

50 Common Interview Questions and Answers

When you've got a job interview coming up, good preparation is essential. By planning and practicing your answers, you can boost your confidence and increase your chances of getting the outcome you want.

Interviewers want to hear about your career history, your attributes and skills, and how your competencies match those specific to the job. They also want to know whether you're a good fit for their team. The more accurately you can predict their questions, the better you can prepare the most persuasive answers.

But how do you know in advance what you'll be asked?

The good news is that interviews tend to follow a common pattern. And most of them use very similar questions. By understanding why interviewers follow some classic lines of inquiry, you can prepare the best possible responses, and have plenty of great examples ready to use.

We've created this resource to help you to get ready for your next interview. It lists the 50 most-asked interview questions, along with advice about preparing great answers for all of them. You can read them all, or click on a particular question from the list on the following pages to jump straight to it.

Some of the questions that you're asked in your interview may be phrased differently to the ones we've provided. And you should always be ready to be asked about specific aspects of the role. But, if you invest time in crafting strong answers to all of the questions here, you'll be ready to perform confidently and convincingly in every interview that you face.

50 Common Interview Questions and Answers

Opening Questions

- [1. Tell me about yourself.](#)
- [2. Why do you want to work for this company?](#)
- [3. What interests you about this particular job?](#)
- [4. How did you hear about the position?](#)
- [5. What do you know about our organization?](#)

Career History Questions

- [6. How has your career so far prepared you for this position?](#)
- [7. Why do you want to change roles?](#)
- [8. What is your greatest professional achievement?](#)
- [9. Tell me about your worst boss.](#)
- [10. Describe a conflict you faced at work – and how you dealt with it.](#)
- [11. How good are you in a crisis?](#)
- [12. When have you demonstrated leadership skills?](#)
- [13. Describe a time when you showed initiative.](#)
- [14. When have you been innovative at work?](#)

Skills/Attributes Questions

- [15. Why should we hire you?](#)
- [16. What are your greatest strengths?](#)
- [17. What makes you unique?](#)

Role-Specific Questions

- [18. What are you hoping for from this role?](#)
- [19. What would your first 30/60/90 days here look like?](#)
- [20. What could you help us to do differently or better?](#)
- [21. What would your salary requirements be?](#)

Self-Analysis Questions

- [22. When have you failed?](#)
- [23. Tell me about a time you made a mistake.](#)
- [24. What do you do if you disagree with someone's decision?](#)
- [25. Describe a time when you faced an ethical dilemma.](#)
- [26. What do you consider to be your weaknesses?](#)
- [27. What sort of criticism do you most often receive?](#)

Work-Style Questions

- [28. What sorts of things annoy you at work?](#)
- [29. How do you tackle difficulties when they arise?](#)
- [30. What type of work environment do you prefer?](#)
- [31. What's your management style?](#)
- [32. If I asked your boss or co-workers about you, what would they say?](#)
- [33. How do you deal with pressure?](#)
- [34. How do you prioritize your work?](#)
- [35. How do you like to be managed?](#)

Goal-Based Questions

- [36. Where do you see yourself in five years?](#)
- [37. What's your dream job?](#)
- [38. What motivates you?](#)

Personal Questions

- [39. What do you like to do outside of work?](#)
- [40. How do you achieve a good work-life balance?](#)
- [41. Are you willing to relocate?](#)

Quirky Questions

42. How many tennis balls can you fit into a limousine? / How many pennies would be as high as the Empire State building? / How many lightbulbs are on right now in China?

43. If you were an animal, which one would you want to be?

44. If you were a superhero, what would be your superpower?

45. Which five people would you invite to your dream dinner party?

46. Sell me this pen.

Closing Questions

47. Is there anything else you'd like us to know?

48. What other companies are you interviewing with?

49. When could you start?

50. Do you have any questions for us?

Preparing Your Answers

Opening Questions

These questions give you plenty of scope to make a positive first impression. Strong answers here will help to set the tone and direction of the interview as a whole.

1. Tell me about yourself.

Give a clear, concise and compelling outline of who you are and what you've achieved. Let your interviewer see something of your personality and interests, and explain to them why you believe that you're the person they're looking for. However, avoid getting bogged down in too much personal detail at this stage. Instead, focus on the key skills and experience that you have that are relevant to this job.

A good tactic is to discuss your present, your past, and your future. Start by summarizing your current position. Then, fill in details of skills that you've gained from previous roles. Finally, explain how this new job represents your ideal next step.

If possible, include one or two specific, measurable achievements, such as improvements that you've delivered or performance targets that you've exceeded. Use this question as an opportunity to demonstrate how you are ideally suited to this role. And show your confidence and enthusiasm from the start.

2. Why do you want to work for this company?

Demonstrate your knowledge of the company: it's history, where it's going in the future, and what its priorities are right now. And make clear that your own career goals point the same way.

Explain how your key strengths will help the company to move forward – and how working there will allow you to excel. Be as specific as you can about why **this** company, above any other, is the best place for you to have an impact, and why you're so excited to apply.

3. What interests you about this particular job?

Show that you know exactly what this job entails, why you'd enjoy it, and how well-equipped you are to take it on. As with the previous answer, link the role to your career ambitions and goals, outlining why it suits you so well at this stage in your career.

Make it clear that you're aware of the challenges involved, and that you're excited about facing them. And be sure to focus on what you have to offer, as well as how you're hoping to benefit in return.

4. How did you hear about the position?

No matter how you **did** hear about it, emphasize what it was about the role that interested and excited you. This is also an opportunity to highlight your professional connections, and to explain any existing links with the company that fueled your desire to apply.

Overall, show that you're well-informed about your industry, organized in your approach to career development, and eager to seize good opportunities when they arise.

5. What do you know about our organization?

Show that you have a clear picture of the past, present and future of the company. It's important to know key facts, such as how long it's been in business, where it operates, and how well it's doing financially. Say something about the market it operates in, including any current challenges or trends.

But also talk about the company's values, and how these inform its targets and goals. And mention something that you'd like to learn more about – if you were to secure the job.

Career History Questions

Interviewers need to assess the quality and relevance of your experience and skills. These questions give you a chance to show how suitable you are for the job.

6. How has your career so far prepared you for this position?

To prepare for this question, identify the most important skills and experience that you'll need to be successful in this role. Then, choose an achievement or lesson that you've learned in your career so far that relates to each of these success factors. Three or four examples will be enough to make your case persuasive – as long as you include specific details, and mention measurable results.

7. Why do you want to change roles?

Depending on your reasons, this can be a tough question to answer. It's important to keep your response as confident and forward-looking as possible, so that you actually come across as **more** attractive to a new employer, not less.

Don't use this question to admit to failings, or to complain about your existing role – even if you dislike your current boss or department. Instead, explain what you've learned, and why you decided it was time to move on. Phrase your answer positively. For example, you could say that you're looking for a new challenge or want to learn a new skill.

If you were let go from your previous job, be honest about it! Even setbacks like this can be phrased positively – as opportunities to refocus your goals, to learn from your experiences, to be resilient, and to forge ahead.

8. What is your greatest professional achievement?

The best example that you can give here will be something that relates to the job you're applying for. Think of an achievement that you're genuinely proud of. That way, you'll show your passion for the job, your high professional standards, and a clear understanding of what real achievement means in your field.

Prepare a few examples, so that you can choose one that showcases something that you haven't had a chance to address already. And explain them using the STAR method. This should cover:

- The **Situation** that you were in.
- The **Task** that you had to accomplish.
- The **Actions** that you took.
- Your successful **Results**.

9. Tell me about your worst boss.

This is a tricky question. So answer it with a mix of honesty, diplomacy and positivity. Pick a real example (make sure it's not about someone working in the company you want to join), but be discreet about the person's identity.

Focus on one aspect of their behavior, and explain exactly why this made it difficult for you to do your job well. Talk about how you dealt with it, what you learned in the process, and how it's influenced your own approach to leadership since.

10. Describe a conflict that you faced at work – and how you dealt with it.

Again, be honest in acknowledging that conflicts do occur, but demonstrate how you are able to handle them reasonably and professionally. Pick an example when you were able to recognize a problem and explain how you found an effective way to deal with it. Perhaps you were able to defuse some tension in a heated team meeting or encouraged people to see others' perspectives.

Remember, conflict can be valuable in some circumstances – for example, during a brainstorming session. But show that you understand when conflict becomes toxic, that you know how to anticipate it, and that you can head it off before it causes damage.

11. How good are you in a crisis?

This question allows you to define what a crisis is in **your** role or industry, and to outline the skills that you've developed to handle one if it occurs. Use a couple of carefully chosen examples to demonstrate key strengths, such as clearheadedness, initiative, problem solving, and common sense.

This is also a chance to show that you have the confidence and the interpersonal skills needed to lead others through difficult times.

12. When have you demonstrated leadership skills?

Start by explaining what good leadership means to you, and back up your points with examples. Leadership plays a part in almost every role, to some extent, so you should be able to demonstrate leadership credentials whatever stage you're at in your career.

The STAR method (see question 8, above) is a good way to structure a clear and memorable answer. Talk about a time when you had a specific leadership challenge to overcome, and how you used skills such as strategic thinking, empathy, decisiveness, and clear communication to do so.

13. Describe a time when you showed initiative.

Initiative covers a number of key professional skills, including confidence, being a self-starter, spotting problems and opportunities, and coming up with creative ideas. For this answer, tell a story about a time when you not only showed initiative, but also achieved something measurable as a result.

14. When have you been innovative at work?

Again, innovation is a concept that encompasses many important attributes – the confidence to think and act differently, the creativity to find new solutions, and the flexibility to cope as things change.

Think of a time when you spotted a need to be innovative. What did you do? What was the positive impact of your new approach for your team and your organization?

Skills/Attributes Questions

These competency questions give you a chance to demonstrate to your interviewers that, whatever your career path so far, you've got all the abilities and characteristics that they're looking for.

15. Why should we hire you?

There are three points that you need to cover here:

First, show that you can do the job well. Use some punchy pieces of evidence that reflect your experience, attributes and skills. Then, demonstrate your knowledge of the company and the new role, to show that you'll be a good fit.

Finally, pull out the most impressive relevant achievement from your career so far, to set yourself apart from rival candidates.

16. What are your greatest strengths?

Focus on a few of your most impressive strengths – especially the ones that relate closely to this job. It's a good idea to pick strengths that you know the company needs – for a specific project, perhaps, or to solve a particular problem – even if they're not the ones you use most often.

As always, choose a clear example of each one in practice, showing the impact that it's had at work. And seize the opportunity to talk up any strengths that haven't figured in your answers so far.

17. What makes you unique?

Think about why people choose to come to you for help or advice on certain things, rather than anyone else. This is a great way of framing your unique abilities, without appearing boastful. Talk about your accomplishments, too – for example, when you were the first to do something, or when you achieved more than anyone else.

And, since everyone's career trajectory is unique, show why **your** particular mix of skills and experiences makes you the candidate best suited to this role.

Role-Specific Questions

In these questions, the interviewer explores your competencies further, to find out how well-informed you are about the job, and how well-prepared you are to take it on.

18. What are you hoping for from this role?

Use your answer to show that you have a detailed understanding of the role, and ambitious expectations for what you can achieve in it. Demonstrate your enthusiasm, and talk about the ways in which you'd benefit – for example, by being challenged more, by learning new skills, or by enriching your experience in the industry.

Focus most on what you want to contribute to the role, and how you'd go about achieving a positive impact. Show the interviewer that you're realistic, but also optimistic – and ready to deal with whatever the role throws your way.

19. What would your first 30/60/90 days here look like?

This is another test of how well you understand the role, the organization, and the industry as a whole. As with the previous answer, balance ambition with realism. Show that you're eager to make an impact early on by suggesting some of the things that you already know you'd like to try if you got the job.

But also talk about the need to assess, strategize and plan; the time it takes to learn about a business from the inside; and the importance of building trust within your team and taking others forward with you.

If possible, suggest at least one specific early project the business could try. If it's plausible, it will show that you're committed to making things happen, and that you are able to develop well-considered plans – even if it doesn't quite match the company's current ideas.

20. What could you help us to do differently or better?

This is where detailed research will really pay off. For example, if you know an area where the company may be underperforming, or where it wants to improve and grow, highlight how your skills and experience could help.

Frame your answer positively. Talk about “additional” opportunities that the organization could take advantage of or ways of working that are even more efficient. Ask whether the organization has considered these approaches, too. This demonstrates that you understand that things are rarely as simple as they seem, and that you're eager to create well-informed plans.

21. What would your salary requirements be?

Research is vital here. Go to the interview with a clear understanding of the usual salary for that particular role – and, if possible, in that company. Show that you understand how the benefits extend beyond a salary, and that you're interested in knowing more about the full package on offer.

If it feels right to give a specific figure, start at the higher end of the typical range. This shows that you value your abilities highly, while also leaving room for negotiation if necessary!



Note

Be wary of answering questions about your current salary, as such questions are now illegal in many places.

Self-Analysis Questions

How good are you at reflecting on your personality and your performance – so that you keep on learning, growing, and improving at work?

22. When have you failed?

This is another question where you can define the terms to your advantage. What exactly does failure mean to you? It's a great chance to show your values and expectations, and to demonstrate key attributes such as empathy, realism and self-awareness.

But choose your examples carefully. Don't reveal anything that would put the interviewer off hiring you. And always focus on what you learned by failing, and the positive changes you made as a result, rather than on the failure itself.

23. Tell me about a time you made a mistake.

Resist the urge to say "I haven't" – but steer clear of mentioning any serious missteps. Instead, give an example of a mistake that you were successfully able to fix. This shows that you're open and honest about errors that you make, and that you're able to correct and learn from them.

You can also use your answer to talk about the value that you place on attention to detail, honest feedback, self-reflection, and resilience.

24. What do you do if you disagree with someone's decision?

It's best to use examples of times when you dealt with disagreements and managed to resolve them. Focus on your ability to stand your ground, to communicate persuasively, and to debate matters respectfully.

But, demonstrate that you're able to change your perspective in the face of compelling evidence or changed circumstances. Paint a picture of someone who's capable under pressure and able to drive effective decision-making that's always in the best interests of the business.

25. Describe a time when you faced an ethical dilemma.

Choose an example which shows that you understand how a significant ethical dilemma in your industry might emerge. If possible, pick one that relates to a value that's particularly important to this company to emphasize that your own ethical standards are in line with theirs.

Outline the competing factors that made this a real dilemma. Then explain how you reached a decision that you could be proud of, however difficult that was. Don't forget to say what happened as a result – and what you learned in the process.

26. What do you consider to be your weaknesses?

Don't be tempted to go for a cliché such as "perfectionism," or to claim that you don't have any weaknesses. But don't highlight anything that might worry the interviewer, either. Instead, choose something that you've found challenging in the past, but have successfully addressed. Use specific examples to show how you identified the weakness, what you did to improve, and the positive impact this has had on your work since.

27. What sort of criticism do you most often receive?

It's important to show that you're open to criticism, and that you can respond to it positively. But, as with the previous question, don't bring up anything that might reflect badly on you.

One approach is to choose one of your **strengths**, and describe a time when you took it too far, and had to dial it back. For example, maybe your enthusiasm led to you becoming overcommitted. Or perhaps your passion for collaboration held you back from taking control of a project.

Use your answer to demonstrate humility, self-awareness, and a track record of continuous self-improvement.

Work-Style Questions

What are you like to work with? How do you approach your job, and what does that approach say about your standards and values?

28. What sorts of things annoy you at work?

Instead of just listing your “pet peeves,” pick a few examples of things that get in the way of you doing your best work. In each case, explain exactly **why** they’re problematic, and outline the steps that you’ve taken to remedy them.

However frustrating these issues were at the time, talk about them in a calm and confident way. Allow the interviewer to see your human side, but maintain control of your emotions, and focus on your ability to turn negatives into positives!

29. How do you tackle difficulties when they arise?

This is another question where the STAR approach can be very effective (see question 8). Chose two or three strengths that you’d like to demonstrate – for example, initiative, strategic thinking, or interpersonal skills – and talk about how you’ve used them to overcome a difficulty that you’ve faced during your career.

In each case, describe:

- The **Situation** surrounding the difficulty.
- The **Task** that you were attempting to accomplish.
- The **Actions** that you took using the strength that you want to highlight.
- The positive **Results** that you achieved.

30. What type of work environment do you prefer?

You can use this question to highlight your key attitudes and priorities at work. Think about the things that make it easier for you to have maximum impact in your role, and explain why.

Perhaps an open-plan environment helps you to be creative and collaborative, or a quieter space allows you to focus on detailed documents. Use the research that you’ve done on the company to check that the environment you describe matches the one you’d actually experience if you got the job. And remember to talk about the cultural and emotional environment of a company, as well as the physical one.

31. What’s your management style?

This is a chance for you to clearly define what good management means to you. Build your answer around a few relevant strengths, and back up each one with an example of your management skills in practice. In each case, be sure to include the impact that your approach had – did it improve someone’s performance, for example, or helped to get a project back on track?

Make it clear that you're confident about your management style, but that you're also flexible – and always keen to take on new challenges that will help you to improve.

32. If I asked your boss or co-workers about you, what would they say?

If possible, quote from – or paraphrase – positive comments that have been made about you in feedback sessions or performance reviews. Another good approach is to say **how** you know what your colleagues would say about you – for example, from the way they come to you with sensitive issues or the the tasks that they give you.

Remember that the company will likely need real references from your previous employers, so don't say anything here that could be contradicted. But do take this opportunity to discuss any strengths that you haven't been able to showcase in the interview so far.

33. How do you deal with pressure?

Whatever your approach to pressurized situations actually is, take care about how you describe it in your interview. It's important to emphasize the positives in your approach – the way that staying calm helps you to concentrate, for example, or how delegating tasks allows you to keep your team working together effectively.

You also need to show an understanding of pressure itself. After all, a reasonable amount can push you to achieve goals. So explain the strategies that you've used to motivate yourself and others during challenging times.

Use examples that demonstrate some different types of pressure – both in and out of work – and the specific ways in which you've dealt with them successfully.

34. How do you prioritize your work?

Before you talk about any particular tools or techniques that you've used to do this, outline your overall approach to managing your workload. Use examples – ideally with some metrics – of times when you've met tight deadlines, coped with unexpected tasks, or responded to sudden priority changes.

It's important to show that you know the difference between important and urgent; that your approach is both organized and flexible; and that you're able to maintain a healthy work-life balance.

And explain **how** you prioritize – perhaps you use To-Do Lists, spreadsheets, or project management apps – and keep emphasizing the positive impact of your approach.

35. How do you like to be managed?

Use your research into the company to show how you'd thrive in their management culture. Pick some of the strengths that you'd demonstrate if you got the job, and suggest ways that their managers could support you to do that.

Steer clear of discussing any detailed requirements. Instead, focus on the higher-level approaches that would allow you to shine – such as being given new responsibilities, or having a line manager who can both support and challenge you.

And, since people management is a two-way street, mention some of the ways in which you've helped it to work successfully in the past.

Goal-Based Questions

These questions explore what drives you, how you measure success, and where you hope your career will go from here.

36. Where do you see yourself in five years?

Make it clear that this isn't the first time you've considered this question! Have an answer ready that's positive and ambitious, but also realistic in terms of where this job could actually take you.

One approach is to think about the skills and experience that you'd like to gain. Then, describe what those improvements might mean for you in five years' time. This emphasizes your commitment to the new role, and demonstrates how you'd make the most of it – for the organization as well as yourself.

It's great to mention longer-term aspirations – but don't say anything that suggests you're not committed to the job at hand first.

37. What's your dream job?

This is a chance to describe some exciting long-term plans, while also positioning yourself perfectly for the role on offer. Your “dream” job should be an ambitious one, but you don't have to be too specific. Instead, focus on what your perfect job would let you **achieve** – especially the strengths that you'd be able to use, the responsibilities you'd have, and the sort of impact you'd hope to make.

Use your answer to emphasize your interests, values, and the high expectations you have of yourself. Try to show that the job you're applying for would move you toward your ideal role – and maybe even **become** your dream job in time!

38. What motivates you?

This is a great opportunity to tell a powerful story, so that your interviewer can visualize you working with energy and enthusiasm, and having a real impact.

Choose an example that's relevant to the role that you're applying for. Explain exactly where your motivation came from, how it felt, and what you achieved as a result.

There are many strengths that you can highlight here, including your keenness to meet deadlines and targets; your love of learning new things; your pride in developing other people's skills; and your delight in making a difference through your work.

Personal Questions

Questions about your personal life can be the trickiest ones to answer. However, it is possible to control what you reveal, while also presenting a picture of yourself that's honest, reassuring and impressive.



Note

Questions about your family status, gender, nationality, religion, or age are almost always illegal. You can politely decline to answer them – and follow up later with a concern or complaint, if appropriate. However, personal questions are sometimes asked indirectly, or simply in an attempt to put you at your ease – and it's up to you whether you want to answer them or not.

One useful tactic is to avoid giving specific details, but to ask instead if the interviewer has a particular concern – so that you can address it. If a question appears to raise doubts about your age, for example, you could respond with evidence of your energy, fitness, and commitment to the job.

And a good approach to any queries about your future – about getting married, for example, or having children – is to say that you haven't made any decisions yet, but, for the foreseeable future, you are concentrating on being as successful as you can in your career.

39. What do you like to do outside of work?

This is a chance to show that you're a well-rounded person, with a good mix of interests and the ability to achieve an effective work-life balance. Make it clear that your out-of-hours interests don't take up too much of your time and energy. If possible, highlight ways in which they actually make you **better** at your job – how they keep you healthy and sharp, for example, or allow you to use useful new skills.

Pick examples that reveal positive things about your personality, and spell out the benefits – the way that traveling has given you extra confidence when meeting new people, for example. Take this opportunity to flag up some key personal achievements, to show your overall commitment to self-improvement and to reveal the interesting new perspectives you can bring to the job.

40. How do you achieve a good work-life balance?

Start by defining what a good work-life balance means to you. Emphasize its benefits, both to you and your organization, and then give examples of how you've achieved it.

For most people, work-life balance is a “work in progress,” and you’ll show honesty if you reflect that in your answer. Most importantly, explain the positive impact that has been achieved when you’ve managed to get the balance right. Perhaps you stayed on top of a long and challenging project by protecting your weekends. Or maybe working flexibly allowed you to take calls from colleagues in different time zones.

Finally, use what you know about the company’s attitudes and values to show how well your approach will fit in.

41. Are you willing to relocate?

If you’re not, say so now – and have a specific, valid reason. But also explain all the ways in which you could be flexible, including any scope for relocating in the future.

Even if you are willing to relocate, be wary of making any commitments at this stage – or of looking desperate for “any job, anywhere”! Emphasize that you’re focused on finding the best role for you, and that you are open to opportunities that will help you to find it.

Show the interviewer that you’re open-minded and ambitious, but also that you take all major life decisions seriously – because you’re committed to making them work for everyone involved.

Quirky Questions

Some interviewers throw in “curve ball” questions, to test whether you can think on your feet. Strong answers here will show off even more of the attitudes and abilities that they’re looking for!

42. How many tennis balls can you fit into a limousine?

How many pennies would be as high as the Empire State building?

How many lightbulbs are on right now in China?

Calculation questions like these may only seem relevant to roles like budget manager or quantity surveyor. In fact, they’re used in a wide range of interviews. You can use them to show that you enjoy a challenge, that you can deal with uncertainty, and that you’re ready for anything.

These questions are also a great way to show strong thinking skills, and the ability to communicate clearly.

First, clarify the problem (“Do you mean room lights, or even light bulbs in vehicles and machines?”). Then break it down into steps, explaining each one as you go.

Highlight any assumptions that you’re making (“... assuming that the tower of pennies would stay upright in the wind...”) – and use words like “so” and “because” to explain your logic.

Be alert to any obvious “traps” (for example, “Is it currently day or night in China?”). And, when you reach your final answer, say how accurate you think it might be – and also what you could do to improve it.

43. If you were an animal, which one would you want to be?

This is a fun question designed to draw out your personality – so smile! And make sure that you use it to your advantage. Pick one of your strengths – one that’s particularly important for the job – and think of an animal that exemplifies it.

Perhaps you’d be a meerkat, because you’re great at working in teams; or a camel, because of your reputation for stamina during long projects. Mention a few possibilities, to showcase your range of valuable attributes.

44. If you were a superhero, what would be your superpower?

Again, start with characteristics that you want to highlight, particularly if you haven’t already had a chance to mention them. Then, exaggerate them, to create superpowers that you can talk about convincingly. You might even be able to link them to famous superheroes.

Perhaps you'd choose Spider-Man's agility, because you can navigate all the extra responsibilities that you feel ready to take on. Or maybe you need Black Widow's extraordinary tactical insight to launch a new product in a crowded market.

Other qualities that lend themselves well to this question include observation, resilience, persuasion, and speed. And your answer will have even more impact if you connect it to a real problem that the company's grappling with.

45. Which five people would you invite to your dream dinner party?

Choose guests that embody the personal values that you want to showcase, and ones that reflect a wide range of interests.

Vary the way you explain your reasons. You might invite some guests so that you can learn more about an area that fascinates you. Others might be there because you've felt an affinity with them. Maybe you even choose people whose views you want to challenge!

46. Sell me this pen.

If selling is your specialty, this is a great chance to prove it. However odd it seems, do all the things you'd usually do – in a way that makes it very clear what you're trying to achieve.

Even if you've never sold anything in your life, this is a chance to show how well you can communicate, form connections with people, persuade them about your ideas, and perform confidently when you're out of your comfort zone.

So be confident. Showcase the product and establish a clear need for it. Find a Unique Selling Point (USP) – but also emphasize how owning the pen will make the person feel, and all the wider benefits it will bring to them. Use positive body language – good eye contact and a warm, confident demeanor. Listen to your customer and address any questions. And, at the end, don't forget to close the deal!

Closing Questions

*These questions give interviewers a final chance to assess your “fit” for the job, the team, and the organization. They also allow **you** to ask some questions, and to give the best possible impression as you leave.*

47. Is there anything else you’d like us to know?

If there really is something relevant that hasn’t come up in the interview, say it now. But don’t dilute your message by bringing up any weaker points at this stage. It’s fine to say that you feel you’ve covered everything, and that you hope you’ve shown why you’d be a good fit. This allows you to give a short summary of the factors that qualify you for the job, and to emphasize your eagerness to secure it.

48. What other companies are you interviewing with?

It’s good to show that you’re attracting interest from other places. It underlines your credibility and value, and it can only help in any future salary discussions! But make it clear that this is the role that excites you most.

Even if you haven’t had a good response from other applications, you can still talk about the types of companies that you’re applying to. This shows your confidence in your own abilities, and how seriously you take your career progress. But always end by stressing why this job is your number one target.

49. When could you start?

You might be tempted to say “Immediately!” But don’t, as you may come across as desperate. It could also be viewed as unprofessional, since you’d likely have to make arrangements with your current employer, and possibly work through a notice period.

Flag up any specific timing issues that you know about now, to avoid backtracking or causing unnecessary problems later. You can still express your eagerness to be as flexible as possible, and your determination to start quickly – just as soon as all the necessary arrangements have been made.

50. Do you have any questions for us?

Don’t ask about any basic details that you should know already, or that you could easily find elsewhere. Also resist the urge to ask anything that’s challenging or uncomfortable to answer. And avoid going into anything too specific at this stage. After all, you haven’t got the job yet! So this isn’t the right time to be discussing detailed points about working hours, benefits or responsibilities.

It's much better to use this opportunity to ask questions that emphasize your best qualities, and that underline your seriousness about the role.

A question such as, "How ambitious is this company?" should be appealing for the interviewer to answer, and it will demonstrate your own ambitious nature.

If your research about the company has revealed new, imminent plans, a question about this will demonstrate your diligence, and show them how your values align with theirs. For example, you might have heard that the company is planning to extend its work in the community – so you could ask what shape that will likely take. Or maybe there's a new product launch coming up, which you could show your interest and enthusiasm about.

It's a good idea to ask a question about the specific job that you're applying for – such as, "What are the major challenges of the role?" or "How will you measure the post-holder's success?" You'll come across as professional and strategic, with a strong sense of your own value, and a commitment to succeed.

Finally, include a question about day-to-day life in the organization. You could simply ask, "What's it like to work here?" This is always important to know, and it gives your interviewer plenty to talk about.

Alternatively, use the research you've done on the company to ask about something that you know matches your own interests or preferences. If you've heard that there's a staff softball team, for example, you could enquire whether there are opportunities for you to take part. The more your interviewer can picture you fitting in, succeeding, and making valuable contributions to the organization, the more eager they'll be to offer you the job.



Note

For more interview advice, see our articles [Interview Skills](#) and [How to Answer Interview Questions](#).

This e-book is published by:

Emerald Works Ltd.
Level 1, 50 Frederick Street,
Edinburgh EH2 1EX, U.K.

Copyright © Emerald Works 2020.
All rights reserved.

Emerald Works Limited (Company Number
SC202102, VAT Number: GB 665 3593 06) is
a company registered in Scotland.

“Mind Tools” is a registered trademark of Emerald
Works Limited (Company Number SC202102, VAT
Number: GB 665 3593 06).

Version 1.0.

This publication is protected by international
copyright law. You may use it if you have
downloaded it directly from MindTools.com, or if
you have been provided with it under corporate
license. Please contact copyright@mindtools.com
if you’ve received it from any other source.