



Interview questions

You never know exactly what an interviewer will ask you, but that doesn't mean you can't research and prepare your answers, ready for whatever they throw at you. A knowledgeable answer to a common interview question can make all the difference and get you into the next round.

Strengths and weaknesses in a job interview

1. Why do you want to leave your current company?

Try not to be too negative here. Instead focus on the future - you may want new challenges, a new location or new promotion opportunities, for example.

2. Why are you looking for a new job?

This doesn't need to be negative. Focus on positive reasons for changing job - the desire to face new challenges or a better fit of company culture.

3. How did you hear about this position?

Be honest and positive. Did you have to hunt to find the vacancy? Did you choose the company specifically? If you found it in a general search, what made you choose this opportunity over the others?

4. Why should we hire you?

This is a very broad question so avoid the obvious like basic skills, and

think of something you can offer that other candidates cannot - uncommon transferable skills or extremely high passion for a project, for example.

5. What can you offer us that someone else can not?

This can be difficult but it's so important to have an answer ready. Try to think of experiences and transferable skills you have gained in an unusual or unique way. Steer clear of generic answers like passion and enthusiasm - these should be taken as given anyway.

6. How do you handle pressure?

Pressure is a challenge by definition, so it's fine not to shrug this one off completely. Instead, talk about a past experience under pressure and how you dealt with the psychological effects while getting the job done efficiently.

7. What are your salary requirements?

Don't say what you currently earn. Instead, suggest a fair salary and benefits package. You can research salaries on Glassdoor before the interview.

8. What questions haven't I asked you?

This is your chance to bring up any stock answers you haven't been able to use. Choose carefully and deliver a prepared question and answer that you know portray you in a really good light - it could be any of these 50 most common interview questions, or something original.

9. What questions do you have for me?

You know you will be asked this, so have something prepared. You could ask about the company culture, what it takes to perform well in the job, or ask about a specific campaign or objective you know the company is working on. Be interested and engaged, and leave the interviewer with a positive impression of how much you want the job.

Background & Experience Interview Questions

10. Discuss your CV

Pick out the strongest positives or explain any unusual attributes, for example if you have changed job frequently.

11. Discuss your educational background

Talk about your qualifications and other skills in the context of the role you are applying for. The point is not what certificates you have, but how the knowledge you hold prepares you to excel in the job you want.

12. Describe yourself

This is not a request for your entire life story. Instead, choose 2-3 professional attributes you want to describe in detail, and keep it concise and relevant.

13. Why was there a gap in your employment between [insert date] and [insert date]?

You might feel awkward answering this one, depending on the reason, but try to set that aside. Employers have a right to know why you took a career break and will often be more understanding about it than you expect.





Getting Started Interview Questions

14. What would you look to accomplish in the first 30 days/60 days/90 days on the job?

Have a 30/60/90-day plan ready. Remember this effectively adds up to three 30-day plans, so set some long-term goals but also some shorter targets for month one, two and three.

15. Are you willing to relocate?

Be careful with this question. It's possible the company might ask you to relocate to a different branch office in the future - so if that's a deal breaker for you, say so now.

16. Are you willing to travel?

This is little more than a yes/no answer, and maybe aspects like distance, whether you can be away overnight, international travel and so on. Be honest - you don't want to end up in a job where your expectations are severely mismatched.

17. What's your availability?

This is a basic admin question and there's no point trying to game it. If you need to give notice at your current job, be honest about your earliest available start date. Similarly if you can't work evenings, weekends or holidays, say so,

or you could end up in a job where you can't meet the minimum expectations.

Strengths and Weaknesses Questions

18. What are your strengths?

This is a common question and a great opportunity to give several clear and concise personal and professional strengths. Be specific, avoid clichés and generic answers, and make them count - three good strengths are better than five mediocre ones.

19. What are your weaknesses?

Don't ignore the value in this question. Employers want workers who are self-aware and willing to improve, so identify genuine weaknesses that are not insurmountable, and explain what you are already doing to overcome them.

20. What was your biggest failure?

Don't be negative here. Be honest, but focus on how you reacted and recovered, and long-term lessons you learned as a result.

21. What are three things your former manager would like you to improve on?

It's common to prepare one 'weakness' answer, but be ready with several

just in case. Make sure they are all things you can improve on (and hopefully already are doing).

22. If I called your boss right now and asked them what is an area that you could improve on, what would they say?

It's OK to have areas for improvement - the important thing here is to be self-aware and actively working to get better. Obviously, avoid choosing anything that would be really detrimental to the job you're applying for.

23. What were your bosses' strengths/weaknesses?

This shows you have learned from your previous managers, for better or for worse. Think of something balanced - perhaps your past bosses did not communicate enough, or spent too much time on talk and not enough on action, and you have learned to communicate effectively and efficiently as a result.

Career Development Questions

24. Where do you see yourself in five years? Ten years?

It's OK to be ambitious with this one, as long as it's realistic. For example, in





an entry-level interview, you might see yourself leading a small to medium-sized team in five years' time. For management roles, you might aim to be a department head in ten years.

25. What is your dream job?

This should be relevant to the position you are applying for, but it doesn't have to be the exact role. Instead, think about your future career growth and how your prospective employer could help you to reach that dream job someday.

26. What are your career goals?

It's good to have goals, so make sure you have an answer for this question. Equally, try to avoid implying that your next career goal is to work for a different company or that you expect rapid promotion - be more general about your desire to gain experience and learn from your managers.

27. Who's your mentor?

This is another question where the one-word answer is not the point. You can choose anyone from family, friends, colleagues, even celebrities - just have a good explanation for how they inspire you to work well and be better.

Company Fit Questions

28. What motivates you?

An honest answer is good here, but try to avoid just saying money. If you can

think of something relevant to the role, that's great - for example, you might say you like a fast-paced environment and innovation if you are applying to work with a start-up company.

29. What gets you up in the morning?

Resist the obvious double espresso line here. Instead, take the opportunity to express yourself as an engaged and enthusiastic employee. Nobody leaps out of bed every day without fail, but genuine excitement for the job can keep you going through times both good and bad.

30. Would you work holidays/weekends?

Be honest here. Some jobs will expect you to work weekends and holidays, whereas in other roles this would be unusual. If you're unavailable due to other commitments, do say so.

31. Would you work 40+ hours a week?

It's not enough to simply say 'yes' to this question. Be honest about your availability or willingness to work frequent overtime, and be positive about your ability to get the job done on schedule.

32. What are your co-workers pet peeves?

Steer clear of minor annoyances and think of poor discipline from co-workers that makes it hard to get the job done -

lateness, unexplained absence and a lack of effort all work well as answers here.

33. What makes you uncomfortable?

It goes without saying that you should avoid naming skills specific to the role you are interviewing for. Instead, be more general and mention something that you know you can overcome with experience.

34. What do you like the most and least about working in this industry?

This is not an invitation to rant. Give a balanced answer including both positives and negatives. Interviewers are looking for authenticity and experience, both good and bad.

Behavioural Questions

35. Tell me about an accomplishment you are most proud of

Don't waste this question - it's a chance to be positive about your past achievements, ideally by choosing something relevant to the role you are applying for today.

36. Tell me about a time you made a mistake

Mistakes and failures are a chance to turn a negative into a positive, so focus on how you reacted to an error and made the effort to put things right.

37. Tell me how you handled a difficult situation

Give a complete answer with a positive outcome. The STAR method is a great way to approach this kind of question, and well worth learning as a general interview technique.

38. Give a time when you went above and beyond the requirements for a project

This is a good chance to be positive about yourself. Try to keep it within reasonable expectations - for example, a time when you took on more delegated duties than normal and handled them well.

39. Tell me about a time when you disagreed with your boss

A difference of opinion does not mean one person was right and the other was wrong - it could be more nuanced than that. Try to avoid sliding into a rant here, but give a constructive answer and an example of how you resolved the situation for the better.



40. How would you deal with an angry or irate customer?

Ideally, you will have past experience of this. If not, focus on clear communications, rapid resolution and escalating the issue if necessary - and don't just give the customer whatever they want.

Company-related Questions

41. Why are you interested in working for [insert company name here]?

Try to think like an employer, not an employee. Align your interests with those of the company and any goals you know they are working towards - don't just say you heard the money is good or the workload is light!

42. What is the name of our CEO?

This is a simple question, so be ready with the correct answer. The interviewer just wants to know you've done your research - so don't let them down!

43. Who are our competitors?

This is a basic research question. Always know the direct rivals of any company you apply to work with and be ready to say why you have chosen this opportunity and not a vacancy with a competitor.

Hobbies and Interests Questions

44. What are your hobbies?

Choose something positive and relatable, such as sports, cooking, walking in nature etc. Charity work is admirable too, if you volunteer any of your time for good causes.

45. What was the last book you read for fun?

You don't have to be literally honest here. Think of something relevant to the role or that the interviewer is likely to have heard of, and make sure you know it well in case they have read it too and ask you anything specific.

46. What is your favourite website?

The real question here is why - do you like to stay informed, or stay connected with others? Remember social networks are websites too, so can be a useful answer for communications, media and marketing roles.

Leadership Questions

47. What would your direct reports say about you?

If you've had employees directly under your management, this is your chance to give an example of when you did well, or when you learned and improved from their feedback.

48. Are you a leader or a follower?

Most people are a combination of both, and that's useful for companies, who might want you to follow instructions well when necessary, but also be ready to take the initiative or push for promotion.

49. What are some of your leadership experiences?

You don't need management experience to have leadership experience. For entry-level roles, think of an example of when you worked in a team but took on a leadership role, to show you are not always the quiet one.

50. How would you fire someone?

Go beyond basic company policy like "do it in private". A broad answer is good here, including any earlier steps you might take to avoid firing the person at all, followed by how you would handle it if there was no alternative.

