



Types of Interview Questions

Historical Interview:

Examines underlying motivations (how and why) for past decisions and track records. Frequently uses probing questions derived from academic and employment history, job application, resume and volunteer activity. Asks questions that require "reflection".

- Why did you choose to study ____ ?
- Was this a good decision?
- Why did you choose to attend _____ college?
- At what point did you make this decision?
- How did you find your first job?
- Was your first job satisfying/dissatisfying? Why?
- What did you "get" or "take away" from your last job?
- Who was your favorite supervisor or teacher? Why?
- How have you ever differed from your supervisors/teachers in evaluation of your performance?

Traditional Interview:

Utilizes open-ended questions that require discussion.

- Tell me about yourself.
- Why do you want to work here?
- Why did you leave your last job?
- Why do you want to leave your current position?
- Tell me about the gap in the employment between job X and job Y. Be honest here!
- Describe your work ethic.
- Why do you want to work here?
- What do you know about our organization?
- Why did you leave your last job?
- Do you consider yourself successful? Explain.
- What experience do you have in this field aside from what is on your resume?
- What do your co-workers say about you.
- Why should we hire you?
- What specifically attracts you to this industry?
- What do you see yourself doing in 5 years from now?
- What kind of supervisor do you work for best? Provide examples.
- What steps do you follow to study a problem before making a decision?
- Have you found any ways to make school or work easier and more rewarding?
- Are you a team player? Give examples.
- What salary do you require?
- What have you done to improve your technical knowledge in the last year?

- Have you ever been asked to leave a position?
- Tell me about the latest job related suggestion you have made/
- What is your greatest strength? (As it relates to your work capabilities).
- What is your greatest weakness? (As it relates to your work capabilities).
- What would your former supervisor say about your greatest strengths and weaknesses?
- What irritates you most about your co-workers?
- Describe to me your perfect day at work.
- How do you feel about working nights and weekends?
- Do your skills match this job or another job more closely?
- What motivates you to do your best work?
- Are you willing to relocate?
- What have you learned most from your mistakes?
- If you were hiring someone for this job, what would you look for?
- Are you overqualified for this job?
- **Do you have any questions for me? Be prepared!**

Behavioral/Situational Interview Questions:

Behavioral questions help employers see how you might manage time, work under pressure, and problem solve. Job situation or task questions focus on past actions and results and the premise is that past behavior predicts future performance.

One of the best ways to ace a behavioral question is to use the STAR system. It helps you tell your story but keeps the answer brief and to the point. For example:

Question: “Tell me about a time when you had to go above and beyond the call of duty to get the job done.”

- S: situation** Our primary customer no longer want to buy our company’s product.
- T: task** Of course, our company wanted to change her mind and recover her business.
- A: action** I presented material showing our latest improvements, how our product beat our competitors in quality and price, and the recent awards we had won for excellence. I also explained to her how we could easily custom fit the product to her specific needs.
- R: result** The customer gave us a second chance and is once again our primary customer. She also informed my boss of my determination and customer service, and I was promoted as a result.

It helps to think of some scenarios from your life that show your employability. Be sure to practice them out loud using the Star system. Below are some additional behavioral questions.

- Sometimes it's easy to get in "over your head". Describe a situation where you had to request help or assistance on a project or assignment
- Give an example of how you applied knowledge from previous coursework to a project in another class.
- Describe a situation where others you were working with on a project disagreed with your ideas and what did you do?
- Describe a situation in which you found that your results were not up to your professor's or supervisor's expectations. What happened? What action did you take?
- Tell of a time when you worked with a colleague who was not completing their share of the work.

Who, if anyone, did you tell or talk to about it? Did the manager take any steps to correct your colleague? Did you agree or disagree with the manager's actions?

- Describe a situation in which you had to arrive at a compromise or guide others to a compromise.
- We can sometimes identify a small problem and fix it before it becomes a major problem. Give an example(s) of how you have done this.
- What was the most complex assignment you have had? What was your role?
- Tell of some situations in which you have had to adjust quickly to changes over which you had no control. What was the impact of the change on you?
- Compare and contrast the times when you did work which was above the standard with times your work was below the standard.
- Describe some projects or ideas (not necessarily your own) that were implemented, or carried out successfully primarily because of your efforts.
- Describe a situation that required a number of things to be done at the same time. How did you handle it? What was the result?
- How do you determine priorities in scheduling your time? Give examples.
- Tell of a time when your active listening skills really paid off for you.
- Tell of the most difficult customer service experience that you have ever had to handle. Be specific, tell what you did, and what the outcome was.
- Describe a situation where you found yourself dealing with someone who didn't like you. How did you handle it?

Situational Interview Questions:

Another type of interview question that looks at your predictable behavior is one that presents a specific scenario where the circumstances can be very detailed, some examples are:

In a training session, you find that the trainer has a thick accent, and you can't understand what's being said. Immediately following the training session you need to meet with your boss to brief her on the content of the session. What would you do?

A co-worker tells you in confidence that she plans to call in sick while actually taking a week's vacation. What would you do and why?

Interview the Interviewer:

Interviewers will always ask if you have any questions for them at the end of an interview. **Always prepare written questions to ask!** Questions demonstrate interest and preparedness. You will want to ask questions to determine if the job is a good fit for you. Is this a company where you want to work? Does this job meet your short/long term needs, etc.? Look at the questions below and determine which ones might be the most appropriate for your interview.

- Is there anything personally or professionally that you believe would prevent my being a solid contributor in this role?
- Can you describe an ideal employee?
- What would your "learning plan" consist of for my first six months?
- What kind of work can I expect to do the first year?
- What particular computer equipment/software does the company use?
- What percent of routine/detailed work will I encounter?
- How much opportunity will I have for decision making in my first assignment?
- When was the last significant layoff? What criteria were used to select those who would stay?

- What are the organization's plans for the next 5 years and how does this department fit in?
- What do you think are the most critical skills and abilities for success in this job?
- What would I see if I stood outside the front door at five o'clock? Would people be smiling? Staying late or leaving early? Would everyone be taking work home?
- Could I get a chance to see the team in action? Could I sit in on a team meeting? Could I shadow someone for a day?
- What are the biggest problems facing this department in the next six months and in one year?
- What do you see in me? What are my strongest assets and possible weaknesses? Do you have any concerns that I need to clear up in order to be the top candidate?
- Do you know when you will be making your hiring decision?