

Sample Interview Questions & Answers



When you are asked open-ended questions, always try to put a positive spin on your responses. Do your homework prior.

Below are some common interview questions asked by the interviewer. Our goal is to make sure you are not caught off guard. Be true to yourself and always tell the truth.

Q1 **Tell me about yourself?**
(The interviewer is really saying “I want to hear you talk”)

How To Answer:

This is a commonly asked question designed to ‘loosen’ you up. Spend a maximum of five minutes to describe your qualifications, career history and your range of skills. Emphasise those skills that are relevant to the job you are applying for.

Q2 **What, if any, have been your achievements to date?**
(The interviewer is saying, “Are you an achiever?”)

How To Answer:

Again, this is a common question so be prepared. Select an achievement that is recent. Identify skills you used in the achievement and quantify the benefits for this or any company.

Q3 **Are you happy with your career to date?**
(The interviewer is really asking about your self-confidence, your career aspirations and whether you are a half-glass full person)

How To Answer:

The answer must be ‘yes’ but if you have hit a career plateau or you feel you are moving too slowly, then you must qualify the answer. Explain why coming to this company would benefit you as much as them.

Q4 **Tell me the most difficult situation you have had to face and how you tackled it?**
(The interviewer is really trying to find out your definition of “difficult” and whether you can show a logical approach to problem solving)

How To Answer:

Select a difficult work situation that you encountered. Explain how you defined the problem and what effective and time saving methodology/solution(s) you applied to overcome the problem.

Q5 **What do you dislike about your current role, why are you looking to leave?**
(The interviewer is trying to find out whether the job on offer has responsibilities you will dislike)

How To Answer:

Be careful with this one. One approach is to choose a characteristic of your present company such as its size, its slow decision-making process in stride. Give your answer with the air of someone who takes problems and frustrations in your stride, as part of the job. Never EVER bad mouth your ex-employer, ex company, ex co-workers. What you can say is that the corporate culture is not aligned with yours, and you would be happy to go into detail should you decide collectively to move forward.

Q6

What are your strengths?

(The interviewer wants a straightforward answer as to what you are good at and how it is going to add value)

How To Answer:

This is one question you will certainly be asked, so there is no excuse for being unprepared. Concentrate on discussing your main strengths. List three or four explanations of how they could benefit the employer. Strengths to consider include technical proficiency; ability to learn quickly; determination to succeed; positive attitude; team focus and your ability to work autonomously. The higher the position the more concrete a skill set you must deliver.

Q7

What are your greatest weaknesses?

(The interviewer is asking about your self-perception and self-awareness)

How To Answer:

This is another standard question for which you can be well prepared. Do not say you do not have any. We all have weaknesses. Either use a professional weakness such as a lack of experience (not ability) on your part in one area that is not vital for the job, or use a personal weakness and show the steps that you have taken to combat it. An example would be, "I am not the best delegator but I am learning to pass work on to my colleagues by sitting down on a weekly basis and splitting the workload".

Q8

Why do you want to leave your current employer?

(The interviewer is trying to understand and evaluate your motives for moving)

How To Answer:

This should be straight forward. Always start off by praising your soon to be ex-employer and thanking them for the opportunity that has brought you here. State how you are looking for more challenge, responsibility, experience and a change of environment and do explain why you feel you are no longer receiving these things from your current role. For example, "I have been with my company for seven years and feel I have gone as far as I can in this company." At this present time there is no opening or room for growth in my career path. I am (fill in your age) and ready, eager and excited to learn what is out there and bring the knowledge I have acquired with me.

Other questions to consider:

- How does your last/current job fit into your department and company? (Gives an idea of level of responsibility).
- How do you respond to working under pressure? (Meaning - can you? Give examples).
- How have you coped when you have had to face a conflict of interest at work? (Testing interpersonal skills, team and leadership opportunities).
- What are your preferred working conditions, working alone or in a group and why?
- How do you think you are going to fit in here especially as this organisation is very different from your current employer? (You may not be able to answer until you have established what your interviewer perceives as the differences).
- What are you looking for in a company?
- How do you measure your own performance?
- Which part of this role is least attractive to you?
- What makes you more deserving of this role than other people on the shortlist? (Strengths).
- What would your previous employers say about you and what would they consider your weaknesses?

Your questions:

- Before your interview, prepare questions you want to ask the interviewer. 'Open' questions that begin with 'What?', 'How?', 'Where?', 'Will?' or 'Who?' should encourage your interviewer to talk and provide you with additional information.
- We recommend that you consider some of the following questions;
- What will the key responsibilities be?
- What do you see as the main challenges facing someone in this role?
- What is most pressing, and what would you like to see done in the short / medium term/long term?
- Why is the position vacant?
- How is performance measured, and will goals be clearly defined? How does this occur?
- How does the role fit into the structure of the department?
- How does the department fit into the organisation as a whole?
- What is the company's culture?
- Who will I report to and are there persons reporting to me?
- What encouragement is given to undertake further training?
- Who are your customers?
- Where is the company going? Expansion plans?
- Where is the specific location of the position?
- Will the position entail travelling?