

50+ COMMON INTERVIEW QUESTIONS TO PRACTICE

❖ Tell me about yourself:

Have a short statement prepared but make sure it doesn't sound rehearsed, and limit it to work-related items (unless stated otherwise). Start with items farthest back and work your way up to the present.

❖ Why did you leave your last job?

Stay positive regardless of the circumstances. Don't speak ill of supervisors, co-workers, or the organization. Keep smiling and talk about leaving for a positive reason, such as pursuing other opportunities.

❖ What experience do you have in this field?

Speak about specifics that relate to the position, or get as close as you can if you do not have the experience.

❖ Do you consider yourself successful?

Always say yes and briefly explain why. For example, say that you have set goals, met some, and are on track to achieve others.

❖ What do co-workers say about you?

Be prepared with a quote or paraphrase. "Jill Clark, a co-worker at Smith Company, always said I was the hardest worker she's ever known."

❖ What do you know about this organization?

You should do some research on the organization before the interview to find out where the company has been, where they are going, current issues, etc.

❖ What have you done to improve your knowledge in the last year?

Try to include improvement activities that relate to the job.

❖ Are you applying for other jobs?

Be honest but do not spend a lot of time in this area. Focus on this job and what you can do for the organization.

❖ Why do you want to work for this organization?

Sincerity is extremely important here, and it may take some thought and should be based on the research you have done. Relate it to your long-term goals.

❖ Do you know anyone who works for us?

Be aware of the policy on relatives working for the organization. Only mention a friend if they are well thought of.

❖ What kind of salary do you need?

A loaded question that you will likely lose if you answer. Don't answer it. Say something like, "That's a tough question. Can you tell me the range for the position?" If they do not tell you, you can say it depends on the details of the job and give a wide range.

❖ Are you a team player?

Yes, you are! This is a key point. Give some examples where you performed for the good of the team rather than for yourself.

❖ How long would you expect to work for us if hired?

Specifics here are not good. Something like, "I'd like it to be a long time," or, "As long as we both feel I'm doing a good job."

❖ Have you ever had to fire anyone? How did you feel about that?

Do not make light of this situation or make it seem as though you like to fire people. But you will do it when it is the right thing to do. When it comes to the organization versus the individual who has created a harmful situation, you will protect the organization. (Firing is not the same as layoff or reduction in force).

❖ What is your philosophy towards work?

Short and positive is best here. Do you have strong feelings that the job gets done? Yes.

❖ If you had enough money to retire right now, would you?

Answer yes if you would. But since you need to work, this is the type of work you prefer. Don't say yes if you do not mean it.

❖ Have you ever been asked to leave a position?

If you have, be honest, brief, and avoid saying negative things about the people or organization involved.

❖ Explain how you would be an asset to this organization:

This gives you a chance to highlight your best points as they relate to the position. Give thought to this.

❖ Why should we hire you?

Point out how your assets meet what the organization needs. Don't mention any other candidates to make a comparison.

❖ Tell me about a suggestion you have made:

Be sure to use a suggestion that was accepted and was then considered successful. One that is related to the work applied for is a big plus.

❖ What irritates you about co-workers?

This is a trap question. Think hard, but don't come up with anything. A short statement that you seem to get along with folks is great.

❖ What is your greatest strength?

Stay positive! A few examples: Your ability to prioritize, problem-solving skills, ability to work under-pressure, leadership skills, positive attitude, etc.

❖ Tell me about your dream job:

Stay away from a specific job, even if it is the job you are applying for (it strains credibility). Stay generic: "A job where I love to work, love the people, can contribute, and can't wait to get to work."

❖ Why do you think you would do well at this job?

Give several reasons and include skills, experience and interest.

❖ What are you looking for in a job?

Answer similarly with your dream job description above.

❖ What kind of person would you refuse to work with?

Do not be trivial. It would take disloyalty to the organization, violence, lawbreaking for you to object.

❖ What is more important to you: the money or the work?

"Money is always important, but the work is the most important." There is no better answer.

❖ What would your previous employer say your strongest point is?

For example: Loyalty, Energy, Positive attitude, Leadership, Initiative, Creativity.

❖ Tell me about a problem you had with a supervisor:

Another trap question. This is a test to see if you will speak ill of your boss. If you fall for it, you may be below the interview right there. Stay positive and develop a poor memory about any trouble with a supervisor.

❖ What has disappointed you about a job?

Don't get trivial or negative. "Not enough of a challenge," is a safe example answer.

❖ Tell me about your ability to work under pressure:

You may thrive under certain types of pressure. Give examples.

❖ Do your skills match this job or another job more closely?

Do not give suspicion that you may want another job more.

❖ What motivates you to do your best on the job?

This is a personal trait, but some examples are: Challenge, Achievement, Recognition.

❖ Are you willing to work overtime? Nights? Weekends?

This is up to you, so just be honest. If the culture of the job is that most people work extra and you don't want to, it may not be the best fit for you.

❖ How would you know you were successful on this job?

Examples: You set high standards for yourself and you meet them. Your outcomes are successful. Your boss tells you that you are successful.

❖ Would you be willing to relocate if required?

This is something you may want to discuss with your family before the interview if you think there is a chance it may come up. Don't say yes if the answer is no.

❖ Are you willing to put the interests of the organization ahead of your own?

This is a straight loyalty and dedication question. Don't worry about a long response. Just say yes.

❖ Describe your management style:

Avoid labels. The "situational style" is safe because it says you will manage according to the situation, instead of a "one size fits all."

❖ What have you learned from mistakes on the job?

You have to come up with something or it will strain your credibility. Make it a small, well intentioned mistake with a positive lesson learned.

❖ Do you have any blind spots?

Trick question. If you knew about your blind spots, they would no longer be blind spots. Don't reveal any personal areas of concern here, let them do their own discovery.

❖ If you were hiring a person for this job, what would you look for?
Be careful to mention traits that are needed and that you have.

❖ Do you think you are overqualified for this position?
Just state that you are very well qualified for the position.

❖ How do you propose to compensate for your lack of experience?
If you have experience not yet mentioned it, mention it. If not, if true, say that you are a hardworking, quick learner.

❖ What qualities do you look for in a boss?
Be generic and positive. Knowledgeable, sense of humor, fair, loyal. All bosses think they have these traits.

❖ Tell me about a time when you helped resolve a dispute between others:
Concentrate on your problem solving of a specific incident and not the dispute itself.

❖ What position do you prefer on a team working on a project?
Just be honest. If you are more comfortable fulfilling certain roles, mention it.

❖ Describe your work ethic:
“Determination to get the job done,” or “Work hard but enjoy your work,” are good examples.

❖ What has been your biggest professional disappointment?
Refer to something beyond your control, but don't show negative feelings.

❖ Tell me about the most fun you have had on the job:
Having fun accomplishing something for the organization.

❖ Do you have any questions for me?
Always have some questions prepared. Ask for the interviewer's opinion of the company, culture, etc. or ask things like, “How soon will I be able to be productive?”

A FEW QUESTIONS NOT TO ASK AT A JOB FAIR

❖ “What’s the pay range for this position?”

The goal is to show an interest in the company/organization.

❖ “What about benefits and vacation time?”

This will be explained when the hiring manager offers you the job.

❖ “Can you tell me something about your company?”

You should know what the company is and what they do. It’s okay to ask if the company is located outside of your area, if it’s a small company or a start-up company.