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## Academic librarian interview questions and answers

You could spend a lot of time trying to prepare for every possible job interview question (and there are a ton), but most job interviews really boil down to just five things employers want to know about you.Go on enough job interviews and you'll quickly learn most interviewers ask the same things. But...Read moreThe Undercover Recruiter says:The reason you will always struggle to prepare answers to every single question you are asked in an interview is that the interviewer themselves didn't prepare them. They don't really care too much about all the answers you give either. What we do know is that an interviewer has one major objective to fulfill and that is to get the answers to the five basic questions. Based on the answers, he or she will then compare the answers to that of any other interviewer's and they will then rule you in or out. The five questions are: What brings you to this interview? (Why you're looking for a new job and why you're interested in this company)What value will you add to our company? (How your skills will be directly applicable to the job)Can you work well with the team?What is special about you?What's your salary and when can you start?The interviewer might not phrase the questions as such (they'll probably phrase them like this), but when you're preparing for your interview, make sure you've got examples to cover all of these bases.Most job interviews come with a set of stock questions, with a few additional that are specific to...Read moreThe Only 5 Interview Questions You Need to Prepare For | The Undercover Recruiter via Donna SveiPhoto by bpsusf. This is it: The make-it-or-break-it interview stage. The interview is the hardest part of the job process, but we're here to help. To identify common job interview questions to prepare for, we reached out to Editorial Director Erica Devaney. Devaney has conducted hundreds of interviews, making her uniquely qualified to provide advice and insight about the interview process. Hi, y'all. My name is Erica Devaney. I've been at Red Ventures for nine years, working on various teams in a few different content roles — from SEO writing, to UX content, to editorial planning, and more. In 2019, I did more creative interviews than anyone else at the company, so I'd say I have some experience here. I hope some of my interview tips can be helpful to you! Interviews are crucial to finding the right person for the right role. At Red Ventures, we use interviews to make sure a candidate is a good fit for the specific role, which includes having the right skills, the right attitude for coaching, and an eagerness to learn. Common Interview Questions Every interview — and every candidate — is different, but I generally rely on a central set of questions to help me better understand the question. Here are five of my go-to interview questions. I typically interview candidates for content or design roles, so I've shared a few creative-specific questions along with more generic versions of those questions to help those of you interviewing in other industries. To help advance you through the hiring process, I'll also clue you in to what I'm looking for when I ask these questions and provide a sample response that I'd like to hear. Tell me about your (writing, editing, design, etc.) experience. I usually start with this question to get a good baseline understanding of your experience, in your own words. I've read about it on your resume or LinkedIn, but I want to hear you explain what you've done. I'm sure you'll get this question from almost everyone you talk to during the interview process, so it's good to prepare how you'd hit on the high points of your experience. I'll use your answer to ask specific follow-up questions. Example of a Good Answer "In my classes, I worked with groups on papers and presentations, and did a lot of peer editing on our papers. At my internship, I worked closely with my editor to pitch topics and learned how to publish effective posts on social media for our brand. In my current position, I own our content calendar and contribute around three articles a week, making sure to follow our style guide and the tone of the site." Tell me about a time you received some tough feedback or feedback you didn't agree with. What happened and what did you learn from getting this feedback? I'm looking for an experience that helped you grow so as to not make the same mistakes again. I'm not looking for you to place blame on someone else or to tell me about feedback you ignored. Example of a Good Answer "On my first story pitch, I got feedback that the topic didn't fit with our site. I reworked it with my manager and realized why this topic wouldn't work. Before my next pitch, I took a closer look at the types of stories we covered on the site so that I could make more informed pitches for future stories." What is your [writing, editing, design, etc.] process? I'm interested in learning HOW you actually use the skill you have, whether that's writing, editing, analyzing, marketing, SEO, or something else. I'm hoping to hear about where you put your focus — what's most important to you when you do your job? I want to know that you have a thoughtful way of doing your work — a planning or understanding phase, a stage to do the actual work, time for a final review or edits, and a last look before submitting the work or passing it along. Example of a Good Answer "Before I start editing, I make sure to have an understanding of the goal of the piece. Next I read through it, then I start making edits — big picture first to make sure the piece makes sense and has all the right information and sources, then grammar, before my final read-through. Finally I'll read through the whole thing one last time before giving it back to the writer to make any changes." Tell me about a time you had to give tough feedback or have a tough conversation. I'm hoping to learn how you handle tough situations. It's inevitable that you'll have to give someone hard feedback at some point, whether it's a small conversation or something career-changing. I know situations like these are difficult for everyone involved, but at some point you have to step up for the good of the team, the project, your coworker, yourself, and the business. Example of a Good Answer "One time I was peer reviewing an article that I thought didn't quite hit the mark for the topic and audience we were going after. The person who wrote it was senior to me, so I worried about going to them with this feedback, but I listed out all my reasons for why this article didn't work for our goals. During our conversation, they were able to understand the feedback and expressed how much they appreciated me telling them. We talked through my ideas and they were able to rework the piece into something we were both really proud of." What is the project you're most proud of completing? I want to hear about a project that was challenging or complex — something that, when it was finished, you felt proud of yourself for completing. Maybe you learned how to work well with others or came up with a process to make project completion go a little smoother, or maybe it's something that means a lot to you. There's really no wrong answer here, but I do want to hear about something that was meaningful to you. Example of a Good Answer "Last year in my class, I had a group project that took us a while to choose a topic and get started on. It was tough, but once we all sat down, aligned on the topic, and assigned roles, we came together, and I was so proud of what we accomplished. We put in a ton of work and ended up with an A on the project." Interview FAQ Here's advice for some common interview scenarios. How much information is too much information? First thing I would say here is that it's great to show your personality in an interview, but don't overshare. I once interviewed someone who was very much an oversharer and told me some really weird and personal stories — not really a good look during an interview. Secondly, try to avoid long, drawn-out answers. Give me enough information to understand your role in a project and how you worked with teammates, but don't tell me every single detail of the class. Stick to what's most important to answer the question. What are some red flags in a candidate's answer or way of answering? A few red flags for me include: Yes-or-no answers with no elaboration or details to support your answer. Dismissive phrases, like, "I already know how to do that" or "I'm already an expert at that." Anything that gives the impression that you think you have no more to learn on a topic is concerning to me. If I ask about a challenging project you worked on, it's a red flag if you place the blame on someone else. Is it OK to ask an interviewer to repeat a question? YES! If my question isn't clear or you're unsure what I'm looking for, let me know and I'll try to ask a different way. Any tips for someone who's been laid off or has gaps in their resume? In general, seeing a gap in a resume doesn't concern me. Life happens, and I'm more interested in the experience you do have, not that you may have breaks in between. However, I would suggest simply being honest about any gaps if your interviewer asks. Is sending a thank-you note after the interview expected or valuable? I personally don't expect a thank-you note after an interview and I would never count the lack of a note against anyone. But it does always make me smile when I get a thank you, especially if it's personalized to our conversation. Any Tips for Interviewing Successfully on Zoom? Zoom interviews are our current reality and we've all had to adapt. The most important thing to remember is that we're all in the same situation — most everyone is now holding their meetings over Zoom, and interviews are no different for me as an interviewer. We all have pets and kids and roommates or partners who may end up in the background of a Zoom meeting, and that's okay! We all get it. It is guaranteed that one of my two cats will walk across my screen or end up in the background of a meeting at least once a day, and interviews are not exempt from these visits. On a more practical note, I'd suggest testing your Zoom before your interview. This includes making sure you know how to log in and use your camera, testing out your audio, and ensuring you have your headphones handy. If you happen to have a shaky or unstable internet connection on the day of your interview, don't worry — we've all been there before, too. In some cases where someone has a shaky connection, I'll often suggest we both turn off our cameras and just talk, because that typically helps keep the audio from freezing. What interests you about this position? What are your greatest strengths and biggest weaknesses? What types of people do you have difficulty working with? What distinguishes you from other people who can do the same tasks as you? What role do you usually play in a group? What tools do you use to stay organized? What's something about you that people wouldn't know from your resume? What question were you hoping I'd ask today, but didn't — and what would your answer be? What aspect of your current role do you enjoy doing most? What questions do you have for me? Header Image Credits: Compassionate Eye Foundation/Gary Burchell, Luis Alvarez | Getty Images

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