:

- *"Working with a diverse team excites me because it's an opportunity to learn and grow. I make it a point to listen actively and ask questions that help me understand where others are coming from. This approach has helped me adapt my work style to suit different team needs. I'm eager to join your company because I know that you consider diversity a strength that drives success."*

25. What Is Your Approach to Maintaining Work-Life Balance?

A well-balanced employee is often seen as more productive, happier, and better at problem-solving. By showing your prospective employer that you have a solid game plan for maintaining

your work-life balance, you demonstrate self-awareness and that you are in it for the long haul – aiming for a sustainable and successful career path.

Example of how to answer this interview question:

- *"I believe in being proactive about my work-life balance. For instance, I schedule my tasks to prioritize efficiency during work hours and set clear boundaries for after-work availability. When I'm off work, I unplug completely and engage in activities like hiking or yoga, which help me return to work refreshed."*

26. How Do You Contribute to a Positive Team Environment?

Creating a positive team environment is like being part of a band – you have to tune in to others, know your parts, sometimes lead and other times follow, to make harmonious music. Interviewers ask this question to assess how well you play with others, your interpersonal skills, and if you are a team player who will contribute to the group's success and morale.

Example of how to answer this interview question:

- *"In my current role, I contribute to a positive team environment by maintaining open communication and a spirit of cooperation. I kick off projects with brainstorming sessions that welcome all ideas, ensuring everyone feels heard and valued. I also make it a point to recognize my colleagues' efforts, which I believe fosters a culture of appreciation and motivation."*

27. What Do You Expect From a Supervisor to Help You Perform at Your Best?

Employers often pose this question in interviews to uncover what management style you respond to best. It reveals your professional needs and expectations, as well as how you view the role of a leader in your work journey.

Example of how to answer this interview question:

- *"I expect a supervisor to be clear about expectations and available for guidance without micromanaging. I thrive when given autonomy to complete my tasks, knowing I can rely on my supervisor for support when challenges arise. For example, at my last job, my supervisor conducted regular but brief check-ins to keep us aligned, which I found incredibly effective for staying on track."*

28. Describe How You Have Contributed to a Team's Success in a Past Role.

Employers ask this to gauge how you define success, your role in achieving it, and whether you elevate the team's goals above your ambitions. Show them your collaborative spirit and your capacity to be a team player by pointing out specific instances where your contributions made a tangible difference.

Example of how to answer this interview question:

- “As a **marketing analyst**, I contributed to my team’s success by identifying a key market trend that led to a 20% increase in lead generation. I conducted thorough research and shared my findings with the team, which then shaped our strategy moving forward. I also took the initiative to lead a series of workshops to keep my team updated on the latest market research techniques.”

Leadership Interview Questions

This is your chance to shine like the beacon of guidance you are and demonstrate that you’re as wise as a council of Yodas. Leadership isn’t just about steering the ship – it’s about inspiring the crew, reading the stars, and sometimes swabbing the deck right alongside your team. When asked **leadership interview questions**, talk about your vision, strategy, decision-making, and how you react in tough situations.

29. Describe Your Leadership Style.

With this interview question, recruiters want to understand how your unique brand of leadership aligns with their team’s needs and the company’s values. It’s your chance to showcase how you inspire performance, handle challenges, and drive results – all while keeping the team’s spirit flying high. Use real-life examples to demonstrate how your leadership made a tangible impact where it matters most.

Example of how to answer this interview question:

- “I lead with empathy and support. I focus on understanding the individual strengths and motivations of my team members, which allows me to tailor my guidance to help them excel. By ensuring that team members have the resources and emotional support they need, I help to create a work environment that is nurturing yet result-driven.”

30. Give an Example of How You’ve Motivated Others.

Interviewers often ask this question to tap into your personal influence, emotional intelligence, and leadership potential. They want to see how you fuel the fire of enthusiasm in a work setting. It’s not only about what you’ve achieved but also how you’ve lifted others along your journey to success.

Example of how to answer this interview question:

- “In a previous role, I set a series of incremental goals that were attainable yet ambitious and motivated my team by recognizing individual achievements in our weekly meetings. With each success, the team’s enthusiasm and effort increased.”

31. How Do You Handle Delegating Tasks to Team Members?

When recruiters ask this question, they're looking for insights into how you ensure tasks are understood, supervised, and completed, without micromanaging or overloading your team members. Articulate your delegation process during the interview to underscore your strategic approach to leadership and team management.

Example of how to answer this interview question:

- *"I believe delegation is an opportunity to empower others. By involving the team in decision-making about who takes on which tasks everyone felt invested in the project. In the past, I've implemented this when planning a product launch and I also made sure to provide the resources and authority needed to accomplish all tasks, which promoted accountability and leadership within the team."*

32. Tell Me About a Time When You Had to Lead a Project With Little to No Direction.

This question reveals how you interpret objectives, set goals, and mobilize resources when the path isn't clearly marked. It also tests your resilience and problem-solving skills in situations where guidance is minimal. Your response should illustrate your capability to thrive in environments that require both autonomy and strategic thinking.

Example of how to answer this interview question:

- *"In my previous role as an event planner, I was tasked with developing a launch event for a new product. Without specific guidelines, I began by setting clear objectives with my team, establishing milestones, and brainstorming promotion strategies. This structured approach resulted in a successful event that exceeded our attendance goals by 25%."*

33. How Do You Evaluate the Success of Your Team?

Understanding how a candidate measures team success is vital for employers. It provides insight into the candidate's leadership style and accountability standards. This question also sheds light on the individual's commitment to continuous improvement and whether they value results or processes more.

Example of how to answer this interview question:

- *"I measure success not just by meeting deadlines and budgets but also by monitoring our team's growth over time. This includes analyzing our ability to reduce errors, increase efficiency, and enhance client satisfaction. Regular retrospectives help us learn from each outcome and refine our approach continually."*

34. Describe a Situation Where You Had to Resolve a Conflict Within Your Team.

Navigating team conflicts is a testament to strong leadership and problem-solving skills. When interviewers ask this question, they want to see how you handle pressure, mediate disputes, and

foster a collaborative environment. It's not about the conflict itself, but your approach to transparency, empathy, and finding solutions that maintain team cohesiveness and productivity.

Example of how to answer this interview question:

- *"When I noticed rising tensions due to uneven workloads, I initiated a team meeting to redistribute tasks. I introduced a shared tracking system for better visibility of everyone's responsibilities. This proactive approach not only alleviated stress but also increased overall team efficiency and morale."*

35. How Do You Foster Teamwork?

Teamwork is the glue that holds tasks, people, and goals together in any thriving workplace. Recruiters ask this question hoping to get insights into your collaborative skills and your role in building a positive team dynamic. They want to understand how you encourage participation, support a shared vision, and create an inclusive environment that leverages diverse strengths for collective success.

Example of how to answer this interview question:

- *"To foster teamwork, I maintain open lines of communication and ensure that all team members feel heard. For instance, I introduced weekly meetings where team members could bring up any ideas or issues. This practice not only prevented potential conflicts but also affirmed that we valued and considered every voice critical to our shared mission."*

36. What Strategies Do You Use to Make Decisions Under Pressure?

Decisions are the steering wheel that directs the course of business action and, under pressure, that wheel can either hold steady or veer off course. Do you possess the composure, analytical skills, and foresight needed to handle tough calls when the stakes are high?

Example of how to answer this interview question:

- *"When under pressure, I prioritize the tasks at hand based on urgency and impact. For instance, when facing tight deadlines on two major projects, I assessed which project had the potential to affect more stakeholders and prioritized my team's focus accordingly, ensuring we met our goals without compromising quality."*

Career Goals and Aspirations Interview Questions

This is the moment in your interview where the spotlight shines on your future vision, revealing where you aim to go and how you plan to get there. These aren't random interview questions, but a vital tool for recruiters to unveil if there's any synergy between your career trajectory and the company's direction. Share your professional desires, ambitions, and the steps you're eager to take toward achieving greatness.

37. Where Do You See Yourself in Five Years?

This question is a recruiter's way of checking if you have a forward-thinking mindset and ambition to grow alongside them, or if you're just a shooting star, passing briefly through their galaxy. Check out our variety of tips on how to [answer "where do you see yourself in five years?"](#) so you skillfully navigate this common interview question with confidence and clarity.

Example of how to answer this interview question:

- *"I envision myself in a senior role, contributing to impactful policy change within the sector. Working with an organization that values social responsibility, like this one, I aim to leverage my skills in advocacy and program development to make a substantial difference in the community."*

38. How Do Your Career Goals Align With This Position?

Recruiters want to know that their position isn't just a temporary parking spot on your career highway but a meaningful milestone for you. Prove that you've done your homework on where the company is going and that your career compass points in the same direction as their mission.

Example of how to answer this interview question:

- *"My career goal is to become an expert in **graphic design**, and this position is a perfect match. Your company's innovative approach to branding is something I have always admired. I am excited about the prospect of bringing my unique style and fresh ideas to your team, helping to push creative boundaries and drive brand engagement."*

39. What Is Your Dream Job, and Why?

Recruiters ask this question to see if your values and ambitions align with the job at hand. Practice interview questions like this one to tie your ultimate career wishes to the realities of the position you're interviewing for. Get their attention by showing commitment and clarity.

Example of how to answer this interview question if interviewing for your dream job:

- *"Actually, this position is my dream job. I thrive on challenges like those that characterize your company. I have always wanted a role that blends my passion for cutting-edge technology with my desire to make a real-world impact, which is what this role is all about."*

Example of how to answer this interview question if your dream job is different:

- *"My dream job is to lead a software development team because it combines my love for coding with my passion for team building and mentorship. While this role as a **software developer** is a step on that path, I believe your company's culture of leadership development and technical excellence is the perfect environment in which to improve those skills."*

40. Describe the Steps You Have Taken Towards Professional Development.

Companies love growth-oriented go-getters, and they might ask you this question to know if you are as invested in your own progress as they are in their success. Your answer should demonstrate initiative, commitment, and a genuine interest in self-improvement. It should outline specific actions you've taken to learn new skills, advance your knowledge, and stay up-to-date in your field.

Example of how to answer this interview question:

- *"In pursuit of becoming an **SEO content manager**, I have completed certifications in SEO and analytics, and I have attended writing workshops to sharpen my craft. I have also led a content campaign as a volunteer, increasing web traffic for a nonprofit by 40%."*

41. What Professional Achievements Are You Most Proud of?

This question unpacks your definition of success and shows what you value in your work. It can reveal your strengths, aspirations, and fit for the company culture. A great answer to this question should go beyond listing achievements by connecting them with real value delivered to previous employers or your own development.

Example of how to answer this interview question:

- *"The professional achievement I hold in the highest regard is developing a new product feature that became the top revenue generator for my current company. This experience enhanced my product development and market analysis skills, which I plan to expand upon in the more strategic role I seek now."*

Problem-Solving Interview Questions

These common interview questions are like the intellectual equivalent of an obstacle course, asking you to demonstrate agility, strength, and strategy all at once. This is your moment to show off your critical thinking, creativity, and cool-under-pressure demeanor. It's your chance to show recruiters that you can easily transform a "Houston, we have a problem" moment into a "Ta-da! Watch me fix it" showstopper.

42. Can You Describe a Time When You Had to Solve a Difficult Problem at Work?

When recruiters ask this question, they want to know how you approach a problem, weigh your options, and follow through. Your answer should paint a picture of the problem and your resolution journey, including the skills you applied, the steps you took, and the outcome. Emphasize your analytical abilities, creativity, and tenacity without sacrificing the wisdom of seeking help when needed.

Example of how to answer this interview question:

- *"Once, a product launch I was managing was at risk due to a critical supply chain disruption. To solve this, I worked closely with the operation team to identify alternative suppliers. We*

negotiated expedited shipping to meet our deadline. As a result, the launch was not only on time but came under budget, strengthening our team's adaptability and vendor relationships."

43. How Do You Approach a Situation Where You Don't Have All the Answers?

This is your chance to prove that you're not one to shy away from the occasional "I don't know". Instead, you are the one who will find out, pulling knowledge and expertise from wherever it lies. With this interview question, recruiters attempt to assess your humility, learning attitude, ability to leverage resources, and how you collaborate with others.

Example of how to answer this interview question:

- *"If I'm confronted with a question from a student that I can't answer, I see it as a learning opportunity for the class and myself. I take a 'let's research together' approach where we ultimately collectively learn much more than if I had provided an immediate answer."*

44. Tell Me About a Creative Solution You Have Designed to Address a Work Issue.

Interviewers often ask this question to see the originality of your problem-solving skills, if you can think outside the proverbial box, and how your unique solutions can bring value to the team and the company. When answering, highlight your ability to identify challenges, your creativity in solving problems, and the impact of your solution.

Example of how to answer this interview question:

- *"I noticed our team's response time to customer inquiries was slow due to an outdated ticketing system. I proposed and led the adoption of an AI chatbot that could handle common questions and free up our reps for complex issues. This solution cut our average response time in half and increased customer satisfaction scores by 15%."*

45. How Do You Prioritize Issues When Multiple Problems Arise Simultaneously?

This question is recruiters' attempt to understand your problem-solving hierarchy. The best answer to this interview question should highlight your ability to assess situations quickly, manage time effectively, and communicate priorities clearly.

Example of how to answer this interview question:

- *"In my previous role as an **IT specialist**, I often had to deal with simultaneous system failures. I prioritize based on impact and urgency. For instance, if two issues occur at once, like a server outage and a printer jam, I tackle the server first because it affects all users company-wide. My goal is always to minimize downtime and maintain productivity."*

46. How Do You Assess the Risks When Making a Decision?

Evaluating risk is an essential part of decision-making, especially in roles that affect the trajectory of a business. Interviewers ask this question to determine if you have a strategy for anticipating, understanding, and managing potential setbacks in a project or business decision. Explain how thorough you are with your homework, paying attention to all tiny warning signs.

Example of how to answer this interview question:

- *"When I'm at the decision-making helm, I start by charting out the 'what-ifs' and considering all possible outcomes and their implications. I evaluate past projects for unforeseen challenges and seek advice from subject matter experts to understand potential future conditions. For example, in a project with significant consequences, I developed alternative plans to address various possible issues that could arise, guaranteeing continuity of operations despite unexpected difficulties."*

47. Tell Me About a Time You Made a Mistake in Your Problem-Solving Process and How You Corrected It.

Interviewers use this question to get a sense of your humility, resilience, and how you handle setbacks and challenges. They look for candidates who can demonstrate growth and the ability to learn from their errors. The best answer to this question conveys self-awareness, responsibility, problem-solving skills, and an understanding that mistakes are a valuable part of learning and growth.

Example of how to answer this interview question:

- *"During a software rollout, I focused too much on meeting the launch date rather than ensuring full functionality. When early users encountered bugs, I owned up to the oversight and led my team in a user-focused testing phase, which not only fixed the bugs but also gave us deeper insights into user needs, improving the final product."*

48. How Do You Ensure That a Solution is Both Effective and Efficient?

In the fast-paced rhythm of today's workplaces, it's not enough for a solution to just work. It has to work smart. Interviewers ask this question to see if you have a good eye for solutions that strike an optimal balance between quality and resourcefulness. The ideal answer should illustrate your ability to think critically, streamline processes, and measure outcomes.

Example of how to answer this interview question:

- *"I believe in regular audits of the solutions we implement. For instance, after overhauling an inventory system, I scheduled monthly reviews to track various performance metrics against our goals. This approach has consistently helped us fine-tune the system to adapt to changing demands while ensuring optimal resource usage."*

Communication Skills Interview Questions

Strong communication is what connects the many moving parts of an organization. Whether you're the voice that calms the storm, the email that lights up a smile, or the presentation that sparks inspiration, your ability to convey ideas clearly and effectively is crucial. These questions give you a chance to prove that you're not just a talker but a communicator whose every word leaves a lasting impression.

49. How Would You Describe Your Communication Style?

With this question, interviewers are trying to find out if your style of communication will harmonize with the company's culture. Explain how you interact with colleagues and clients, manage conflicts, and ensure your message is understood and appreciated. Your answer should demonstrate clarity, adaptability, and ability to balance speaking and listening.

Example of how to answer this interview question:

- *"I prioritize empathy in my communication, striving to understand others' viewpoints before responding. This approach helped me successfully mediate a conflict between two departments, by ensuring each side felt heard and valued before moving towards a resolution."*

50. Describe a Situation Where You Had to Explain a Complex Concept to a Coworker or Client.

Unraveling complex concepts for others is like translating a foreign language into a local dialect – it takes skills, patience, and understanding. When interviewers ask you to recount such a situation, they're scanning for your ability to make the intricate simple and your talent for guiding others. Show recruiters that you can dissect big ideas into bite-sized, digestible pieces.

Example of how to answer this interview question:

- *"When our company introduced new project management software, I was responsible for training my non-tech-savvy colleagues. I broke down the software functionality into a series of step-by-step tutorials and used relatable analogies to familiar processes. By comparing the software workflow to a well-organized filing cabinet, colleagues quickly grasped the concept, which led to a smooth transition."*

51. How Do You Handle Giving Negative Feedback to a Team Member?

Let's face it: no one throws a party when it's time to give negative feedback. But as a leader or teammate, it's part of the gig. Remember, it's not just about being honest or direct but also about being constructive and kind, ensuring that feedback leads to growth, not resentment. Highlight your emotional intelligence, professionalism, and commitment to fostering a positive team environment, even when things get tough.

Example of how to answer this interview question:

- “When a team member’s performance was slipping, I scheduled a private, informal chat. I used the ‘sandwich’ feedback technique, which starts and ends with positive notes. I started by acknowledging their past contributions before describing the current issue. Together, we developed an improvement plan, and I made it clear I was there for support. This turned a potentially tough conversation into a collaborative effort for better results.”

52. Tell Me About a Time When You Successfully Persuaded Someone to See Things Your Way.

How do you harness the power of persuasion in a professional setting? Being persuasive is about dialogue, understanding, and respect. This question tests your ability to communicate compellingly, negotiate, and win others over with logic and empathy, not just passion.

Example of how to answer this interview question:

- “In my previous **sales role**, I persuaded our team to adopt a new customer relationship management system. I demonstrated how it could save us time and increase leads by showcasing a successful case study and running a cost-benefit analysis. My methodical approach helped the team see the long-term benefits, leading to a unanimous agreement to make the switch.”

53. What Is Your Approach to Handling Customer Complaints?

Recruiters use this question to assess your ability to listen, empathize, and act effectively, ensuring customer satisfaction and loyalty while upholding the company’s reputation. Prove to them that you can maintain poise under pressure and turn a potentially negative experience into a positive one.

Example of how to answer this interview question:

- “When faced with a customer complaint, I listen actively to fully understand the issue. For instance, when a customer reported a problem with a product, I listened without interruption, apologized for the inconvenience, and offered a replacement along with a discount on their next purchase. This approach resolved the issue and helped retain the customer.”

54. How Do You Deal With Miscommunication in the Workplace?

Miscommunication can sneak into the workplace like an uninvited guest, and it can disrupt the flow of even the smoothest-running operations. Interview questions like this one give you the chance to showcase your ability to clarify, collaborate, and correct with a level head and a focused approach.

Example of how to answer this interview question:

- “When I detect a miscommunication, my first step is to address it directly with the involved parties. For example, when a project brief was misunderstood by my team, leading to a mismatch in project outcomes, I organized a meeting to discuss the confusion, realigned our

understanding, and established clearer channels for ongoing communication to prevent future issues."

55. What Strategies Do You Use to Communicate Effectively in a Team?

Effective communication is an essential skill that includes knowing how to articulate ideas, listen to feedback, and foster an environment where information travels without getting lost in translation. Explain to recruiters how you make sure communication in your team is a two-way street and everyone feels heard and empowered to contribute to the team's success.

Example of how to answer this interview question:

- *"I focus on clarity and simplicity in my communications. This means breaking down complex tasks into actionable items. Once, I converted a complicated project workflow into a simple checklist, which my team used to complete the project ahead of schedule with fewer errors."*

56. Tell Me About a Time When Your Communication Skills Improved a Situation.

Interviewers ask this question to assess your interpersonal abilities and witness the transformative power of your words firsthand. They're interested in how you use communication as a tool to navigate and enhance workplace dynamics, solve problems, and drive positive change.

Example of how to answer this interview question:

- *"There was a time when miscommunication between two departments led to a standoff that affected project delivery. I stepped in as a neutral party, arranged a meeting to facilitate dialogue, and provided clear, structured mediation. By the end of our session, not only had we found a resolution, but the teams also agreed to a new protocol for future collaboration, enhancing cross-departmental harmony and productivity."*

Creativity and Innovation Interview Questions

During a job interview, expect employers to poke at the boundaries of your creative mind, looking for evidence that you can bring fresh perspectives to solve old problems. This is your chance to showcase that you're the kind of innovator who doesn't just follow trends – you set them. Whether it's about reimagining a process, dreaming up a product, or leading a revolutionary campaign, you'll need to show that your creativity is a powerful engine for real-world innovation and change.

57. Describe a Time When You Had to Think Outside the Box to Solve a Problem.

A great answer to this question goes beyond just a unique solution. You must demonstrate your innovative thinking, flexibility, and willingness to experiment with new approaches to finding a solution.

Example of how to answer this interview question:

- “Confronted with a limited budget for a marketing campaign, I turned to social media to crowdsource content from our users, encouraging them to share their own experiences with our products for a chance to get into our ‘PR and Influencers’ list. This approach created authentic brand stories, increased our engagement by 50%, and brought in a higher ROI than any of our previous campaigns.”

58. How Do You Foster Innovation Within a Team?

This question allows interviewers to examine your leadership style and how you cultivate a fertile environment for new ideas. The best answer will outline specific strategies you use to encourage your team to push boundaries and think creatively.

Example of how to answer this interview question:

- “I believe exposure to different perspectives sparks innovation. In my team, I facilitate cross-departmental workshops, which in multiple cases, resulted in projects that integrated unique insights from different teams, leading to innovative features in our products that set us apart from competitors.”

59. Can You Provide an Example of a Project Where Your Creativity Made a Difference?

Creativity in the workplace isn’t just about novelty. It’s about impactful innovation and real-world applications that drive progress and success. The best answer to this common job interview question illustrates your ability to think differently, use resources ingeniously, and bring in tangible results for your team or company.

Example of how to answer this interview question:

- “In my previous role as a **sales executive**, I was tasked with reviving a client’s interest in our services. Instead of the usual PowerPoint, I used an interactive web presentation tool to create a dynamic, engaging pitch. My creativity in presenting our solutions led to renewing a contract worth \$500K that was previously at risk.”

60. What Is Your Process for Generating New Ideas?

This interview question is a recruiter’s way of peering into your mental kitchen to see how you cook up recipes for innovation. A great answer should reveal your creative process, how you find inspiration, and the way you refine raw concepts into workable, practical solutions.

Example of how to answer this interview question:

- “My process starts with staying informed and dedicating time each week to reading industry publications and attending webinars. For instance, when I noticed a trending topic in

cybersecurity, I proposed a new service offer for our IT company, which later became one of our most-in-demand services.”

61. How Do You Stay Inspired and Keep Your Creative Skills Sharp?

Employers are always on the lookout for people who can keep their creativity fire burning long-term. With this question, they're trying to figure out if you have sustainable habits and strategies that fuel your imagination and innovation on a regular basis. Show them that instead of waiting for a muse to whisper in your ear, you go out there chasing.

Example of how to answer this interview question:

- *“To keep my creative juices flowing, I make it a point to step outside my comfort zone regularly. Last month, I joined a creative writing workshop, which not only honed my writing skills but also introduced me to new storytelling techniques that I translated into more engaging marketing content.”*

62. How Do You Encourage Others to Be Creative?

This question serves to identify potential leaders who understand that creativity isn't a solo performance but a group effort that can drive company success. Recruiters want to know whether you have the ability to encourage team members to think creatively and a strategic approach to nurturing such an important aspect.

Example of how to answer this interview question:

- *“I believe in giving team members ‘creative time’ to work on passion projects related to our business. At my last company, team members spent a few hours every Friday exploring new ideas. This approach led to the creation of two best-seller software products and many features that increased our customer base by 30%.”*

63. How Do You Evaluate the Feasibility of New Ideas?

This question is how interviewers try to understand if you possess both creativity and the practicality to implement ideas effectively. Your answer should communicate a methodical approach to assessment, demonstrating that you can balance creativity with analytical skills.

Example of how to answer this interview question:

- *“I believe in prototyping as a way to test the practicality of a new idea. I once led a team to develop a low-cost prototype of a new feature in our software, which we tested internally. This helped us identify potential issues and gather data on its usability before rolling it out for further development.”*

64. What Do You Do When Someone Challenges Your Ideas?

Being questioned or facing opposition to creative ideas is part of the collaborative process in any professional setting. Interviewers ask this question to learn more about your interpersonal skills,

flexibility, and how you handle critique.

Example of how to answer this interview question:

- *"I handle challenges to my ideas by preparing and presenting data that supports them. This was effective when my recommendation for a new product feature was initially met with skepticism but was later accepted after I shared user testing results that confirmed its potential. Once everyone was on board with my initial idea, we focused on refining it together."*

Salary Interview Questions

This is the moment when the value you assign to your skills and experience meets what a potential employer is willing to offer. Turn a potentially uncomfortable conversation into an opportunity to show that you're worth every penny. Learn how to articulate your worth, [research salaries](#), and [negotiate like a pro](#) to ace these specific interview questions about salary.

65. What Are Your Salary Expectations?

Employers ask [questions about salary expectations](#) to ensure that your compensation requirements align with their budget and to prevent any miscommunication further down the hiring process. Your response should be well-researched and reflect your professional worth. It's a balancing act between asking for what you deserve and showing an understanding of the value you bring to the company.

Example of how to answer this interview question:

- *"In considering the responsibilities of this role and the industry standard, I expect a salary expectation between \$X and \$Y. However, I'm flexible and more interested in finding a position that is a good fit for my skills and ambitions, and I believe that the compensation will reflect that."*

66. Are You Willing to Negotiate Your Salary?

This question often serves to test your business acumen and your ability to handle sensitive discussions with poise and professionalism. The best answer to this question should show that you're both reasonable in your ask and confident in what you bring to the table.

Example of how to answer this interview question:

- *"It's important for me to receive fair compensation for my contributions to the company, and I understand that this is a two-way conversation. I'm ready to talk through the details to ensure that we're both happy with the arrangement."*

67. How Does Your Desired Salary Compare With the Industry Average for This Role?

This question reveals if you have a realistic expectation of how your experience and qualifications balance with the going rate for the job. Your answer should communicate that you know the industry standards and have considered where you fit.

Example of how to answer this interview question:

- *"In setting my desired salary, I have considered the industry average and how my track record of driving sales growth stands out. My expectation is competitive, considering my experience, the success I have achieved in similar roles, and the scope of responsibility for this position."*

68. What Benefits Beyond Salary Are Most Important to You?

Recruiters ask this question to learn what motivates you as a candidate beyond monetary compensation and if their benefits package aligns with your needs. Answer by providing a window into your priorities and values and explaining how a good benefits package can contribute to your work-life balance, personal growth, and job satisfaction.

Example of how to answer this interview question:

- *"Flexible working hours and the option for remote work are benefits that I prioritize highly. They allow for a better balance between my professional and personal life, enabling me to be more productive and satisfied in my role."*

Technical Skills Interview Questions

These **competency-based interview questions** give you the chance to show off those valuable hard skills that make you a strong candidate. Employers want to be sure that your skill set matches the practical demands of the role. They're looking for concrete evidence that you're up to date with the latest tools, technologies, and methodologies in your field.

69. What Programming Languages Are You Proficient In?

This is an incredibly common interview question for roles that involve software development, data analysis, or any position requiring coding. The best answer will communicate your level of expertise with the programming languages you know, how they could be valuable to the employer, and any related special projects or accomplishments you've achieved.

Example of how to answer this interview question:

- *"I'm proficient in Java, Python, and C#. In my last role, I developed a suite of supply chain management tools in Java, automating processes that cut down on errors by 30%. I have also used Python for data analysis, providing insights that have driven strategic decisions, and I have developed several .NET applications with C#."*

70. Can You Explain the Steps You Take to Troubleshoot a Technical Problem?

This is the question recruiters ask to see if you have a systematic process for identifying, analyzing, and resolving issues, which is critical in any role that depends on technology. A solid answer should demonstrate your analytical abilities, attention to detail, and how you prioritize tasks. Show them you can handle pressure and uncertainty when things don't go as planned.

Example of how to answer this interview question:

- *"When troubleshooting, my first step is to replicate the issue to understand it better. For instance, when I receive reports about potential bugs in our application, I reproduce the problem in a test environment to isolate the cause. Then, I review the code for potential errors, consult the documentation, and if needed, discuss with colleagues to find further insights."*

71. Describe a Project Where You Used Data Analysis to Drive Decisions.

Data is king if you know how to interpret it and turn it into actionable strategies. Recruiters ask this question to assess your ability to harness the power of data to solve problems, predict trends, and advise business decisions. When answering, clarify the methods you use to analyze data, the tools and technologies you rely on, and the impact of your data-driven decisions.

Example of how to answer this interview question:

- *"While working on improving user experience for our e-commerce platform, I used A/B testing and heat map data to analyze user interaction with our site. My analysis led to a redesign of the site's navigation, which ultimately increased our conversion rate by 30% and significantly lowered the bounce rate."*

72. How Do You Ensure the Quality of Your Work When Performing Technical Tasks?

In technical work, quality assurance is a fundamental aspect that runs parallel with every task you undertake. This question assesses your commitment to excellence and your proactive measures in maintaining high standards. Your answer should reflect a meticulous and systematic approach to your work.

Example of how to answer this interview question:

- *"When writing or reviewing critical code, I ensure quality by maintaining comprehensive documentation and change logs. In my previous role, this helped streamline the review process, facilitated troubleshooting post-deployment, and consequently reduced downtime for our clients."*

73. Tell Me About a Time You Learned a New Technology to Complete a Job Task.

Interviewers ask this question to understand how you adapt to technological advancements and your commitment to continuous learning in a rapidly evolving workplace. They want to evaluate

your ability to take initiative and self-teach, and how you apply new knowledge to enhance job performance. Your answer should reflect your proactive approach to professional growth and adaptability.

Example of how to answer this interview question:

- *"In my last role, I had the task of optimizing our website's SEO. Although I had basic knowledge, I completed an advanced SEO strategy course and applied these new techniques to our website. Within three months, we saw a 40% increase in traffic and a significant boost in our page ranking for key search terms."*

74. What Software Tools Do You Have Experience With?

Share with your interviewers the tools relevant to your field that you've used and your proficiency level with each. It's also helpful to mention how you've used these tools to achieve results in your previous role, illustrating practical use and impact.

Example of how to answer this interview question:

- *"I have extensive experience with Adobe Creative Suite, particularly Photoshop and InDesign. At my previous job, I used these tools to design marketing materials that contributed to a 30% increase in engagement on our social media platforms."*

75. Can You Describe Your Experience with Automation or Improving Efficiency Through Technology?

In a world where efficiency is synonymous with a competitive edge, companies are perpetually hunting for ways to do more with less effort and time. A strong answer to this question demonstrates your initiative in identifying opportunities for automation, your problem-solving skills in implementing these solutions, and the outcomes of your efforts.

Example of how to answer this interview question:

- *"During my tenure as a customer service manager, I introduced chatbots to handle our initial customer inquiries. This freed up our customer service reps to deal with more complex cases, increasing our resolution rate for advanced issues by 50% and overall customer satisfaction by 20%."*

More Technical Skills Interview Questions

Turn your expertise into job offers. For more [technical interview questions to prepare for](#), check out the following articles:

- [SQL interview questions](#)
- [Java interview questions](#)
- [JavaScript interview questions](#)

Here's how to answer the 16 most common interview questions:

- 1.** Tell me about yourself.
- 2.** How would you describe yourself?
- 3.** What makes you unique?
- 4.** Why do you want to work here?
- 5.** What interests you about this role?
- 6.** What motivates you?
- 7.** What are you passionate about?
- 8.** Why are you leaving your current job?
- 9.** What are your greatest strengths?
- 10.** What are your greatest weaknesses?
- 11.** What are your goals for the future?
- 12.** Where do you see yourself in five years?
- 13.** Can you tell me about a difficult work situation and how you overcame it?
- 14.** What is your salary range expectation?
- 15.** Why should we hire you?
- 16.** Do you have any questions?

Every interviewer is different and each one's questions may vary. By preparing answers for these common interview questions, you can develop compelling talking points to make a great impression during your next job interview.

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Best interview questions and answers

1. Tell me about yourself.

Your interviewers will likely start out with a question about you and your background to get to know you. Start by giving them an overview about your current position or activities then provide the most important and relevant highlights from your background that make you the most qualified for the role. If you'd like, it is generally acceptable to include some light personal details about things like your pets, hobbies or family. Doing so can help you be more memorable and personable to the interviewer.

Example: *"Currently, I serve as the assistant to three of the company's five executive team members including the CEO. During my time at the organisation, I have been recognised for my time management skills, writing abilities and commitment to excellence."*

From my 12 years of experience as an executive assistant, I've developed the ability to anticipate roadblocks and create effective alternative plans. My greatest value to any executive is my ability to work independently, freeing up their time to focus on the needs of the business.

It's clear that you're looking for someone who understands the nuances of managing a CEO's busy day and can proactively tackle issues. As someone with a sharp eye for detail and a drive to organise, I thrive on making sure every day has a clear plan and every plan is clearly communicated."

For more on answering this question, visit [Interview Question: "Tell Me About Yourself."](#) ↗

2. How would you describe yourself?

When interviewers ask you to talk about yourself, they're looking for information about how your qualities and characteristics align with the skills they believe is required to succeed in the role. If possible, include quantifiable results to demonstrate how you use your best attributes to drive success.

Example: *"I am a vigilant and proactive Security Officer working to ensure safe, secure and orderly environments. I'm also a lifelong learner always seeking out the latest security equipment and techniques to patrol buildings. Lastly, I am thorough in documenting all incidents and actively making suggestions to management about security improvements and changes."*

For more on answering this question, visit [Interview Question: "How Would You Describe Yourself?"](#)

3. What makes you unique?

Employers often ask this question to identify why you might be more qualified than other candidates they're interviewing. To answer, focus on why hiring you would benefit the employer. As you don't know the other applicants, it can be challenging to think about your answer in relation to theirs. Addressing why your background makes you a good fit will let employers know why your traits and qualifications make you well prepared.

Example: *"What makes me unique is my experience of four years in retail. Because I've had first-hand experience fielding shoppers' questions, feedback and complaints, I know what customers want. I know what it takes to create a positive consumer experience through marketing."*

4. Why do you want to work here?

Interviewers often ask this question as a way to determine whether or not you took time to research the company and to learn why you see yourself as a good fit. The best way to prepare for this question is to do your homework and learn about the products, services, mission, history and culture of this workplace. In your answer, mention the aspects of the company that appeal to you and align with your career goals. Explain why you're looking for these things in an employer.

Example: *"The company's mission to help college graduates pay off their student loan debt speaks to me. I've been in that situation and I'd love the opportunity to work with a company that's making a difference. Finding a company with a positive work environment and values that align with my own has remained a priority throughout my job search and this company ranks at the top of the list."*

5. What interests you about this role?

Like the previous question, hiring managers often include this question to make sure you understand the role and to give you the opportunity to highlight your relevant skills. In addition to thoroughly reading the job description, it can be helpful to compare the role requirements against your skills and experience. Choose a few things you particularly enjoy or excel at and focus on those in your answer.

Example: *"I've been passionate about user experience design for most of my professional career. I was excited to see this company uses Adobe products because I'm well versed in the entire suite. Also, I'm a huge advocate for applying agile workflows to design. I think it's the most effective way to tackle large projects. I was able to successfully build and launch an agile process in my previous role as UX manager and we saw considerable improvements in project speed."*

6. What motivates you?

Employers ask this question to gauge your level of self-awareness and ensure your sources of motivation align with the role. To answer, be as specific as possible, provide real-life examples and tie your answer back to the job role.

Example: *"Making a true difference in the lives of my patients and their families motivates me to strive for excellence in everything I do. I look forward to seeing my patients' reaction when we get a positive outcome that will change their lives forever. That's why I became a nurse and why I'm pursuing a position in pediatrics."*

7. What are you passionate about?

Much like the previous question about motivation, employers might ask what you are passionate about to better understand what drives you and what you care most deeply about. This can help them understand whether you are a good fit for the role and if it fits into your larger goals. To answer, select something you are genuinely passionate about, explain why you're passionate about it, give examples of how you've pursued this passion and relate it back to the job.

Example: *"As an experienced, service-oriented professional with more than a decade of experience working in boutique salons, I thrive on creating a welcoming environment for all clients and providing the highest quality skincare services. My specialised training, along with my interpersonal skills, has helped me become adept at developing long-term, trusted relationships that help to build a loyal client base. These relationships are the reason I'm excited to go to work every day."*

8. Why are you leaving your current job?

There are many reasons for leaving a job. Prepare a thoughtful answer that will give your interviewer confidence that you're being deliberate about this job change. Instead of focusing on the negative aspects of your current or previous role, focus on the future and what you hope to gain in your next position.

Example: *"I'm looking for an opportunity that gives me the ability to build closer, long-term relationships with clients. In my current role, the sales cycle is so short that I don't spend as much time building a rapport with my customers as I'd like. Relationship-building is one of the reasons I chose a career in sales and I look forward to working with a company in which that's a top priority."*

9. What are your greatest strengths?

This question gives you an opportunity to talk about your technical and soft skills. To answer, share qualities and personal attributes and then relate them back to the role for which you're interviewing.

Example: *"I'm a natural problem solver. I find it rewarding to dig deep and uncover solutions to challenges. It's like solving a puzzle. It's something I've always excelled at and something I enjoy. Much of product development is about finding innovative solutions to challenging issues, which is what drew me to this career path in the first place."*

For more on answering this question, visit [Interview Question: "What Are Your Strengths And Weaknesses?"](#)

10. What are your greatest weaknesses?

It can feel awkward to discuss your weaknesses in an environment where you're expected to focus on your accomplishments. However, when answered correctly, sharing your weaknesses can show that you are self-aware and want to continuously get better at your job—traits that are extremely attractive to many employers. Remember to start with the weakness and then discuss the measures you've taken to improve. This way, you're finishing your answer on a positive note.

Example: *"I sometimes have trouble saying 'no' and end up overwhelmed by my workload. Earlier in my career, I would take on so many projects that I'd work evenings and weekends. It was stressful. I realised this was counterproductive so I started using workload management tools and setting better expectations for myself and my teammates."*

11. What are your goals for the future?

Often, hiring managers ask about your future goals to determine whether or not you're looking to stay with the company in the long term. Additionally, this question is used to gauge your ambition, expectations for your career and your ability to plan ahead. The best way to handle this question is to determine your current career trajectory and how this role plays into helping you reach your ultimate goals.

Example: *"I would like to continue developing my marketing expertise as well as my leadership skills over the next several years. One of the reasons I'm interested in working for a fast-growing start-up company is that I'll have the ability to wear many hats and collaborate with many different departments. I believe this experience will serve me well in achieving my ultimate goal of leading a marketing department someday."*

12. Where do you see yourself in five years?

Understanding how you imagine your life in the future can help employers understand whether the trajectory of the role and company fits in with your personal development goals. To answer, provide general ideas about the skills you want to develop, the types of roles you would like to be in and the things you would like to have accomplished.

Example: *"In five years, I'd like to be an industry expert in my field with the ability to train and mentor students and entry-level designers. I would also like to gain specialised knowledge in user experience to be a well-rounded contributor working with design and marketing teams on large scale projects that make a difference in the company and to the global community."*

13. Can you tell me about a difficult work situation and how you overcame it?

This question is often used to assess how well you perform under pressure as well as your problem-solving abilities. Keep in mind stories are more memorable than facts and figures so strive to 'show' instead of 'tell'. This is also an excellent opportunity to show your human side and how you're willing to go the extra mile without being asked.

Example: *"It was the first day of my boss's two-week vacation and our agency's highest-paying client threatened to leave because he didn't feel he was getting the personalised service he was promised. I spent my lunch hour on the phone with him talking through his concerns. We even brainstormed ideas for his next campaign. He was so grateful for the personal attention that he signed another six-month contract before my boss even returned from her trip."*

14. What is your salary range expectation?

Interviewers ask this question to make sure your expectations are in line with the amount they've budgeted for the role. If you give a salary range exceedingly lower or higher than

the market value of the position, it gives the impression that you don't know your worth. Research the typical compensation range for the role on [Indeed Salaries](#) and request for the higher side of your range. Be sure to let the hiring manager know if you're flexible with your rate.

Example: *"My salary expectation is between INR XX,XXX and INR XX,XXX, which is the average salary for a candidate with my level of experience in this city. However, I am flexible."*

15. Why should we hire you?

While this question may seem like an intimidation tactic, interviewers generally bring this up to offer you another opportunity to explain why you're the best candidate. Your answer should address the skills and experience you offer and why you're a good culture fit.

Example: *"I have a passion for application development that's grown stronger over the course of my five-year career. The company's mission aligns with my personal values and from my limited time in the office, I can already tell this is the sort of positive culture in which I would thrive. I want to work for a company that has the potential to reshape the industry and I believe you're doing just that."*

For more on answering this question, visit [Interview Question: "Why Should We Hire You?"](#)

16. Do you have any questions?

This might be one of the most important questions asked during the interview process because it allows you to explore any subject that hasn't been addressed and shows the interviewer you're excited about the role. By this point, you'll likely have already covered most of the basics about the position and the company so take time to ask the interviewer questions about their own experiences with the company and gain tips on how you can succeed if hired.

Example: *"What do you love about working for this company? What would success look like in this role? What are some of the challenges people typically face in this position?"*

Much like preparing for a test in school, the best way to succeed in your interview is to study and practice. Do research on the company and the job and practice your talking points until you feel confident about your answers. The more you prepare, the more likely you are to leave a lasting impression and outperform fellow candidates.

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10 Common Job Interview Questions and How to Answer Them

by Vicky Oliver

November 11, 2021



HBR Staff/Getty Images/svetolk

Summary. Interviews can be high stress, anxiety-driving situations, especially if it's your first interview. A little practice and preparation always pays off. While we can't know exactly what an employer will ask, here are 10 common interview questions along with advice on how to... [more](#)



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Resignation numbers have remained abnormally high in the U.S. between July 2021 and October 2021, with millions of Americans quitting their jobs — which also means there are millions of new openings up for grabs. If you're entering the market for the first time, or just looking to make a change, use this guide to prepare for your next interview.

Below is a list of 10 common job interview questions, along with answering techniques that will help you dazzle your prospects, and hopefully, secure the role you want.

1. Could you tell me about yourself and describe your background in brief?

Interviewers like to hear stories about candidates. Make sure your story has a great beginning, a riveting middle, and an end that makes the interviewer root for you to win the job.

Talk about a relevant incident that made you keen on the profession you are pursuing and follow up by discussing your education. In the story, weave together how your academic training and your passion for the subject or industry the company specializes in, combined with your work experience, make you a great fit for the job. If you've managed a complex project or worked on an exciting, offbeat design, mention it.

Example: “I come from a small town, where opportunities were limited. Since good schools were a rarity, I started using online learning to stay up to date with the best. That’s where I learned to code and then I went on to get my certification as a computer programmer. After I got my first job as a front-end coder, I continued to invest time in mastering both front- and back-end languages, tools, and frameworks.”

2. How did you hear about this position?

Employers want to know whether you are actively seeking out their company, heard of the role from a recruiter, or were recommended to the position by a current employee. In short, they want to know how you got to them.

If someone recommended you for the position, be sure to say their name. Don't assume that the interviewer already knows about the referral. You'll probably want to also follow up with how you know the person who referred you. For example, if you and Steve (who recommended you) worked together previously, or if you met him over coffee at a networking event, mention it to give yourself a little more credibility. If Steve works at the company and suggested that you apply for the job, explain why he thought you'd be the perfect fit.

If you sought out the role yourself, be clear about what caught your eye — extra bonus points if you can align your values with the company and their mission. You want to convince the hiring manager that you chose their company, over all other companies, for a few specific reasons.

Lastly, if you were recruited, explain why you took the bait. Did this role sound like a good fit? Does it align with the direction you want to take your career? Even if you weren't familiar with the organization prior to being recruited, be enthusiastic about what you've learned and honest about why you're interested in moving forward with the process.

Example: "I learned about the position through LinkedIn as I've been following your company's page for a while now. I'm really passionate about the work you're doing in X, Y, and Z areas, so I was excited to apply. The required skills match well with the skills I have, and it seems like a great opportunity for me to contribute to your mission, as well as a great next move for my career."

3. What type of work environment do you prefer?

Be sure to do your homework on the organization and its culture before the interview. Your research will save you here. Your preferred environment should closely align to the company's workplace culture (and if it doesn't, it may not be the right fit for you). For example, you may find on the company's website that they have a flat organizational structure or that they prioritize collaboration and autonomy. Those are key words you can mention in your answer to this question.

If the interviewer tells you something about the company that you didn't uncover in your research, like, "Our culture appears buttoned-up from the outside, but in reality, it's a really laid-back community with little competition among employees," try to describe an experience you've had that dovetails with that. Your goal is to share how your work ethic matches that of the organization's.

Example: "That sounds great to me. I like fast-paced work environments because they make me feel like I'm always learning and growing, but I really thrive when I'm collaborating with team members and helping people reach a collective goal as opposed to competing. My last internship was at an organization with a similar culture, and I really enjoyed that balance."

4. How do you deal with pressure or stressful situations?

The employer wants to know: Do you hold down the fort or crumble under pressure? They want to make sure that you won't have a meltdown when the pressure becomes intense and deadlines are looming. The ability to stay calm under pressure is a highly prized talent.

Share an instance when you remained calm despite the turmoil. If it's a skill you're developing, acknowledge that and include the steps you're taking to respond better to pressure in the future. For example, you could indicate that you've started a mindfulness practice to help you better deal with stress.

Example: “I realize stressful situations are always going to come up, and I definitely have had to learn how to navigate them throughout my career. I think I get better at it with every new experience. While working on a new product launch at my last company, for example, things were not going according to plan with my team. Instead of pointing fingers, my first reaction was to take a step back and figure out some strategies around how we could solve the problem at hand. Previously, I may have defaulted to panicking in that situation, so being calm and collected was definitely a step forward and helped me approach the situation with more clarity.”

5. Do you prefer working independently or on a team?

Your answer should be informed by the research you’ve done on the company culture and the job in question. Nevertheless, you should expect that most work environments will have some team aspect.

Many positions require you to work collaboratively with other people on a daily basis, while some roles require you to work on your own. When you answer this question, highlight the best traits of your personality and how they fit the job requirements. It could also be in your interest to answer this question by highlighting the advantages and disadvantages of both situations.

Example: “I enjoy a blend of the two. I like having a team to strategize with, get diverse opinions from, and reach out to for feedback. But I am also comfortable taking on assignments that require me to work independently. I find I do some of my best work when I can focus alone in a quiet space, but I really value collaborating with my teammates to come up with the best ideas.”

6. When you’re balancing multiple projects, how do you keep yourself organized?

Employers want to understand how you use your time and energy to stay productive and efficient. They’re also looking to understand if you have your own system for staying on track with

the work beyond the company's schedules and workflow plans. Be sure to emphasize that you adhere to deadlines and take them seriously.

Discuss a specific instance when you stayed on track. Talk about the importance and urgency of the projects you were working on and how you allocated your time accordingly. Explain how you remain organized and focused on the job in front of you.

Example: "I'm used to juggling projects at my current job where I'm often moving between coding one software program to another. I use the timeboxing technique to make sure they're all on track, allocating time on my calendar for certain tasks. I've found it really helps me prioritize what needs to get done first, and it holds me accountable for the more repetitive day-to-day tasks I'm responsible for."

7. What did you do in the last year to improve your knowledge?

This question may come up as a result of the pandemic. Employers want to know how people used their time differently. Know that you don't have to feel scared about answering this question if you didn't spend your time brushing up on skills or taking courses. We learn from any experience we have.

If you spent time honing your professional skills, you might say the following.

Example: "The extra time on my plate really allowed me to get introspective around where I want to take my career. I read a lot of journals to keep abreast of the latest ideas in my field, and sharpened my skills by taking some online courses, such as..." (and then be specific).

If you chose to work on your personal development, you could say something like the following.

Example: “Like everyone else, I, too, gained some time last year from not having to travel two hours a day to and from work. I decided to spend my time on things I love. So I got back to learning how to play the guitar and journaling. I feel it brought me closer to myself and has been really great for my mental health and productivity.”

8. What are your salary expectations?

Before you walk in for your first interview, you should already know what the salary is for the position you’re applying to. Check out websites such as Glassdoor, Fishbowl, or Vault.com for salary information. You could also ask people in the field by reaching out to your community on LinkedIn.

Employers will always ask this question because every position is budgeted, and they want to ensure your expectations are consistent with that budget before moving forward.

Remember that it’s often better to discuss a salary range rather than a specific number during the interview and leaving room for negotiation. It’s also better to err on the side of caution and quote a slightly higher number as it’s easier to negotiate downward than upward. As a general rule of thumb, I advise not bringing up the questions about salary until your interviewer does or bringing it up too early in the process.

Example: “Based on my skills and experience and on the current industry rates, I’m looking at a salary around \$____” (then fill in with your desired salary range and rationale).

9. Are you applying for other jobs?

Interviewers want to know if you’re genuinely interested in this position or if it’s just one of your many options. Simply, they want to know if you’re their top choice. Honesty is the best policy. If you’re applying for other jobs, say so. You don’t have to necessarily say where you’re applying unless you have another

offer. But they might want to know where in the hiring process you are with other companies. You can also mention that you're actively looking for offers if your interviewer asks.

Example: "I've applied to a couple of other firms, but this role is really the one I'm most excited about right now because..."

10. From your resume it seems you took a gap year. Would you like to tell us why that was?

Gap years are more popular in some cultures than others. In some professions, gap years may have a negative connotation (the industry moves too fast and you're not up to date).

Let your interviewer know that your gap year wasn't about procrastinating over your transition from childhood to adulthood, but that it added value to the confident professional you have become. Based on what part of the world you're in and how common these are, employers are likely looking to hear stories of what you did and how your experiences have benefitted and prepared you for this role.

Provide a short explanation of why you decided to pursue a gap year, then focus on what came out of it that made a positive difference for your future.

Example: "During my last year of high school, I didn't feel ready to choose my educational path, so I took a wilderness course for a few months to sort out my life goals. It may seem a little random, but the time I spent actually helped me develop so many new skills — in the areas of leadership, communication, (etc...). During that time, I realized that I wanted to earn a degree in (state your degree) to align with my passion (say what that is)."

To make a winning impression, you'll need to answer each question with poise and passion. But practicing first really helps. Meticulous preparation will allow you to appear confident and in control, helping position you as the ideal candidate when the competition is tough.

Vicky Oliver is a leading career development expert and the multi-best-selling author of five books, including ***301 Smart Answers to Tough Interview Questions***, named in the top 10 list of “Best Books for HR Interview Prep.” She’s a sought-after speaker and seminar presenter and a popular media source, having made over 900 appearances in broadcast, print, and online outlets.

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50+ Most Common Interview Questions and Answers

by [The Muse Editors](#)

Updated 3/29/2024



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Wouldn't it be great if you knew exactly what questions a [hiring manager](#) would be asking you in your next [job interview](#)?

We can't read minds, unfortunately, but we'll give you the next best thing: a list of 53 of the most commonly asked interview questions and answers, along with advice on how to come up with your own responses.

While we don't recommend having a canned response for every interview question (in fact, please don't), we *do* recommend spending some time getting comfortable with what you might be asked, what hiring managers are really looking for in your responses, and what it takes to show that you're the right person for the job.

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Consider this list your job interview answer and question study guide. (And don't miss our bonus list at the end, with links to resources on specific types of interview questions—about emotional intelligence or [diversity and inclusion](#), for example—and interview questions by role, from accountant to project manager to teacher.)

50+ most common job interview questions and answers

- [Tell me about yourself.](#)
- [Walk me through your resume.](#)
- [How did you hear about this position?](#)
- [Why do you want to work at this company?](#)
- [Why do you want this job?](#)
- [Why should we hire you?](#)
- [What can you bring to the company?](#)
- [What are your greatest strengths?](#)
- [What do you consider to be your weaknesses?](#)
- [What is your greatest professional achievement?](#)
- [Tell me about a challenge or conflict you've faced at work, and how you dealt with it.](#)
- [Tell me about a time you demonstrated leadership skills.](#)
- [What's a time you disagreed with a decision that was made at work?](#)
- [Tell me about a time you made a mistake.](#)
- [Tell me about a time you failed.](#)
- [Why are you leaving your current job?](#)
- [Why were you fired?](#)
- [Why was there a gap in your employment?](#)

- [Can you explain why you changed career paths?](#)
- [What's your current salary?](#)
- [What do you like least about your job?](#)
- [What are you looking for in a new position?](#)
- [What type of work environment do you prefer?](#)
- [What's your work style?](#)
- [What's your management style?](#)
- [How would your boss and coworkers describe you?](#)
- [How do you deal with pressure or stressful situations?](#)
- [What do you like to do outside of work?](#)
- [Are you planning on having children?](#)
- [How do you stay organized?](#)
- [How do you prioritize your work?](#)
- [What are you passionate about?](#)
- [What motivates you?](#)
- [What are your pet peeves?](#)
- [How do you like to be managed?](#)
- [Do you consider yourself successful?](#)
- [Where do you see yourself in five years?](#)
- [How do you plan to achieve your career goals?](#)
- [What are your career aspirations?](#)
- [What's your dream job?](#)
- [What other companies are you interviewing with?](#)
- [What makes you unique?](#)
- [What should I know that's not on your resume?](#)

- [What would your first few months look like in this role?](#)
- [What are your salary expectations?](#)
- [What do you think we could do better or differently?](#)
- [When can you start?](#)
- [Are you willing to relocate?](#)
- [How many tennis balls can you fit into a limousine?](#)
- [If you were an animal, which one would you want to be?](#)
- [Sell me this pen.](#)
- [Is there anything else you'd like us to know?](#)
- [Do you have any questions for us?](#)

1. Tell me about yourself.

This question seems simple, so many people fail to prepare for it, but it's crucial. Here's the deal: Don't give your complete employment (or personal) history. Instead, give a pitch—one that's concise and compelling and that shows exactly why you're the right fit for the job.

Muse writer and MIT career counselor Lily Zhang recommends using a present, past, future formula. Talk a little bit about your current role (including the scope and perhaps one big accomplishment), then give some background as to how you got there and experience you have that's relevant. Finally, segue into why you want—and would be perfect for—this role.

Possible answer to “Tell me about yourself.”

“Well, I’m currently an account executive at Smith, where I handle our top-performing client. Before that, I worked at an agency where I was on three different major national healthcare brands. And while I really enjoyed the work that I did, I’d love the chance to dig in much deeper with one specific healthcare company, which is why I’m so excited about this opportunity with Metro Health Center.”

Read More: [A Complete Guide to Answering “Tell Me About Yourself” in an Interview \(Plus Examples!\)](#)

2. Walk me through your resume.

Like “Tell me about yourself,” this question is a common interview opener. But instead of framing your answer around what qualities and skills make you best for the position, your answer should group your qualifications by your past jobs and tell your career story. You might choose to tell this story chronologically, especially if there’s a great anecdote about what set you on this path. Or, as with “Tell me about yourself,” you can begin with your present job then talk about what brought you here and where you’re going next. But regardless, when you speak about your “past” and “present,” highlight your most relevant experiences and accomplishments for *this* job and wrap up by talking about the future, i.e. connect your past and present together to show why this job should be the next one you add to your resume.

Possible answer to “Walk me through your resume.”

“Well, as you can see from my resume, I took a bit of a winding road to get to where I am today. In college, I double majored in chemistry and communications. I found early on that working in a lab all day wasn’t for me and at some point I realized I looked forward to the lab class I TA’ed the most.

“So when I graduated, I found a job in sales for a consumer healthcare products company, where I drew on my teaching experience and learned even more about tailoring your message and explaining complex health concepts to people without a science background. Then, I moved into a sales training role at a massive company where I was responsible for teaching recent graduates the basics of selling. My trainees on average had more deals closed in their first quarter than any of the other trainers’ cohorts. Plus, I got so much satisfaction from finding the right way to train each new hire and watching them progress and succeed. It reminded me of my time as a TA in college. That’s when I started taking night classes to earn my chemistry teaching certificate.

“I left my full-time job last year to complete my student teaching at P.S. 118 in Manhattan, and over the summer, I worked for a science camp, teaching kids from the ages of 10 to 12 about basic chemistry concepts and best practices for safe experiments. Now, I’m excited to find my first full-time teaching job, and your district is my top choice. The low student-to-teacher ratio will let me take the time to teach each student in the best way for them—which is my favorite part of the job.”

Read More: [How to Respond to “Walk Me Through Your Resume”—and Get Your Interview Started on the Right Note](#)

3. How did you hear about this position?

Another seemingly innocuous interview question, this is actually a perfect opportunity to stand out and show your passion for and connection to the company. For example, if you found out about the gig through a friend or professional contact, name-drop that person, then share why you were so excited about the job. If you discovered the company through an event or article, share that. Even if you found the listing through a random job board, share what, specifically, caught your eye about the role.

Possible answer to “How did you hear about this position?”

“I heard about an opening on the product team through a friend of a friend, Akiko, and since I’m a big fan of your work and have been following you for a while I decided it would be a great role for me to apply for.”

Read More: [3 Ways People Mess Up the \(Simple\) Answer to “How Did You Come Across This Job Opportunity?”](#)

4. Why do you want to work at this company?

Beware of generic answers! If what you say can apply to a whole slew of other companies, or if your response makes you sound like every other candidate, you’re missing an opportunity to stand out. Zhang recommends one of four strategies: Do your research and point to something that makes the company unique that really appeals to you; talk about how you’ve watched the company grow and change since you first heard of it; focus on the organization’s opportunities for future growth and how you can contribute to it; or share what’s gotten you excited from your interactions with employees so far. Whichever route you choose, make sure to be specific. And if you can’t figure out why you’d want to work at the company you’re interviewing with by the time you’re well into the hiring process? It might be a red flag telling you that this position is not the right fit.

Possible answer to “Why do you want to work at this company?”

"I saw on The Muse that you were also hiring for new positions on the West Coast to support your new operations there. I did some more reading about the new data center you're building there and that excites me as I know this means there'll be opportunities to train new teammates. I also learned through a Wall Street Journal article that you're expanding in Mexico as well. I speak Spanish fluently and would be eager to step up and help liaise whenever necessary."

Read More: [4 Better Ways to Answer “Why Do You Want to Work at This Company?”](#)

5. Why do you want this job?

Again, companies want to hire people who are passionate about the job, so you should have a great answer about why you want the position. (And if you don't? You probably should apply elsewhere.) First, identify a couple of key factors that make the role a great fit for you (e.g., "I love customer support because I love the constant human interaction and the satisfaction that comes from helping someone solve a problem"), then share why you love the company (e.g., "I've always been passionate about education, and I think you're doing great things, so I want to be a part of it").

Possible answer to “Why do you want this job?”

"I've always been a fan of X Co's products and I've spent countless hours playing your games. I know that your focus on unique stories is what drew me and other fans into your games initially and keeps us coming back for more. I've followed X Co on social media for a while, and I've always loved how you have people in different departments interact with users. So I was psyched when I came across this posting for a social media manager with TikTok experience. At my last job, I was responsible for launching our TikTok account and growing it to 10,000 followers in six months. Between that experience, my love of gaming, and my deep knowledge of your games and fanbase, I know I could make this TikTok account something special and exciting."

Read More: [3 Steps for Answering “Why Do You Want This Job?”](#)

6. Why should we hire you?

This interview question seems forward (not to mention intimidating!), but if you're asked it, you're in luck: There's no better setup for you to sell yourself and your skills to the hiring

manager. Your job here is to craft an answer that covers three things: that you can not only do the work, but also deliver great results; that you'll really fit in with the team and culture; and that you'd be a better hire than any of the other candidates.

Possible answer to “Why should we hire you?”

“I know it’s been an exciting time for General Tech—growing so much and acquiring several startups—but I also know from experience that it can be challenging for the sales team to understand how new products fit in with the existing ones. It’s always easier to sell the product you know, so the newer stuff can get shortchanged, which can have company-wide ramifications. I have over a decade of experience as a sales trainer, but more importantly, most of those years were working with sales teams that were in the exact same boat Gen Tech is in now. Growth is wonderful, but only if the rest of the company can keep up. I’m confident I can make sure your sales team is confident and enthusiastic about selling new products by implementing an ongoing sales training curriculum that emphasizes where they sit in a product lineup.”

Read More: [3 Better Ways to Answer “Why Should We Hire You?”](#)

7. What can you bring to the company?

When interviewers ask this question, they don’t just want to hear about your background. They want to see that you understand what problems and challenges they’re facing as a company or department as well as how you’ll fit into the existing organization. Read the job description closely, do your research on the company, and make sure you pay attention in your early round interviews to understand any issues you’re being hired to solve. Then, the key is to connect your skills and experiences to what the company needs and share an example that shows how you’ve done similar or transferable work in the past.

Possible answer to “What can you bring to the company?”

“As Jocelyn talked about in our interview earlier, PopCo is looking to expand its market to small business owners with less than 25 employees, so I’d bring my expertise in this area and my experience in guiding a sales team that’s selling to these customers for the first time. In most of my past roles, this segment has been my focus and in my current role, I also played a big part in creating our sales strategies when the business began selling to these customers. I worked with my managers to develop the sales script. I also listened in on a number of sales calls with other account execs who were selling to these customers

for the first time and gave them pointers and other feedback. In the first quarter, our 10-person sales team closed 50 new bookings in this segment, and I personally closed 10 of those deals. I helped guide my last company through the expansion into small businesses, and I'm eager to do that again at PopCo. Plus, I noticed you have a monthly karaoke night—so I'm eager to bring my rendition of 'Call Me Maybe' to the team as well."

Read More: [What Interviewers Really Want to Hear When They Ask "What Can You Bring to the Company?"](#)

8. What are your greatest strengths?

Here's an opening to talk about something that makes you great—and a great fit for this role. When you're answering this question, think quality, not quantity. In other words, don't rattle off a list of adjectives. Instead, pick one or a few (depending on the question) specific qualities that are relevant to this position and illustrate them with examples. Stories are always more memorable than generalizations. And if there's something you were hoping to mention because it makes you a great candidate, but you haven't had a chance yet, this would be the perfect time.

Possible answer to "What are your greatest strengths?"

"I'd say one of my greatest strengths is bringing organization to hectic environments and implementing processes to make everyone's lives easier. In my current role as an executive assistant to a CEO, I created new processes for pretty much everything, from scheduling meetings to planning monthly all hands agendas to preparing for event appearances. Everyone in the company knew how things worked and how long they would take, and the structures helped alleviate stress and set expectations on all sides. I'd be excited to bring that same approach to an operations manager role at a startup, where everything is new and constantly growing and could use just the right amount of structure to keep things running smoothly."

Read More: [3 Smart Strategies for Answering "What's Your Greatest Strength?"](#)

9. What do you consider to be your weaknesses?

What your interviewer is really trying to do with this question—beyond identifying any major red flags—is to gauge your self-awareness and honesty. So, "I can't meet a deadline to

“Save my life” is not an option—but neither is “Nothing! I’m perfect!” Strike a balance by thinking of something that you struggle with but that you’re working to improve. For example, maybe you’ve never been strong at public speaking, but you’ve recently volunteered to run meetings to help you get more comfortable when addressing a crowd.

Possible answer to “What do you consider to be your weaknesses?”

“It can be difficult for me to gauge when the people I’m working with are overwhelmed or dissatisfied with their workloads. To ensure that I’m not asking too much or too little from my team, we have weekly check-ins. I like to ask if they feel like they’re on top of their workload, how I could better support them, whether there’s anything they’d like to take on or get rid of, and if they’re engaged by what they’re doing. Even if the answer is ‘all good,’ these meetings really lay the groundwork for a good and trusting relationship.”

Read More: [4 Ways to Answer “What Is Your Greatest Weakness?” That Actually Sound Believable](#)

10. What is your greatest professional achievement?

Nothing says “hire me” better than a track record of achieving amazing results in past jobs, so don’t be shy when answering this interview question! A great way to do so is by using the [STAR method](#): situation, task, action, results. Set up the situation and the task that you were required to complete to provide the interviewer with background context (e.g., “In my last job as a junior analyst, it was my role to manage the invoicing process”), then describe what you did (the action) and what you achieved (the result): “In one month, I streamlined the process, which saved my group 10 person-hours each month and reduced errors on invoices by 25%.”

Possible answer to “What is your greatest professional achievement?”

“My greatest accomplishment was when I helped the street lighting company I worked for convince the small town of Bend, Oregon to convert antiquated street lighting to energy-efficient LED bulbs. My role was created to promote and sell the energy-efficient bulbs, while touting the long-term advantage of reduced energy costs. I had to develop a way to educate city light officials on the value of our energy-efficient bulbs—which was a challenge since our products had an expensive up-front cost compared to less efficient lighting options. I created an information packet and held local community events aimed at city officials and the tax-paying public. There, I was able to demo the company

product, answer questions, and evangelize the value of LED bulbs for the long term. It was crucial to have the public on board and I was able to reach a wide variety of community members with these events. I not only reached my first-year sales goal of \$100,000, but I was also able to help us land another contract in a neighboring city. Plus, the community-focused strategy garnered attention from the national media. And I'm proud to say I got a promotion within one year to senior sales representative."

Read More: [The Perfect Formula for Answering “What Is Your Greatest Accomplishment” in an Interview](#)

11. Tell me about a challenge or conflict you've faced at work, and how you dealt with it.

You're probably not eager to talk about conflicts you've had at work during a job interview. But if you're asked directly, don't pretend you've never had one. Be honest about a difficult situation you've faced (but without going into the kind of detail you'd share venting to a friend). "Most people who ask are only looking for evidence that you're willing to face these kinds of issues head-on and make a sincere attempt at coming to a resolution," former recruiter Richard Moy says. Stay calm and professional as you tell the story (and answer any follow-up questions), spend more time talking about the resolution than the conflict, and mention what you'd do differently next time to show "you're open to learning from tough experiences."

Possible answer to "Tell me about a challenge or conflict you've faced at work, and how you dealt with it."

"Funnily enough, last year I was part of a committee that put together a training on conflict intervention in the workplace and the amount of pushback we got for requiring attendance really put our training to the test. There was one senior staff member in particular who seemed adamant. It took some careful listening to understand he felt like it wasn't the best use of his time given the workload he was juggling. I made sure to acknowledge his concern. And then I focused on his direct objection and explained how the training was meant to improve not just the culture of the company, but also the efficiency at which we operated—and that the goal was for the training to make everyone's workload feel lighter. He did eventually attend and was there when I talked to the whole staff about identifying the root issue of a conflict and addressing that directly"

without bringing in other issues, which is how I aim to handle any disagreement in the workplace.”

Read More: [3 Ways You’re Messing Up the Answer to “Tell Me About a Conflict You’ve Faced at Work”](#)

12. Tell me about a time you demonstrated leadership skills.

You don't have to have a fancy title to act like a leader or demonstrate leadership skills. Think about a time when you headed up a project, took the initiative to propose an alternate process, or helped motivate your team to get something done. Then use the STAR method to tell your interviewer a story, giving enough detail to paint a picture (but not so much that you start rambling) and making sure you spell out the result. In other words, be clear about why you're telling this particular story and connect all the dots for the interviewer.

Possible answer to “Tell me about a time you demonstrated leadership skills.”

“I think that a good leader is someone who can make decisions while also listening to others and being willing to admit when you’re wrong and course correct. In my last role, my team and I were responsible for giving a big presentation to a prospective client. I quickly assigned different tasks to members of my team, but the project never really got moving. I gave everyone an opportunity to share their input and concerns, and it turned out that they were struggling in the roles I’d given them. I ended up switching a few people around. Meanwhile, the employee I’d assigned to give the presentation was nervous, but still wanted to give it a try. I worked with them to make sure they were ready and even held a practice session so that they could rehearse in a more comfortable environment. When the time came for the real thing, they nailed it! We landed the client and the company still has the account to this day. And that employee became a go-to person for important client presentations. I’m really glad I took the time to listen to everyone’s concerns so that I could re-evaluate my approach and help my team be the best it could be.”

Read More: [The Best Way to Answer “Tell Me About a Time You Demonstrated Leadership Skills” in a Job Interview](#)

13. What's a time you disagreed with a decision that was made at work?

The ideal anecdote here is one where you handled a disagreement professionally and learned something from the experience. [Zhang recommends](#) paying particular attention to how you start and end your response. To open, make a short statement to frame the rest of your answer, one that nods at the ultimate takeaway or the reason you're telling this story. For example: "I learned early on in my professional career that it's fine to disagree if you can back up your hunches with data." And to close strong, you can either give a one-sentence summary of your answer ("In short...") or talk briefly about how what you learned or gained from this experience would help you in the role you're interviewing for.

Possible answer to "What's a time you disagreed with a decision that was made at work?"

"In my job as a finance assistant, I was in charge of putting together reports for potential company investments. It was important to get the details and numbers right so that leaders had the best information to make a decision. One time, my boss asked me to generate a new report on a Wednesday morning and wanted it done by Thursday at 5 PM. Because I'm committed to high-quality work and I wasn't sure my boss fully understood what goes into each report, I knew I needed to speak up. At her next available opening, I sat down with my boss and explained my concerns. She was firm that the report would be completed by Thursday at 5 PM. So I decided to ask if there was anyone who could help out. After thinking about it, my boss found another assistant who could put in a few hours. While it was a tight timeline, we got the report done, and the committee was really pleased to review it at the meeting. My boss appreciated my extra efforts to make it happen and I felt good that I hadn't let the quality of the report slip. It was a good experience of being a team player but also knowing when and how to ask for help. And once I explained how much time and work goes into each report, my boss was careful to assign them further in advance."

Read More: [Here's the Secret to Answering "Tell Me About a Time You Had a Conflict With Your Boss" in an Interview](#)

14. Tell me about a time you made a mistake.

You're probably not too eager to dig into past blunders when you're trying to impress an interviewer and land a job. But talking about a mistake and winning someone over aren't mutually exclusive, Moy says. In fact, if you do it right, it can *help* you. The key is to be honest without placing blame on other people, then explain what you learned from your mistake and what actions you took to ensure it didn't happen again. At the end of the day, employers are looking for folks who are self-aware, can take feedback, and care about doing better.

Possible answer to "Tell me about a time you made a mistake."

"Early in my career, I missed a deadline that ended up costing us a really big account. There were a lot of factors that contributed to this, but ultimately, I was the one who dropped the ball. From that experience, I went back and thought really hard about what I could've controlled and what I would've changed. It turns out that I was not nearly as organized as I thought I was. I sat down with my boss, asked for suggestions on how to improve my organizational skills, and a few months later I was able to score an even bigger account for the department."

Read More: [3 Rules That Guarantee You'll Nail the Answer to "Tell Me About a Time You Made a Mistake"](#)

15. Tell me about a time you failed.

This question is very similar to the one about making a mistake, and you should approach your answer in much the same way. Make sure you pick a real, actual failure you can speak honestly about. Start by making it clear to the interviewer how you define failure. For instance: "As a manager, I consider it a failure whenever I'm caught by surprise. I strive to know what's going on with my team and their work." Then situate your story in relation to that definition and explain what happened. Finally, don't forget to share what you learned. It's OK to fail—everyone does sometimes—but it's important to show that you took something from the experience.

Possible answer to "Tell me about a time you failed."

"As a team manager, I consider it a failure if I don't know what's going on with my staff and their work—basically if a problem catches me by surprise then I've failed somewhere along the way. Even if the outcome is ultimately fine, it means I've left a team member unsupported at some point. A somewhat recent example would be this training we do

every year for new project managers. Because it's an event that my team has run so many times, I didn't think to check in and had no idea a scheduling conflict was brewing into a full-on turf war with another team. The resolution actually ended up being a quick and easy conversation at the leadership team meeting, but had I just asked about it sooner it would never have been a problem to begin with. I definitely learned my lesson about setting reminders to check in about major projects or events even if they've been done dozens of times before."

Read More: [4 Steps for Answering “Tell Me About a Time When You Failed”](#)

16. Why are you leaving your current job?

This is a toughie, but one you can be sure you'll be asked. Definitely keep things positive—you have nothing to gain by being negative about your current employer. Instead, frame things in a way that shows that you're eager to take on new opportunities and that the role you're interviewing for is a better fit for you. For example, "I'd really love to be part of product development from beginning to end, and I know I'd have that opportunity here." And if you were let go from your most recent job? Keep it simple: "Unfortunately, I was let go," is a totally acceptable answer.

Possible answer to "Why are you leaving your current job?"

"I'm ready for the next challenge in my career. I loved the people I worked with and the projects I worked on, but at some point I realized I wasn't being challenged the way I used to be. Rather than let myself get too comfortable, I decided to pursue a position where I can continue to grow."

Read More: [4 Better Ways to Answer “Why Are You Leaving Your Job?”](#)

17. Why were you fired?

Of course, they may ask the follow-up question: *Why* were you let go? If you lost your job due to layoffs, you can simply say, "The company [reorganized/merged/was acquired] and unfortunately my [position/department] was eliminated." But what if you were fired for performance reasons? Your best bet is to be honest (the job-seeking world is small, after all). But it doesn't have to be a deal breaker. Frame it as a learning experience: Share how

you've grown and how you approach your job and life now as a result. And if you can portray your growth as an advantage for this next job, even better.

Possible answer to "Why were you fired?"

"After working for XYZ Inc. for four years, there were some changes made to the amount of client calls we were expected to process per hour. I used the techniques we were taught after the change took effect, but didn't want our customer service to slip. Unfortunately, I wasn't consistently completing the required number of calls, and, as a result, I was let go. I felt really bad about this and in retrospect I could have done better sticking to the process that would have let me meet the per hour quota. But you've told me about the customer service standards and the volume expectations here, and I believe it won't be a problem."

Read More: [Stop Cringing! How to Tell an Interviewer You've Been Fired](#)

18. Why was there a gap in your employment?

Maybe you were taking care of children or aging parents, dealing with health issues, or traveling the world. Maybe it just took you a long time to land the right job. Whatever the reason, you should be prepared to discuss the gap (or gaps) on your resume. Seriously, practice saying your answer out loud. The key is to be honest, though that doesn't mean you have to share more details than you're comfortable with. If there are skills or qualities you honed or gained in your time away from the workforce—whether through volunteer work, running a home, or responding to a personal crisis—you can also talk about how those would help you excel in this role.

Possible answer to "Why was there a gap in your employment?"

"I spent a number of years working at a company in a very demanding job, in which—as you'll see from my references—I was very successful. But I'd reached a stage in my career where I wanted to focus on my personal growth. The time I spent traveling taught me a lot about how to get along with people of all ages and cultures. Now I feel more than ready to jump back into my career with renewed energy and focus and I feel this role is the ideal way to do that."

Read More: [How to Explain the Gap in Your Resume With Ease](#)

19. Can you explain why you changed career paths?

Don't be thrown off by this question—just take a deep breath and explain to the hiring manager why you've made the career decisions you have. More importantly, give a few examples of how your past experience is [transferable](#) to the new role. This doesn't have to be a direct connection; in fact, it's often more impressive when a candidate can show how seemingly irrelevant experience is very relevant to the role.

Possible answer to “Can you explain why you changed career paths?”

“Ever since my brother was diagnosed with a heart condition, I’ve been training and running with him in your annual Heart Run to raise money for your organization and help support patients with expenses not covered by insurance. Each time, I’ve been struck by how truly dedicated and happy to be there your employees have been. So when I saw this posting for a fundraising role, it felt like it was meant to be. For the last 10 years of my career I’ve been an account executive for various SaaS companies, and I’ve really honed my skills when it comes to convincing organizations to make regular payments for something over the long-term. But I’ve been looking for a position in fundraising where I can use these skills to really help people and I’m highly motivated to do that with your organization.”

Read More: [How to Explain Your Winding Career Path to a Hiring Manager](#)

20. What's your current salary?

It's now illegal for some or all employers to ask you about your salary history in several cities and states, including New York City; Louisville, North Carolina; California; and Massachusetts. But no matter where you live, it can be stressful to hear this question. Don't panic—there are several possible strategies you can turn to. For example, you can deflect the question, Muse career coach Emily Liou says, with a response like: "Before discussing any salary, I'd really like to learn more about what this role entails. I've done a lot of research on [Company] and I am certain if it's the right fit, we'll be able to agree on a number that's fair and competitive to both parties." You can also reframe the question around your salary expectations or requirements (see question 38) or choose to share the number if you think it will work in your favor.

Possible answer to “What's your current salary?”

"Before discussing any salary, I'd really like to learn more about what this role entails. I've done a lot of research on [Company] and I am certain if it's the right fit, we'll be able to agree on a number that's fair and competitive to both parties."

Read More: [Here's How You Answer the Illegal "What's Your Current Salary" Question](#)

21. What do you like least about your job?

Tread carefully here! The last thing you want to do is let your answer devolve into a rant about how terrible your current company is or how much you hate your boss or that one coworker. The easiest way to handle this question with poise is to focus on an opportunity the role you're interviewing for offers that your current job doesn't. You can keep the conversation positive and emphasize why you're so excited about the job.

Possible answer to "What do you like least about your job?"

"In my current role, I'm responsible for drafting media lists to pitch. While I've developed a knack for this and can do it when it is necessary, I'm looking forward to a job that allows me to have a more hands-on role in working with media partners. That's one of the things that most excited me about your account supervisor position."

Read More: [What Interviewers Really Want When They Ask, "What Do You Like Least About Your Job?"](#)

22. What are you looking for in a new position?

Hint: Ideally the same things that this position has to offer. Be specific.

Possible answer to "What are you looking for in a new position?"

"I've been honing my data analysis skills for a few years now and, first and foremost, I'm looking for a position where I can continue to exercise those skills. Another thing that's important to me is the chance to present my findings and suggestions directly to clients. I'm always very motivated by being able to see the impact of my work on other people. And I'm definitely looking for a position where I can grow since I hope to take on managerial responsibilities in the future. To sum it up, I'd love a position where I can use my skills to make an impact that I can see with my own eyes. Of course, the position is only part of the equation. Being at a company where I can grow and work toward

something I care about matters, too. DNF's goal of being at the intersection between data and education inspires me, and I'm really excited about this opportunity."

Read More: [4 Steps for Answering "What Are You Looking for in a New Position?"](#)

23. What type of work environment do you prefer?

Hint: Ideally one that's similar to the environment of the company you're applying to. Be specific.

Possible answer to "What type of work environment do you prefer?"

"I really like the environment in my current position. My manager is a great resource and always willing to help out when I run into an issue, but they trust me to get my work done so I have a lot of freedom in how I schedule and prioritize, which is very important to me. Everyone has their own cubicle, so it's often pretty quiet to get our work done, but we all get lunch together and our team has a lot of check-in meetings and communicates frequently via Slack so we still get a lot of opportunities to bounce ideas off each other. So I like both individual and more collaborative work. How would you describe the mix here?"

Read More: [3 Steps to Answering "What Type of Work Environment Do You Prefer?"](#)

24. What's your work style?

When an interviewer asks you about your work style, they're probably trying to imagine you in the role. How will you approach your work? What will it be like to work with you? Will you mesh well with the existing team? You can help them along by choosing to focus on something that's important to you *and* aligns with everything you've learned about the role, team, and company so far. The question is broad, which means you have a lot of flexibility in how you answer: You might talk about how you communicate and collaborate on cross-functional projects, what kind of remote work setup allows you to be most productive, or how you approach leading a team and managing direct reports. Just try to keep it positive. And remember, telling a story will almost always make your answer more memorable.

Possible answer to "What's your work style?"

"I tend to do my best work when I'm collaborating with colleagues and we're working together toward a common goal. I was that rare student who loved group projects and now I still get a rush of excitement when I'm planning marketing campaigns with a team and bringing new and different voices into the fold. When I was working at XYZ Agency, I made it a habit to extend invitations to folks in different departments to join certain brainstorming and feedback sessions. Some of our most successful campaigns grew out of the ideas we generated together with coworkers in IT, HR, product, and customer success. That's why I was so excited to learn that this role would have me working closely with the product and sales teams as well as with a talented marketing team. The other thing I find is crucial to making these collaborations successful is organization and documentation, so I'm also really big on creating one central home for all materials related to a project, including meeting notes, action items, drafts of campaign copy and visuals, and timelines."

Read More: [How to Answer “What Is Your Work Style?” in an Interview \(Plus Examples!\)](#)

25. What's your management style?

The best managers are strong but flexible, and that's exactly what you want to show off in your answer. (Think something like, "While every situation and every team member requires a bit of a different strategy, I tend to approach my employee relationships as a coach...") Then share a couple of your best managerial moments, like when you grew your team from five to 15 or coached an underperforming employee to become the company's top salesperson.

Possible answer to "What's your management style?"

"Management style is so hard to put your finger on, but I think in general a good manager gives clear directions and actually stays pretty hands-off, but is ready and available to jump in to offer guidance, expertise, and help when needed. I try my best to make that my management style. I also go out of my way to make sure I know when my team needs help. That means plenty of informal check-ins, both on the work they're doing and on their general job satisfaction and mental well-being. I remember one project in particular at my most recent position that involved everyone working on a separate aspect of the product. This meant a lot of independent work for my team of seven people, but rather than bog everyone down with repetitive meetings to update me and everyone

else on progress made, I created a project wiki that allowed us to communicate new information when necessary without disrupting another team member's work. I then made it my job to make sure no one was ever stuck on a problem too long without a sounding board. Ultimately, despite the disparate project responsibilities, we ended up with a very cohesive product and, more importantly, a team that wasn't burnt out."

Read More: [How to Answer "What's Your Management Style?"](#)

26. How would your boss and coworkers describe you?

First, be honest (remember, if you make it to the final round, the hiring manager will be calling your former bosses and coworkers for references!). Then try to pull out strengths and traits you haven't discussed in other aspects of the interview, such as your strong work ethic or your willingness to pitch in on other projects when needed.

Possible answer to "How would your boss and coworkers describe you?"

"Actually, in my most recent performance review in April, my direct supervisor described me as someone who takes initiative and doesn't shy away from hard problems. My role involves a lot of on-site implementation, and when things go wrong, it's usually up to me to fix it. Rather than punting the problem back to the team, I always try to do what I can first. I know she appreciates that about me."

Read More: [3 Strategies for Answering "How Would Your Boss or Coworkers Describe You?"](#)

27. How do you deal with pressure or stressful situations?

Here's another question you may feel the urge to sidestep in an effort to prove you're the perfect candidate who can handle anything. But it's important not to dismiss this one (i.e. don't say, "I just put my head down and push through it," or, "I don't get stressed out"). Instead, talk about your go-to strategies for dealing with stress (whether it's meditating for 10 minutes every day or making sure you go for a run or keeping a super-detailed to-do list) and how you communicate and otherwise proactively try to mitigate pressure. If you can give a real example of a stressful situation you navigated successfully, all the better.

Possible answer to “How do you deal with pressure or stressful situations?”

“I stay motivated by thinking about the end result. I’ve found that even in the midst of a challenging situation, reminding myself of my goals helps me take a step back and stay positive.”

Read More: [3 Ways You’re Messing Up the Answer to “How Do You Deal With Stressful Situations?”](#)

28. What do you like to do outside of work?

Interviewers will sometimes ask about your hobbies or interests outside of work in order to get to know you a little better—to find out what you’re passionate about and devote time to during your off-hours. It’s another chance to let your personality shine. Be honest, but keep it professional and be mindful of answers that might make it sound like you’re going to spend *all* your time focusing on something other than the job you’re applying for.

Possible answer to “What do you like to do outside of work?”

“I’m a huge foodie. My friends and I love trying new restaurants in town as soon as they open—the more unusual the better! I love discovering new foods and cuisines, and it’s also a great activity to share with friends. I try to go out with the same group at least once a week and it’s a fun way to make sure we keep in touch and share experiences even when we’re busy with other things. We even took a trip to New York City and spent each day in a different neighborhood, buying something to share from a few restaurants.”

Read More: [How to Answer “What Are Your Hobbies?” in an Interview \(It’s Not a Trick Question!\)](#)

29. Are you planning on having children?

Questions about your family status, gender (“How would you handle managing a team of all men?”), nationality (“Where were you born?”), religion, or age are illegal—but they still get asked (and frequently). Of course, not always with ill intent—the interviewer might just be trying to make conversation and might not realize these are off-limits—but you should

definitely tie any questions about your personal life (or anything else you think might be inappropriate) back to the job at hand.

Possible answer to “Are you planning on having children?”

“You know, I’m not quite there yet. But I am very interested in the career paths at your company. Can you tell me more about that?”

Read More: [5 Illegal Interview Questions and How to Dodge Them](#)

30. How do you stay organized?

Would you want to work with a hot mess? Yeah, we didn’t think so. Neither does anyone else. A disorganized worker doesn’t just struggle in their own role, they can also create chaos for peers, managers, direct reports, clients, customers, and anyone else they interact with. So interviewers will often ask about how you keep yourself organized to make sure you’d be able to handle the workload and gauge what you’d be like to work with. In your answer, you’ll want to reassure them you’d have things under control (both in what you say and how you say it), describe a specific system or method you’ve used (bonus points if you can tie it to the role you’re interviewing for), and explain how it benefited you and your team. Just make sure your answer is succinct and, well, organized.

Possible answer to “How do you stay organized?”

“I take pride in my ability to stay organized, and it’s really come in handy in my past roles and especially the social media assistant job I’m in now. First, I keep a really meticulous calendar for each of the platforms I’m responsible for using Hootsuite—which I noticed you use here as well—and I try to block off time twice a week to get ahead on creating and slotting in posts.

“Second, I’m a big fan of Trello, where I have one personal board I use as a to-do list color-coded by type of task and marked with priority level and one shared marketing team board that we use to coordinate campaigns launching across social, email, and other channels. We pay very close attention to the news in case we need to pause a campaign. If needed, I’d tag all the relevant stakeholders on Trello, immediately suspend all scheduled content in Hootsuite, and start a discussion on Slack or suggest a meeting to reassess strategy.

“Finally, I created a shared folder on Google Drive with subfolders by campaign that I update with one-pagers on goals and strategies, assets, a record of the actual posts deployed, performance analyses, and retros. That way, there’s a go-to place for anyone on the team to refer back to past projects, which I’ve found really helps us learn from every campaign and incorporate those learnings into what we’re working on next.”

Read More: [What Interviewers Really Want to Know When They Ask “How Do You Stay Organized?”](#)

31. How do you prioritize your work?

Your interviewers want to know that you can manage your time, exercise judgement, communicate, and shift gears when needed. Start by talking about whatever system you've found works for you to plan your day or week, whether it's a to-do list app you swear by or a color-coded spreadsheet. This is one where you'll definitely want to lean on a real-life example. So go on to describe how you've reacted to a last-minute request or another unexpected shift in priorities in the past, incorporating how you evaluated and decided what to do and how you communicated with your manager and/or teammates about it.

Possible answer to “How do you prioritize your work?”

“I’d be lost without my daily to-do list! At the beginning of each workday, I write out tasks to complete, and list them from highest to lowest priority to help keep me on track. But I also realize priorities change unexpectedly. On one particular day recently, I had planned to spend most of my time making phone calls to advertising agencies to get price quotes for an upcoming campaign. Then I did a quick check-in with my manager. She mentioned she needed help putting together a presentation ASAP for a major potential client. I moved the more flexible task to the end of the week and spent the next few hours updating the time-sensitive presentation. I make it a point to keep lines of communication open with my manager and coworkers. If I’m working on a task that will take a while to complete, I try to give a heads-up to my team as soon as possible. If my workload gets to be unmanageable, I check in with my boss about which items can drop to the bottom of the priority list, and then I try to reset expectations about different deadlines.”

Read More: [A Foolproof Method to Answer the Interview Question “How Do You Prioritize Your Work?”](#)

32. What are you passionate about?

You're not a robot programmed to do your work and then power down. You're a human, and if someone asks you this question in an interview, it's probably because they want to get to know you better. The answer can align directly with the type of work you'd be doing in that role—like if, for example, you're applying to be a graphic designer and spend all of your free time creating illustrations and data visualizations to post on Instagram.

But don't be afraid to talk about a hobby that's different from your day-to-day work. Bonus points if you can "take it one step further and connect how your passion would make you an excellent candidate for the role you are applying for," says Muse career coach Al Dea. Like if you're a software developer who loves to bake, you might talk about how the ability to be both creative and precise informs your approach to code.

Possible answer to "What are you passionate about?"

"One of my favorite pastimes is knitting—I love being able to create something beautiful from nothing. Of course, knitting also requires a keen attention to detail and a lot of patience. Luckily, as an accountant I have cultivated both of those qualities!"

Read More: [3 Authentic Ways to Answer "What Are You Passionate About?" in a Job Interview](#)

33. What motivates you?

Before you panic about answering what feels like a probing existential question, consider that the interviewer wants to make sure you're excited about *this* role at *this* company, and that you'll be motivated to succeed if they pick you. So think back to what has energized you in previous roles and pinpoint what made your eyes light up when you read this job description. Pick one thing, make sure it's relevant to the role and company you're interviewing for, and try to weave in a story to help illustrate your point. If you're honest, which you should be, your enthusiasm will be palpable.

Possible answer to "What motivates you?"

"I'm driven primarily by my desire to learn new things—big or small—and take on new responsibilities so that I'm constantly growing as an employee and contributing more to my team and organization. I spent several summers working as a camp counselor and

felt most fulfilled when I volunteered to lead planning for a talent show, jumped in to help with scheduling logistics, and learned how to run pickups efficiently. All of that experience helped immensely when I took a step up to become the lead counselor last year focused on operations, and that's what excites me so much about the opportunity to take on this managerial role for the after-school program.”

Read More: [5 Easy Steps to Answer “What Motivates You?” in an Interview](#)

34. What are your pet peeves?

Here's another one that feels like a minefield. But it'll be easier to navigate if you know why an interviewer is asking it. Most likely, they want to make sure you'll thrive at their company—and get a glimpse of how you deal with conflict. So be certain you pick something that doesn't contradict the culture and environment at this organization while still being honest. Then explain why and what you've done to address it in the past, doing your best to stay calm and composed. Since there's no need to dwell on something that annoys you, you can keep this response short and sweet.

Possible answer to “What are your pet peeves?”

“It bothers me when an office’s schedule is really disorganized, because in my experience, disorganization can cause confusion, which can hurt the motivation of the team. As a person who likes things to be orderly, I try to help keep my team on task while also allowing for flexibility.”

Read More: [6 Tips for Answering “What Are Your Pet Peeves?” in an Interview](#)

35. How do you like to be managed?

This is another one of those questions that's about finding the right fit—both from the company's perspective and your own. Think back on what worked well for you in the past and what didn't. What did previous bosses do that motivated you and helped you succeed and grow? Pick one or two things to focus on and always articulate them with a positive framing (even if your preference comes from an experience where your manager behaved in the opposite way, phrase it as what you *would* want a manager to do). If you can give a positive example from a great boss, it'll make your answer even stronger.

Possible answer to “How do you like to be managed?”

“I enjoy having my hands in a lot of different projects, so I like working with managers who allow their employees to experiment, be independent, and work cross-functionally with other teams. At the same time, I really welcome it when a boss provides me with support, guidance, and coaching. No one can do anything alone, and I believe when managers and employees collaborate together and learn from one another everyone comes out on top.”

Read More: [3 Easy Steps to Answer “How Do You Like to Be Managed?” in an Interview](#)

36. Do you consider yourself successful?

This question might make you uncomfortable. But you can think of it as an opportunity to allow the interviewer to get to know you better and to position yourself as an excellent choice for this job. First off, make sure you say yes! Then pick one specific professional achievement you’re proud of that can be tied back to the role you’re interviewing for—one that demonstrates a quality, skill, or experience that would help you excel in this position. You’ll want to explain *why* you consider it a success, talk about the process in addition to the outcome, and highlight your own accomplishment without forgetting your team.

Zooming in on one story will help if you feel awkward tooting your own horn!

Possible answer to “Do you consider yourself successful?”

“I do consider myself successful, even though I’m early in my professional career. I took a full load of classes in my junior year of college because I wanted to take that summer to volunteer for a human rights organization overseas. I knew that I needed to make sure I was on track with my major, minor, and graduation requirements. It was difficult to juggle it all with my part-time job, which I kept to help account for the fact that I wouldn’t be earning money over the summer, and there were a few sleepless nights. But it was worth the hard work: I ended the year with a 3.9 GPA and the opportunity to volunteer for the agency in Ghana without falling behind my graduation timeline. For me success is about setting a goal and sticking with it, no matter how hard it is, and this experience was proof that I could be successful even when there’s a lot to balance, which I know there always is at a nonprofit like this one.”

Read More: [How to Answer “Do You Consider Yourself Successful?” Without Feeling Like a Show-Off](#)

37. Where do you see yourself in five years?

If asked this question, be honest and specific about your future goals, but consider this: A hiring manager wants to know a) if you've set realistic expectations for your career, b) if you have ambition (a.k.a., this interview isn't the first time you're considering the question), and c) if the position aligns with your goals and growth. Your best bet is to think realistically about where this position could take you and answer along those lines. And if the position isn't necessarily a one-way ticket to your aspirations? It's OK to say that you're not quite sure what the future holds, but that you see this experience playing an important role in helping you make that decision.

Possible answer to "Where do you see yourself in five years?"

"In five years, I'd like to be in a position where I know more about my longer-term career aspirations as a designer. I will have gotten experience working for a design agency and know more about the industry overall. I'll have grown my technical skills and learned how to take feedback from clients and incorporate it. And the way your agency is set up, I'll also have gotten the opportunity to design different kinds of deliverables—including websites, branding, and ad campaigns—for different kinds of clients to see where I really feel at home before settling on a focus."

Read More: [How to Answer "Where Do You See Yourself in 5 Years?"](#)

38. How do you plan to achieve your career goals?

Having goals shows interviewers you care, are ambitious, and can think ahead. Having a plan for how you'll achieve your goals demonstrates your self-motivation as well as organizational and time management skills. Finally, the fact that you've accomplished past goals you've set for yourself is proof of your ability to follow through. All together, these are indications that you can not only set and achieve goals of your own, but also help your prospective boss, team, and company do the same. To craft your answer, make sure you focus on one or two goals in detail, explain why the goals are meaningful, communicate what milestones are coming up, highlight past successes, and connect back to *this* job.

Possible answer to "How do you plan to achieve your career goals?"

"My current goal is to earn the CPA license so that I'm fully certified and prepared to contribute in a junior staff accounting job. My undergraduate degree is in finance and I

completed an accounting internship with XYZ Company last summer. While I was there, I decided that each week I'd ask one person from a different team to coffee to learn about their job and career path. Not only did those conversations impress upon me the importance of getting my CPA as soon as possible, they also helped me realize I was eager to pursue forensic accounting, which is why I'm so excited about the opportunity to join this team. In order to ensure I earn my CPA this year, I enrolled in NASBA workshops, created a study schedule to keep myself on track, and will be taking my first trial test in three weeks. I plan on taking the actual test within the next three to six months."

Read More: [How to Answer “How Do You Plan to Achieve Your Career Goals?” in an Interview](#)

39. What are your career aspirations?

Career aspirations are bigger and loftier than career goals. With this question, interviewers are asking: What kind of career would make you happiest (while also being realistic)? Your aspirations might revolve around what kind of company you'd like to work for, what tasks you'd like to do, who you'd like to help, or how you'd like to be seen by your colleagues. So to answer this question, talk about what would energize and fulfill you and connect it to the position you're interviewing for. Be specific about how this job will help you achieve your career aspirations.

Possible answer to “What are your career aspirations?”

“After growing up in a food desert, my biggest professional aspiration is to help make healthy food more widely available and accessible regardless of where you live. I also love solving complex problems. Currently, as a project manager, I specialize in strategic planning and combine it with a natural ability to engage critical stakeholders—resulting in on-time and under-budget delivery. This role would help me use those skills to work on a mission I’m passionate about. I am determined to use these skills to help your organization guarantee our community has access to affordable, nutritious food and information to make healthy decisions. In the next five or so years, I would love to take on additional responsibility and be in a decision-making role to drive the mission beyond our community and support even more families in gaining access to nutritious food options.”

Read More: [How to Answer “What Are Your Career Aspirations?” in an Interview](#)

40. What's your dream job?

Along similar lines, the interviewer wants to uncover whether this position is really in line with your ultimate career goals. While “an NBA star” might get you a few laughs, a better bet is to talk about your goals and ambitions—and why this job will get you closer to them.

Read More: [The Secret Formula to Answering “What's Your Dream Job?” in an Interview](#)

41. What other companies are you interviewing with?

Companies might ask you who else you’re interviewing with for a few reasons. Maybe they want to see how serious you are about this role and team (or even this field) or they’re trying to find out who they’re competing with to hire you. On one hand, you want to express your enthusiasm for this job, but at the same time, you don’t want to give the company any more leverage than it already has by telling them there’s no one else in the running. Depending on where you are in your search, you can talk about applying to or interviewing for a few roles that have XYZ in common—then mention how and why *this* role seems like a particularly good fit.

Possible answer to “What other companies are you interviewing with?”

“I’m interviewing with a few companies for a range of positions, but they all come down to delivering an excellent customer experience. I wanted to keep an open mind about how to best achieve that goal, but so far it seems that this role will really allow me to focus all of my energy on customer experience and retention, which I find very appealing.”

Read More: [How to Answer “What Other Companies Are You Interviewing With?”](#)

42. What makes you unique?

“They genuinely want to know the answer,” Dea promises. Give them a reason to pick you over other similar candidates. The key is to keep your answer relevant to the role you’re applying to. So the fact that you can run a six-minute mile or crush a trivia challenge might not help you get the job (but hey, it depends on the job!). Use this opportunity to tell them something that would give you an edge over your competition for *this* position. To figure out what that is, you can ask some former colleagues, think back to patterns you’ve seen in

feedback you get, or try to distill why people tend to turn to you. Focus on one or two things and don't forget to back up whatever you say with evidence.

Possible answer to “What makes you unique?”

“I basically taught myself animation from scratch. I was immediately drawn to it in college, and with the limited resources available to me, I decided to take matters into my own hands—and that’s the approach I take in all aspects of my work as a video editor. I don’t just wait around for things to happen, and when I can, I’m always eager to step in and take on new projects, pick up new skills, or brainstorm new ideas.”

Read More: [A Simple Way to Answer “What Makes You Unique?” in Your Job Search \(Plus, Examples!\)](#)

43. What should I know that’s not on your resume?

It's a good sign if a recruiter or hiring manager is interested in *more* than just what's on your resume. It probably means they looked at your resume, think you might be a good fit for the role, and want to know more about you. To make this wide-open question a little more manageable, try talking about a positive trait, a story or detail that reveals a little more about you and your experience, or a mission or goal that makes you excited about this role or company.

Possible answer to “What should I know that’s not on your resume?”

“Well, one thing you won’t find on my resume: the time I had to administer emergency CPR. Last year, I was at the lake when I saw a young girl who looked like she was drowning. I was a lifeguard in high school, so I swam out, brought her to shore, and gave her CPR. Although this was—hopefully—a one-time event, I’ve always been able to stay calm during stressful situations, figure out a solution, and then act. As your account manager, I’d use this trait to quickly and effectively resolve issues both within the team and externally. After all, obstacles are inevitable, especially in a startup environment. And if anyone needs CPR at the office beach party, well, I’m your woman.”

Read More: [The Right Way to Answer “What Should I Know That’s Not on Your Resume?”](#)

44. What would your first few months look like in this role?

Your potential future boss (or whoever else has asked you this question) wants to know that you've done your research, given some thought to how you'd get started, and would be able to take initiative if hired. (In some interviews, you might even get the more specific, "What would your first 30, 60, or 90 days look like in this role?") So think about what information and aspects of the company and team you'd need to familiarize yourself with and which colleagues you'd want to sit down and talk to. You can also suggest one possible starter project to show you'd be ready to hit the ground running and contribute early on. This won't necessarily be the thing you do first if you do get the job, but a good answer shows that you're thoughtful and that you care.

Possible answer to "What would your first few months look like in this role?"

"It's been exciting to hear about some of the new initiatives the company has started in our previous conversations—like the database project and the company-wide sync, but I know there's still a lot for me to learn. The first thing I'd do is line up meetings with the stakeholders involved in the projects I'd be tackling to help me figure out what I don't know and then go from there. Hopping into a database project halfway through can be tricky, but I'm confident that once I know what all the stakeholders are looking for, I'll be able to efficiently plot out our next steps and set appropriate deadlines. From there, I'll be focused on hitting the milestones that I've set for the team."

Read More: [The 30-60-90 Day Plan: Your Secret Weapon for New Job Success](#)

45. What are your salary expectations?

The number one rule of answering this question is: Figure out your salary requirements ahead of time. Do your research on what similar roles pay by using sites like PayScale and reaching out to your network. Be sure to take your experience, education, skills, and personal needs into account, too! From there, Muse career coach [Jennifer Fink](#) suggests choosing from one of three strategies:

- Give a salary range: But keep the bottom of your stated range toward the mid-to-high point of what you're actually hoping for, Fink says.

- Flip the question: Try something like “That’s a great question—it would be helpful if you could share what the range is for this role,” Fink says.
- Delay answering: Tell your interviewer that you’d like to learn more about the role or the rest of the compensation package before discussing pay.

(And here’s some more info on responding to a question about your [salary requirements on an application form](#).)

Possible answer to “What are your salary expectations?”

“Taking into account my experience and Excel certifications, which you mentioned earlier would be very helpful to the team, I’m looking for somewhere between \$42,000 and \$46,000 annually for this role. But for me, benefits definitely matter as well. Your free on-site gym, the commuter benefits, and other perks could definitely allow me to be a bit flexible with salary.”

Read More: [3 Strategies for Answering “What Are Your Salary Expectations?” in an Interview](#)

46. What do you think we could do better or differently?

This question can really do a number on you. How do you give a meaty answer without insulting the company or, worse, the person you’re speaking with? Well first, take a deep breath. Then start your response with something positive about the company or specific product you’ve been asked to discuss. When you’re ready to give your constructive feedback, give some background on the perspective you’re bringing to the table and explain why you’d make the change you’re suggesting (ideally based on some past experience or other evidence). And if you end with a question, you can show them you’re curious about the company or product and open to other points of view. Try: “Did you consider that approach here? I’d love to know more about your process.”

Read More: [How to Answer the “How Would You Improve Our Company?” Interview Question Without Bashing Anyone](#)

47. When can you start?

Your goal here should be to set realistic expectations that will work for both you and the company. What exactly that sounds like will depend on your specific situation. If you're ready to start immediately—if you're unemployed, for example—you could offer to start within the week. But if you need to give notice to your current employer, don't be afraid to say so; people will understand and respect that you plan to wrap things up right. It's also legitimate to want to take a break between jobs, though you might want to say you have "previously scheduled commitments to attend to" and try to be flexible if they really need someone to start a bit sooner.

Possible answer to "When can you start?"

"I am excited for the opportunity to join your team. I have several projects to wrap up in my current role at [Company]. I plan to give them two weeks' notice to make a smooth transition for my coworkers and will be happy to come onboard with the team here after that time."

Read More: [4 Ways to Answer the Interview Question "When Can You Start?"](#)

48. Are you willing to relocate?

While this may sound like a simple yes-or-no question, it's often a little bit more complicated than that. The simplest scenario is one where you're totally open to moving and would be willing to do so for this opportunity. But if the answer is no, or at least not right now, you can reiterate your enthusiasm for the role, briefly explain why you can't move at this time, and offer an alternative, like working remotely or out of a local office. Sometimes it's not as clear-cut, and that's OK. You can say you prefer to stay put for xyz reasons, but would be willing to consider relocating for the right opportunity.

Possible answer to "Are you willing to relocate?"

"I do love living in Raleigh and would prefer to stay here. However, for the right opportunity I'd be willing to consider relocating if necessary."

Read More: [The Best Responses to "Are You Willing to Relocate?" Depending on Your Situation](#)

49. How many tennis balls can you fit into a limousine?

1,000? 10,000? 100,000? Seriously? Well, seriously, you might get asked brain-teaser questions like these, especially in quantitative jobs. But remember that the interviewer doesn't necessarily want an exact number—they want to make sure that you understand what's being asked of you, and that you can set into motion a systematic and logical way to respond. So take a deep breath and start thinking through the math. (Yes, it's OK to ask for a pen and paper!)

Read More: [9 Steps to Solving an Impossible Brain Teaser in a Tech Interview \(Without Breaking a Sweat\)](#)

50. If you were an animal, which one would you want to be?

Seemingly random personality-test type questions like these come up in interviews because hiring managers want to see how you can think on your feet. There's no wrong answer here, but you'll immediately gain bonus points if your answer helps you share your strengths or personality or connect with the hiring manager. Pro tip: Come up with a stalling tactic to buy yourself some thinking time, such as saying, "Now, that is a great question. I think I would have to say..."

Read More: [4 Steps for Answering Off-the-Wall Interview Questions](#)

51. Sell me this pen.

If you're interviewing for a sales job, your interviewer might put you on the spot to sell them a pen sitting on the table, or a legal pad, or a water bottle, or just *something*. The main thing they're testing you for? How you handle a high-pressure situation. So try to stay calm and confident and use your body language—making eye contact, sitting up straight, and more—to convey that you can handle this. Make sure you listen, understand your "customer's" needs, get specific about the item's features and benefits, and end strong—as though you were truly closing a deal.

Read More: [4 Tips for Responding to "Sell Me This Pen" in an Interview](#)

52. Is there anything else you'd like us to know?

Just when you thought you were done, your interviewer asks you this open-ended doozy. Don't panic—it's not a trick question! You can use this as an opportunity to close out the meeting on a high note in one of two ways, Zhang says. First, if there really is something relevant that you haven't had a chance to mention, do it now. Otherwise, you can *briefly* summarize your qualifications. For example, Zhang says, you could say: "I think we've covered most of it, but just to summarize, it sounds like you're looking for someone who can really hit the ground running. And with my previous experience [enumerate experience here], I think I'd be a great fit."

Read More: [How to Answer "Is There Anything Else You'd Like Us to Know?"](#)

53. Do you have any questions for us?

You probably already know that an interview isn't just a chance for a hiring manager to grill you—it's an opportunity to sniff out whether a job is the right fit from your perspective. What do you want to know about the position? The company? The department? The team? You'll cover a lot of this in the actual interview, so have a few less-common questions ready to go. We especially like questions targeted to the interviewer ("What's your favorite part about working here?") or the company's growth ("What can you tell me about your new products or plans for growth?") If you're interviewing for a remote role, there are some specific [questions](#) you might want to ask related to that.

Read More: [57 Smart Questions to Ask in a Job Interview in 2022](#)

Bonus questions

Looking for more common interview questions and answers examples? Check out these lists of inquiries for different types of jobs.

- [Behavioral interview questions](#)
- [Phone interview questions](#)
- [Remote interview questions](#)
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- [COVID-related interview questions](#)
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Want even *more* advice for answering common interview questions?

If you are looking for more in depth advice about these 53 interview questions and how to answer them, here's a list of articles with detailed guides to teach you how to approach your responses.

1. [Tell me about yourself.](#)
2. [Walk me through your resume.](#)
3. [How did you hear about this position?](#)
4. [Why do you want to work at this company?](#)
5. [Why do you want this job?](#)
6. [Why should we hire you?](#)
7. [What can you bring to the company?](#)
8. [What are your greatest strengths?](#)
9. [What do you consider to be your weaknesses?](#)
10. [What is your greatest professional achievement?](#)
11. [Tell me about a challenge or conflict you've faced at work, and how you dealt with it.](#)
12. [Tell me about a time you demonstrated leadership skills.](#)
13. [What's a time you disagreed with a decision that was made at work?](#)
14. [Tell me about a time you made a mistake.](#)
15. [Tell me about a time you failed.](#)
16. [Why are you leaving your current job?](#)
17. [Why were you fired?](#)
18. [Why was there a gap in your employment?](#)
19. [Can you explain why you changed career paths?](#)
20. [What's your current salary?](#)
21. [What do you like least about your job?](#)
22. [What are you looking for in a new position?](#)

23. [What type of work environment do you prefer?](#)
24. [What's your work style?](#)
25. [What's your management style?](#)
26. [How would your boss and coworkers describe you?](#)
27. [How do you deal with pressure or stressful situations?](#)
28. [What do you like to do outside of work?](#)
29. [Are you planning on having children?](#)
30. [How do you stay organized?](#)
31. [How do you prioritize your work?](#)
32. [What are you passionate about?](#)
33. [What motivates you?](#)
34. [What are your pet peeves?](#)
35. [How do you like to be managed?](#)
36. [Do you consider yourself successful?](#)
37. [Where do you see yourself in five years?](#)
38. [How do you plan to achieve your career goals?](#)
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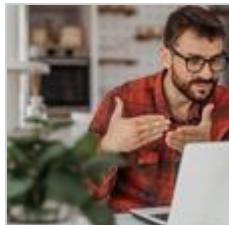
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HIRING

27 Most Commonly Asked Job Interview Questions and Answers

Want to know (or use) some of the most commonly asked interview questions and answers? Here's a comprehensive list used by interviewers. ☕

EXPERT OPINION BY JEFF HADEN, CONTRIBUTING EDITOR, INC. @JEFF_HADEN

JUN 20, 2016



Photo: Getty Images

While some job interviewers take a fairly unusual approach to interview questions, most job interviews involve an exchange of common interview questions and answers (including some of the most often asked behavioral

interview questions). Here are some of the most common interview questions, along with the best way to answer them.

1. "Tell me a little about yourself."

If you're the interviewer, there's a lot you should already know: The candidate's resume and cover letter should tell you plenty, and LinkedIn and Twitter and Facebook and Google can tell you more.

The goal of an interview is to determine whether the candidate will be outstanding in the job, and that means evaluating the skills and attitude required for that job. Does she need to be an empathetic leader? Ask about that. Does she need to take your company public? Ask about that.

If you're the candidate, talk about why you took certain jobs. Explain why you left. Explain why you chose a certain school. Share why you decided to go to grad school. Discuss why you took a year off to backpack through Europe, and what you got out of the experience.

When you answer this question, connect the dots on your resume so the interviewer understands not just what you've done, but also *why*. Interviewers will be listening for a genuine response.

2. "What are your biggest weaknesses?"

Every candidate knows how to answer this question: Just pick a theoretical weakness and magically transform that flaw into a strength in disguise.

For example: "My biggest weakness is getting so absorbed in my work that I lose all track of time. Every day I look up and realize everyone has gone home. I know I should be more aware of the clock, but when I love what I'm doing I just can't think of anything else."

So your "biggest weakness" is that you'll put in more hours than everyone else? Great. A seasoned interviewer has a BS detector that can easily pick up on such silliness.

A better approach for a candidate is to choose an actual weakness, but one you're working to improve. Share what you're doing to overcome that weakness. No one is perfect, but showing you're willing to honestly self-assess and then seek ways to improve comes pretty darned close.

3. "What are your biggest strengths?"

Although a job candidate's resume and experience should make their strengths readily apparent, interviewers ask this popular interview question because they want to know how their skills can drive a long-term growth in the company.

If you're asked, provide a sharp, on-point answer. Be clear and precise. If you're a great problem solver, don't just say that: Provide a few examples, pertinent to the opening, that *prove* you're a great problem solver. If you're an emotionally intelligent leader, don't just say that: Provide a few examples that prove you know how to answer the unasked question.

In short, don't just claim to have certain attributes—*prove* you have those attributes.

4. "Where do you see yourself in five years?"

Answers to this question go one of two basic ways. Candidates try to show their incredible ambition (because that's what they think you want) by providing an extremely optimistic answer: "I want your job!" Or they try to show their humility (because that's what they think you want) by providing a meek, self-deprecating answer: "There are so many talented people here. I just want to do a great job and see where my talents take me."

In either case, you learn nothing, other than possibly how well candidates can sell themselves.

For interviewers, here's a better question: "What business would you love to start?"

That question applies to any organization, because every employee at every company should have an entrepreneurial

mind-set.

The business a candidate would love to start tells you about her hopes and dreams, her interests and passions, the work she likes to do, the people she likes to work with -- so just sit back and listen.

5. "Out of all the candidates, why should we hire you?"

Since candidates cannot compare themselves with people they don't know, all they can do is describe their incredible passion and desire and commitment and, well, basically beg for the job. (Way too many interviewers ask the question and then sit back, arms folded, as if to say, "Go ahead. I'm listening. Try to convince me.")

And you learn nothing of substance.

Here's a better interview question: "What do you feel I need to know that we haven't discussed?" Or even, "If you could get a do-over on one of my questions, how would you answer it now?"

Rarely do candidates come to the end of an interview feeling they've done their best. Maybe the conversation went in an unexpected direction. Maybe the interviewer focused on one aspect of their skills and totally ignored other key attributes. Or

maybe candidates started the interview nervous and hesitant, and now wish they could go back and better describe their qualifications and experience.

Plus, think of it this way: Your goal as an interviewer is to learn as much as you possibly can about every candidate, so don't you want to give them the chance to ensure you do?

Just make sure to turn this part of the interview into a conversation, not a soliloquy. Don't just passively listen and then say, "Thanks. We'll be in touch." Ask follow-up questions. Ask for examples.

And of course if you're asked this question, use it as a chance to highlight things you haven't been able to touch on.

6. "How did you learn about the opening?"

Job boards, general postings, online listings, job fairs – most people find their first few jobs that way, so that's certainly not a red flag.

But a candidate who continues to find each successive job from general postings probably hasn't figured out what he or she wants to do – and where he or she would like to do it.

He or she is just looking for a job; often, *any* job.

So don't just explain how you heard about the opening. Show that you heard about the job through a colleague, a current employer, by following the company—show that you know about the job *because you want to work there.*

Employers don't want to hire people who just want a job; they want to hire people who want a job with *their* company.

7. "Why do you want *this* job?"

Now go deeper. Don't just talk about why the company would be great to work for; talk about how the position is a perfect fit for what you hope to accomplish, both short-term and long-term.

And if you don't know why the position is a perfect fit, look somewhere else. Life is too short. A skilled interviewee loves this interview question because a well-crafted answer shows interviewers the value you will bring to the company.

8. "What do you consider your biggest professional achievement?"

Here's an interview question that definitely requires an answer relevant to the job. If you say your biggest achievement was improving throughput by 18 percent in six months but you're interviewing for a leadership role in human resources, that answer is interesting but ultimately irrelevant.

Instead, talk about an underperforming employee you "rescued," or how you overcame infighting between departments, or how so many of your direct reports have been promoted.

The goal is to share achievements that let the interviewer imagine you in the position – and see you succeeding.

9. "Tell me about the last time a co-worker or customer got angry with you. What happened?"

Conflict is inevitable when a company works hard to get things done. Mistakes happen. Sure, strengths come to the fore, but weaknesses also rear their heads. And that's OK. No one is perfect.

But a person who tends to push the blame – and the responsibility for rectifying the situation – onto someone else is a candidate to avoid. Hiring managers would much rather choose candidates who focus not on blame but on addressing and fixing the problem.

Every business needs employees who willingly admit when they are wrong, step up to take ownership for fixing the problem, and, most important, learn from the experience.

10. "Describe your dream job."

Three words describe how you should answer this question: relevance, relevance, relevance.

But that doesn't mean you have to make up an answer. You can learn something from every job. You can develop skills in every job. Work backward: Identify things about the job you're interviewing for that will help you if you do land your dream job someday, and then describe how those things apply to what you hope to someday do.

And don't be afraid to admit that you might someday move on, whether to join another company or – better – to start your own business. Employers no longer expect "forever" employees.

11. "Why do you want to leave your current job?"

Let's start with what you *shouldn't* say (or, if you're the interviewer, what are definite red flags).

Don't talk about how your boss is difficult. Don't talk about how you can't get along with other employees. Don't bad-mouth your company.

Instead, focus on the positives a move will bring. Talk about what you want to achieve. Talk about what you want to learn. Talk about ways you want to grow, about things you want to

accomplish; explain how a move will be great for you *and* for your new company.

Complaining about your current employer is a little like people who gossip: If you're willing to speak badly of someone else, you'll probably do the same to me. An experienced interviewer will push to get a real answer by asking this follow-up question: How is your current employer not satisfying these needs?

12. "What kind of work environment do you like best?"

Maybe you love working alone, but if the job you're interviewing for is in a call center, that answer will do you no good.

So take a step back and think about the job you're applying for and the company's culture (because every company has one, whether intentional or unintentional). If a flexible schedule is important to you, but the company doesn't offer one, focus on something else. If you like constant direction and support and the company expects employees to self-manage, focus on something else.

Find ways to highlight how the company's environment will work well for you – and if you can't find ways, don't take the job, because you'll be miserable.

When you're the one in the interviewer's seat, you'll get a more honest answer by asking: What do you care about most at work?

13. "Tell me about the toughest decision you had to make in the past six months."

The goal of this question is to evaluate the candidate's reasoning ability, problem-solving skills, judgment, and possibly even willingness to take intelligent risks.

Having no answer is a definite warning sign. *Everyone* makes tough decisions, regardless of their position. My daughter worked part-time as a server at a local restaurant and made difficult decisions all the time – like the best way to deal with a regular customer whose behavior constituted borderline harassment.

A good answer proves you can make a difficult analytical or reasoning-based decision – for example, wading through reams of data to determine the best solution to a problem.

A great answer proves you can make a difficult interpersonal decision, or better yet a difficult data-driven decision that includes interpersonal considerations and ramifications.

Making decisions based on data is important, but almost every decision has an impact on people as well. The best candidates

naturally weigh all sides of an issue, not just the business or human side exclusively.

14. "What is your leadership style?"

This is a tough question to answer without dipping into platitudes. Try sharing leadership examples instead. Say, "The best way for me to answer that is to give you a few examples of leadership challenges I've faced," and then share situations where you dealt with a problem, motivated a team, worked through a crisis. Explain *what* you did and that will give the interviewer a great sense of how you lead.

And, of course, it lets you highlight a few of your successes.

15. "Tell me about a time you disagreed with a decision. What did you do?"

No one agrees with every decision. Disagreements are fine; it's what you do when you disagree that matters. (We all know people who love to have the "meeting after the meeting," where they've supported a decision in the meeting but then go out and undermine it.)

Show that you were professional. Show that you raised your concerns in a productive way. If you have an example that proves you can effect change, great – and if you don't, show that you

can support a decision even though you think it's wrong (as long as it's not unethical, immoral, etc.).

Every company wants employees to be honest and forthright, to share concerns and issues, but to also get behind a decision and support it as if they agreed, even if they didn't.

16. "Tell me how you think other people would describe you."

I hate this question. It's a total throwaway. But I did ask it once, and got an answer I really liked.

"I think people would say that what you see is what you get," the candidate said. "If I say I will do something, I do it. If I say I will help, I help. I'm not sure that everyone likes me, but they all know they can count on what I say and how hard I work."

Can't beat that.

17. "What can we expect from you in your first three months?"

Ideally the answer to this should come from the employer: They should have plans and expectations for you.

But if you're asked, use this general framework:

You'll work hard to determine how your job creates value – you won't just stay busy, you'll stay busy doing the right things.

You'll learn how to serve all your constituents – your boss, your employees, your peers, your customers, and your suppliers and vendors.

You'll focus on doing what you do best – you'll be hired because you bring certain skills, and you'll apply those skills to make things happen.

You'll make a difference – with customers, with other employees, to bring enthusiasm and focus and a sense of commitment and teamwork.

Then just layer in specifics that are applicable to you and the job.

18. "What do you like to do outside of work?"

Many companies feel cultural fit is extremely important, and they use outside interests as a way to determine how you will fit into a team.

Even so, don't be tempted to fib and claim to enjoy hobbies you don't. Focus on activities that indicate some sort of growth: skills you're trying to learn, goals you're trying to accomplish. Weave those in with personal details. For example, "I'm raising a family,

so a lot of my time is focused on that, but I'm using my commute time to learn Spanish."

19. "What was your salary in your last job?"

While this question has been a long-time favorite, new laws now make asking about salary history off limits in some cities and states, including California, Massachusetts, and New York. The aim of the new prohibitions is to end the cycle of pay discrimination.

Even so, it's still OK to ask: Does your current salary really reflect the market rate in your field? Or, is your current salary what you hope to get in your next job?

For job candidates, this is a tough one. You want to be open and honest, but frankly, some companies ask the question as the opening move in salary negotiations. Try an approach recommended by Liz Ryan. When asked, say, "I'm focusing on jobs in the \$50K range. Is this position in that range?" (Frankly, you should already know—but this is a good way to deflect.)

Maybe the interviewer will answer; maybe she won't. If she presses you for an answer, you'll have to decide whether you want to share or demur. Ultimately your answer won't matter too much, because you'll either accept the salary offered or you won't, depending on what you think is fair.

20. "A snail is at the bottom of a 30-foot well. Each day he climbs up three feet, but at night he slips back two feet. How many days will it take him to climb out of the well?"

Questions like these are now among the most popular interview questions (thanks, Google) in recent years. As the interviewer, you're not necessarily looking for the right answer, but instead a little insight into the job candidate's reasoning abilities.

Listen carefully as they talk through their logic as they try to solve the problem. Who cares if people get it wrong? The best candidates will laugh at themselves. Assess how the interviewee deals with failure. Moreover, do they know how to be a good communicator?

21. "What questions do you have for me?"

A great candidate doesn't waste this opportunity. Smart questions not only signal a great candidate but also reveal to the candidate whether the company is a good fit for them. After all, they're being interviewed, but they're also interviewing the company and have a keen sense of the questions to ask during an interview.

Here goes:

22. "What do you expect me to accomplish in the first 90 days?"

A great job candidate will ask this question if they haven't already gleaned this information at some point in their interview. Why? High performers want to hit the ground running. They don't want to spend weeks or months "getting to know the organization." They don't want to spend huge chunks of time in orientation, in training, or in the futile pursuit of getting their feet wet.

They want to make a difference--and they want to make that difference *right now*.

23. "What are the three traits your top performers have in common?"

Great candidates also want to be great employees. They know every organization is different – and so are the key qualities of top performers in those organizations. Maybe your top performers work longer hours. Maybe creativity is more important than methodology. Maybe constantly landing new customers in new markets is more important than building long-term customer relationships. Maybe the key is a willingness to spend the same amount of time educating an entry-level customer as helping an enthusiast who wants high-end equipment.

Great candidates want to know, because:

they want to know if they will fit in, and,
if they do fit in, they want to know how they can be a
top performer.

24. "What *really* drives results in this job?"

Employees are investments, and you expect every employee to generate a positive return on his or her salary. (Otherwise why do you have them on the payroll?)

In every job, some activities make a bigger difference than others. You need your HR team to fill job openings, but what you really want is for them to find the right candidates, because that results in higher retention rates, lower training costs, and better overall productivity.

You need your service techs to perform effective repairs, but what you really want is for those techs to identify ways to solve problems and provide other benefits – in short, to build customer relationships and even generate additional sales.

Great candidates want to know what truly makes a difference and drives results, because they know helping the company succeed means they will succeed as well.

25. "What are the company's highest-priority goals this year, and how would my role contribute?"

Is the job the candidate will fill important? Does that job *matter*?

Great candidates want a job with meaning, with a larger purpose – and they want to work with people who approach their jobs the same way.

Otherwise a job is just a job.

26. "What percentage of employees was brought in by current employees?"

Employees who love their jobs naturally recommend their company to their friends and peers. The same is true for people in leadership positions – people naturally try to bring on board talented people they previously worked with. They've built relationships, developed trust, and shown a level of competence that made someone go out of their way to follow them to a new organization.

And all of that speaks incredibly well to the quality of the workplace and the culture.

27. "What do you plan to do if ...?"

Every business faces a major challenge: technological changes, competitors entering the market, shifting economic trends. There's rarely one of Warren Buffett's moats protecting a small business.

So while some candidates may see your company as a stepping-stone, they still hope for growth and advancement. If they do eventually leave, they want it to be on their terms, not because you were forced out of business.

Say I'm interviewing for a position at your ski shop. Another store is opening less than a mile away: How do you plan to deal with the competition? Or you run a poultry farm (a huge industry in my area): What will you do to deal with rising feed costs?

Great candidates don't just want to know what you think; they want to know what you plan to do – and how they will fit into those plans.



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