



Most Common Interview Questions

01 Tell me about yourself.

The interviewer is asking this open-ended ice-breaker question looking for some introductory information from you. Give a short and engaging response, ending on an interesting note so that the interviewer wants to hear more. At this point, it is more about your personality and ability to give a concise answer than the amount of information you expose.

02 What do you know about this organization?

Since you hopefully have researched the company, its competitors, and the industry before starting the interview, you should be well prepared for this question. Focus on the company's recent accomplishments or press releases, and mention any personal connection you may have with the organization.

03 Why do you think this is the right job for you?

Honestly and truthfully answer why this seems to be the job for you, assuming it is. You can talk about how you like what the company has done and want to be a part of it, or about how your own attitude fits well with what seems to be the company philosophy.

04 Tell me the main reasons why you want this job?

The interviewer is measuring your specific interest and your potential for being successful in this job but also in future positions. Be honest about your goals and the match for this position. The interviewer wants to see that you are looking ahead but may want assurances that you will perform in this role for the necessary period of time before you move on to others.

05 Why should we hire you and not somebody else with similar qualifications?

Give a short, to the point response delineating what you bring to the table and what your unique selling points are. Tell them what makes you the best person for the job. A good answer may be that you want it more.

06 What most interests you about working for this company?

The interviewer is looking to see what you know about their company which helps them to understand your specific level of interest in them. Research on the company before the interview is critical to answering this question. A specific answer is needed here and the person who has done their homework will give the better answer.

07 Can you give me an example of a school or work project that you are especially proud of?

Try to pick a project that has a strong connection to the skills you want to emphasize. Whether it is school or work does not particularly matter, but it should be one that you were heavily involved in from conception to completion.

08 Do you have all the skills needed to perform in this position?

Avoid bringing too much attention to critical skills that are crucial for the position. You may want to choose one that is less vital and emphasize that you are actively working to improve it. If you feel you are fully qualified in all areas, then say so while leaving room for improvement.

09 What do you consider to be the most important skills for this job?

Think about the qualifications the job requires and which of your skills can best serve those qualifications. Don't mention skills that the job could use but that you do not have. One of the most important skills to have is the ability to learn.

10 What skill would you most like to improve in the short-term?

If this is your first position out of school, there are likely many skills that you would need to develop and improve upon which will come with experience. Emphasize that you are a quick learner and look forward to exercising and honing many skills. If you are experienced, the skill you would like to develop should not be a vital one that you should already have -- you don't want to reveal a lack of experience here. Instead, pick a skill that is less important or that you have already developed to some degree, then discuss how the job you are interviewing for could help you improve that skill further.

11 How do you organize your work day to make realistic deadlines?

Discuss your time management habits. Describe what you use to plan out your time and create deadlines for yourself, whether it is a sheet of paper or advanced time management software.

12 Give an example of an obstacle or major problem you have had to overcome in your career.

Go over an event or a change in direction in your career that you initially had trouble with but that turned into a positive developmental experience.

13 Can you cite an example where you made a significant contribution to an employer?

This question is very relevant because it is asking, in effect, what you can do for the company you are interviewing for. Pick an example in which your employer called on you to complete a big project, and you went above and beyond the call of duty to ensure that the job was done well.

14 Nobody is perfect. What would you consider your weakness?

If you are entering the workforce, your greatest weakness is probably your lack of experience. Sometimes a weakness can actually lead to a strength, such as working too hard or being obsessed with your work. Be ready to show how this will not be a problem on the job, that you seek balance and that your goal is to become strong in all areas.

15 What would you consider to be one of your greatest strengths?

Let your best quality shine through on this answer. Typical answers align with the traits that employers are looking for, such as strong problem-solving, communication and leadership skills.

16 What three adjectives best illustrate who you are?

Discussion: The interviewer is looking for a quick response here. Keep your answer upbeat with a positive spin even if giving a negative adjective. Think glass half full instead of glass half empty. For example, "detail-oriented" rather than "nit-picker" or "assertive" rather than "aggressive." *Response:* Upbeat; passionate; well rounded.

17 What is the one thing about yourself that has not come up in the interview that you want our company to know about?

Discussion: Consider this an opportunity to present something positive that may not have come up before. *Response:* Although this has come up, I would like to emphasize that I am the type of person that gets along with everybody and helps people get along. This has been extremely helpful in working on teams with strong personalities.

18 Can you give an example of your problem-solving ability?

This is a straight-forward question investigating your problem solving skills. Give a colorful and specific example of where you used creative thinking and problem solving to find an innovative way to work out an issue.

19 How do you make decisions?

Remember that there are many different styles of making decisions, not just a single correct one. Lay out your personal decision making style, and emphasize that you are rational and do not decide too compulsively.

20 Give an example of when you used diplomacy to get your way.

Discussion: Let your negotiation skills shine through here. This question refers to anything from a sales pitch to a disagreement with team members on a project. Express your ability to see both sides of the story. *Response:* I view diplomacy and compromise as very important in the collaboration process, and I actively practice those skills on team projects and in general disagreements. As part of a team project last year, the group was going in a different direction with the job than I had initially anticipated. I got the team together and explained the negative aspects of the path we were taking. I then proposed something similar to my initial vision as a change of course, and it was agreed that we would modify our plan accordingly.

21 Describe one of your failures and how you handled it.

The interviewer does not want to hear the story of some spectacular failure. Rather, describe a minor failure but then turn the question into a positive by showing how you recovered from the failure and learned from the experience.

22 Can you give me an example of when you went above and beyond the call of duty?

Your greatest accomplishments and measurable achievements are important. Ideally, this example should be something specific and translates to a quality needed to succeed in this position.

23 Did you ever have to confront someone to get something done?

Confronting someone in a positive yet forceful way shows interpersonal and leadership skills. Tell about a time you had to compel employees or fellow team members to carry their share of the weight.

24 Why have you left your prior positions?

Describe the reasons you left your prior positions, keeping negative feelings about former bosses or co-workers to a minimum.
