🎯 Behavioral Question Bank

Select 5 questions across different competencies. Check the boxes for questions you'll use in today's mock interview.

1. Leadership & Initiative
Assessing: Taking ownership, stepping up, driving results without being asked

✅ What to Look For
- Identifies problems proactively, doesn't wait to be told
- Takes ownership of outcomes, not just tasks
- Influences others without formal authority
- Shows clear "I did" vs "we did" — knows their specific contribution
- Demonstrates follow-through to measurable results
- Volunteers for stretch assignments or ambiguous situations

🚩 Red Flags
- Waits for permission or explicit instructions
- Takes credit for team efforts ("we" without clarifying their role)
- Confuses activity with leadership (busy ≠ leading)
- Can't articulate the impact of their initiative
- Blames others when initiative fails
- Leadership examples are all about authority, not influence

☐ "Tell me about a time you took initiative on a project without being asked."

☐ "Describe a situation where you had to lead a team or project. What was your approach?"

☐ "Tell me about a time you identified a problem before others noticed it. What did you do?"

☐ "Describe a time you went above and beyond what was expected."

☐ "Tell me about a time you had to make a decision without all the information you needed."

☐ "Describe a time you convinced others to follow your approach or idea."

☐ "Tell me about a time your leadership approach didn't work. What happened?"

2. Problem-Solving & Technical Judgment
Assessing: Analytical thinking, debugging approach, technical decision-making

✅ What to Look For
- Structured approach: breaks down complex problems systematically
- Considers multiple solutions before deciding
- Articulates trade-offs clearly (cost, time, quality, risk)
- Uses data/evidence to support decisions
- Knows when to ask for help vs. push through
- Learns from debugging experiences—doesn't repeat mistakes

🚩 Red Flags
- Jumps to solutions without understanding the problem
- Can't explain their reasoning or thought process
- "Trial and error" without hypothesis-driven approach
- Overcomplicates simple problems or oversimplifies complex ones
- Blames tools, time, or others for technical failures
- No mention of validation or testing decisions

☐ "Walk me through how you approached a complex technical problem."

☐ "Tell me about a time you had to debug a difficult issue. What was your process?"

☐ "Describe a technical trade-off you had to make. How did you decide?"

☐ "Tell me about a time you had to learn a new technology or tool quickly."

☐ "Describe a time you improved an existing process or system."

☐ "Tell me about a project where you had to balance multiple constraints."

☐ "Tell me about a technical decision you made that turned out to be wrong."

☐ "Describe a time you were stuck on a problem. How did you get unstuck?"

3. Teamwork & Collaboration
Assessing: Working with others, cross-functional skills, supporting teammates

✅ What to Look For
- Shares credit genuinely—highlights teammates' contributions

- Adapts communication style for different audiences
- Seeks to understand before being understood (active listening)
- Puts team success above personal recognition
- Offers help proactively, not just when asked
- Handles conflict constructively—focuses on solutions, not blame

🚩 **Red Flags**
- "I" language only—no acknowledgment of team
- Speaks negatively about previous teammates/managers
- Avoids conflict entirely OR escalates unnecessarily
- Takes a "not my job" attitude
- Can't give specific examples of helping others
- Blames team dynamics for personal failures

☐ "Tell me about a successful team project. What was your role?"

☐ "Describe a time you had to work with someone difficult. How did you handle it?"

☐ "Tell me about a time you helped a teammate who was struggling."

☐ "Describe a cross-functional project you worked on."

☐ "Tell me about a time you received critical feedback. How did you respond?"

☐ "Describe a conflict you had with a teammate. How did you resolve it?"

☐ "Tell me about a time a team project didn't go well. What happened?"

☐ "Describe a time you disagreed with your manager. What did you do?"

4. Communication & Influence
Assessing: Explaining complex ideas, persuading stakeholders, presenting

✅ **What to Look For**
- Adjusts message complexity for the audience
- Uses concrete examples, analogies, or visuals
- Listens and addresses objections thoughtfully
- Shows preparation and structure in presentations
- Delivers difficult messages with empathy and clarity
- Persuades through logic AND relationship-building

☐ "Tell me about a time you had to explain something technical to a non-technical audience."

☐ "Describe a time you had to persuade someone to see your point of view."

☐ "Tell me about a presentation you gave. How did you prepare?"

☐ "Describe a time you had to deliver difficult news or feedback."

☐ "Tell me about a time you failed to communicate effectively. What happened?"

☐ "Describe a time you couldn't convince someone. What did you learn?"

5. Adaptability & Learning

Assessing: Handling change, learning quickly, dealing with ambiguity

✅ **What to Look For**

- Embraces change as opportunity, not threat
- Has a systematic approach to learning new things
- Stays calm under uncertainty—takes action anyway
- Seeks out unfamiliar challenges proactively
- Shows curiosity and asks good questions
- Quickly integrates new information into their approach

🚩 **Red Flags**

- Resists change or complains about shifting priorities
- "That's not what I was hired to do" attitude
- Freezes when facing ambiguity—needs all answers first
- Relies only on familiar methods, won't try new approaches
- Learning approach is passive (waiting to be taught)
- Gets frustrated easily when things don't go as planned

- [ ] "Tell me about a time you had to adapt to a significant change."

- [ ] "Describe a situation where you had to learn something new under pressure."

- [ ] "Tell me about a time priorities shifted mid-project. How did you handle it?"

- [ ] "Describe how you approach learning a new skill or technology."

- [ ] "Tell me about a time you struggled to adapt to something new."

- [ ] "Describe a time you were outside your comfort zone. How did it go?"

6. Failure & Self-Awareness ⭐ MUST ASK AT LEAST ONE
Assessing: Humility, self-reflection, growth mindset, accountability

✅ What to Look For (Strong Answers)
- Owns the failure fully—no deflection or excuses
- Shows genuine self-reflection, not scripted humility
- Describes specific actions taken to improve
- Shares a REAL failure, not a humble-brag
- Demonstrates growth—behavior actually changed
- Comfortable discussing imperfection (emotionally mature)

🚩 Red Flags (Weak Answers)
- Blames others, circumstances, or timing
- "Failure" is actually a disguised success
- Can't name a genuine failure (lack of self-awareness)
- Gets defensive or uncomfortable with the topic
- Learning is generic: "I learned to work harder"
- No evidence the lesson was actually applied

- [ ] "Tell me about a time you failed. What did you learn?"

- [ ] "Describe a mistake you made at work. How did you handle it?"

- [ ] "What's the worst decision you've made? What happened?"

- [ ] "Tell me about a time you realized you were wrong about something."

- [ ] "Describe a time you received negative feedback. How did you respond?"

- [ ] "Tell me about a project that didn't meet expectations. What went wrong?"

- [ ] "What's your biggest weakness? Give me an example of how it's affected your work."

- [ ] "Tell me about a time you had to admit you didn't know something."

7. Drive & Motivation
Assessing: Passion for engineering, career goals, intrinsic motivation

☑ What to Look For
- Genuine enthusiasm—eyes light up talking about work
- Clear career direction with logical reasoning
- Pursues learning outside of job requirements
- Connects personal interests to professional goals
- Shows curiosity about the role and company specifically
- Has researched the company and asks thoughtful questions

🚩 Red Flags
- Generic answers: "I like solving problems"
- Motivation is purely extrinsic (salary, title, prestige)
- No side projects, learning, or personal development
- Can't articulate why THIS role vs. any other
- Career goals seem unrealistic or disconnected
- No questions about the role, team, or company

- [ ] "What got you interested in engineering/this field?"

- [ ] "What's a project you're most proud of? Why?"

- [ ] "Where do you see yourself in 5 years?"

- [ ] "What do you do to stay current in your field?"

- [ ] "Tell me about a side project or personal initiative in engineering."

- [ ] "Why are you interested in this role/company specifically?"