

A GUIDE TO INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

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About the new job and the Company

What interests you about this job?

When you're asked what interests you about the position you are interviewing for, the best way to respond is to describe the qualifications listed in the job posting, then connect them to your skills and experience. That way, the employer will see that you know about the job you're interviewing for (not everyone does) and that you have the qualifications necessary to do the job.

For example, if you were interviewing for a Human Resources Manager job where you would be responsible for recruiting, orientation, and training, you will want to discuss how you were responsible for these functions in your past positions, and why you are interested in continuing to develop your expertise in Human Resources management.

Another example would be if you were interviewing for a Programmer / Analyst position. In that case, you would mention your interest in learning and excelling at new technologies, your experience in programming new applications, and your interest in and your ability to problem solve.

In all cases, you will want to convey your enthusiasm for the opportunity to interview, along with your solid ability to do the job.

Why do you want this job?

Why do you want this job? Are you prepared to answer this question in an interview? Keep in mind that you can customize these answers to fit your particular circumstances and the job you are applying for.

- This is not only a fine opportunity, but this company is a place where my qualifications can make a difference. As a finance executive well versed in the new stock options law, I see this position as made to order. It contains the challenge to keep me on my toes. That's the kind of job I like to anticipate every morning.
- I want this job because it seems tailored to my competencies, which include sales and marketing. As I said earlier, in a previous position I created an annual growth rate of 22 percent in a flat industry. Additionally, the team I would work with looks terrific.
- I well understand that this is a company on the way up. Your Web site says the launch of several new products is imminent. I want be a part of this business as it grows.
- Having worked through a college business major building decks and porches for neighbors, this entry-level job for the area's most respected home builder has my name on it.
- As a dedicated technician, I like doing essential research. Being part of a breakthrough team is an experience I'd love to repeat.
- This job is a good fit for what I've been interested in throughout my career. It offers a nice mix of short- and long-term activities. My short-term achievements keep me cranked up and the long-term accomplishments make me feel like a billion bucks.
- I want this job selling theater tickets because I'd be good at it. I'm good at speaking to people and handling cash. I would like a job with regular hours and I'm always on time.

- Although some companies are replacing Americans with imported low-wage workers, you are standing tall. This company's successful strategies, good reputation and values make it heads and shoulders above its competition.
- I'd fit right in as a counter clerk in your fine drycleaners. I have observed that the counter clerk position requires competence at handling several activities in quick order -- customer service, payments, bagging and phones. I like multitasking and, as a homemaker, I have a lot of practice in keeping all the balls in the air.
- The work I find most stimulating allows me to use both my creative and research skills. The buzz on this company is that it rewards people who deliver solutions to substantial problems.

What applicable attributes / experience do you have?

When you are asked questions related to the experience that qualifies you for the job, it's important to be very specific about your skills and experience.

The best way to respond is to describe your responsibilities in detail and to connect them to the job you are interviewing for. Tie your responsibilities in with those listed in the job description for the new position. That way, the employer will see that you have the qualifications necessary to do the job. Focus most on your responsibilities that are directly related to the new job's requirements.

It's also important to be honest and accurate. Don't embellish your job, because you don't know who the hiring manager will be checking with when they check your references.

Are you overqualified for this job?

Are you overqualified for this job? Are you prepared to respond when an interviewer asks if you're overqualified? Keep in mind that you can customize these answers to fit your particular circumstances and the job you are applying for.

- Overqualified? Some would say that I'm not overqualified but fully qualified. With due respect, could you explain the problem with someone doing the job better than expected?
- Fortunately, I've lived enough years to have developed the judgment that allows me to focus on the future. Before we speak of past years, past titles and past salaries, can we look at my strengths and abilities and how I've stayed on the cutting edge of my career field, including its technology?
- I hope you're not concerned that hiring someone with my solid experience and competencies would look like age bias if once on the job you decided you'd made a mistake and I had to go. Can I present a creative idea? Why don't I work on a trial basis for a month -- no strings -- which would give you a chance to view me up close? This immediately solves your staffing problem at no risk to you. I can hit the floor running and require less supervision than a less experienced worker. When can I start?
- I was proud to be a charge nurse but I really like getting back to working with patients.
- I'm flattered that you think I'm headhunter bait and will leap to another job when an offer appears. Not really. This job is so attractive to me that I'm willing to sign a contract committing to stay for a minimum of 12 months. There's no obligation on your part. How else can I convince you that I'm the best person for this position?
- I'm here because this is a company on the move and I want to move up with you. With more than the minimal experience to just skim by, I offer immediate returns on your investment. Don't you want a winner with the skill sets and attitudes to do just that?

- My family's grown. And I am no longer concerned with title and salary -- I like to keep busy. A reference check will show I do my work on time, and do it well as a team member. I'm sure we can agree on a salary that fits your budget. When can we make my time your time?
- Downsizings have left generational memory gaps in the workforce and knowledge doesn't always get passed on to the people coming up. I could be an anchor or mentor -- calm, stable, reliable and providing day-to-day continuity to the younger team. For my last employer, I provided the history of a failed product launch to a new marketing manager, who then avoided making the same mistakes.
- As you note, I've worked at a higher level but this position is exactly what I'm looking for. You offer opportunity to achieve the magic word: balance. I'm scouting for something challenging but a little less intense so I can spend more time with my family.
- Salary is not my top priority. Not that I have a trust fund but I will work for less money, will take direction from managers of any age, will continue to stay current on technology and will not leave you in the lurch if Hollywood calls to make me a star. And I don't insist that it's my way or the highway.

What can you do for this company? / What do you know about this company?

A typical interview question to discover what assets you have that are specific to the company's goals is "What can you do for this company?"

First of all, be sure to have researched the company prior to the interview, so you are familiar with the company's mission. Respond by giving examples why your education, skills, accomplishments, and experience will make you an asset for the employer.

Take a few moments to compare your goals with objectives of the company and the position, as well as mentioning what you have accomplished in your other jobs. Be positive and reiterate your interest in the company, as well as the job.

Why should we hire you? / Why are you the best person for the job?

A typical interview question, asked to get your opinion, or to validate the interviewer's opinion, on why you would be the best candidate for the position, is "Why should we hire you?"

The best way to respond is to give concrete examples of why your skills and accomplishments make you the best candidate for the job. Take a few moments to compare the job description with your abilities, as well as mentioning what you have accomplished in your other positions. Be positive and reiterate your interest in the company and the position.

Why do you want to work here?

A typical interview question, asked to ensure that you are seriously interested in the job and the company, and to find out how much you know about the company, is "Why do you want to work here?"

The best way to answer this question is, first of all, to be prepared and knowledgeable about the company. Spend some time researching the company (the About Us section of the web site is a good place to start) so you can talk about the benefits of working for this employer.

Compare your goals with objectives of the company and the position, then reiterate why you would be an asset to the employer. Let the interviewer know what you can do for the company, if you get a job offer.

Even though the question is about why you want to work here, you still need to convince the interviewer that hiring you will benefit the company.

Here are sample answers you can use to frame your own response:

- This company is internationally known for its (widgets), and my experience in the (marketing/planning/production/etc.) of (widgets) has me intrigued by the opportunity this position presents.
- The businesses in this area are known for their commitment to the community, and I would like the opportunity to participate in making this a better place to live.
- I am a (widget) connoisseur, and would love the opportunity to share my enthusiasm for (widgets) with customers.

What challenges are you looking for in a position?

A typical interview question to determine what you are looking for in your next job, and whether you would be a good fit for the position being hired for, is "What challenges are you looking for in a position?"

The best way to answer questions about the challenges you are seeking is to discuss how you would like to be able to effectively utilize your skills and experience if you were hired for the job.

You can also mention that you are motivated by challenges, have the ability to effectively meet challenges, and have the flexibility and skills necessary to handle a challenging job.

You can continue by describing specific examples of challenges you have met and goals you have achieved in the past.

What can you contribute to this company?

A typical interview question to discover how hiring you would benefit the company is "What can you contribute to this company?"

The best way to answer questions about your contributions to the company is to give examples of what you have accomplished in the past, and to relate them to what you can achieve in the future.

Describe specific examples of how effective you have been in your other positions, change you have implemented, and goals you have achieved. Talk about the depth and breadth of related experience that you have.

Also, relate your abilities to the employer's goals. You will want to let the interviewer know that you have the skills necessary to do the job they are hiring for, the ability effectively meet challenges, and the flexibility and diplomacy to work well with other employees and with management.

Sample Answers

- I'm a hard worker with the experience to get things done efficiently.
- I can contribute my organizational skills and my ability to work well in a group.
- I have the experience, contacts, and knowledge to contribute to the rapid growth of this business.
- Vision. I am experienced in the areas this company needs to grow, and my ability to plan ahead will help facilitate that growth.

Are you willing to travel?

When you are asked about your willingness to travel during an interview, be honest. There's no point in saying "yes" if you would prefer to be home five nights a week.

It is perfectly acceptable to ask how much travel is involved. That way, you can weigh how much you would need to be on the road and make an educated decision as to whether the amount of travel required fits in with your lifestyle.

What's most important is to get a good understanding of what's involved before you are offered the job, rather than being (unpleasantly) surprised after you have already been hired.

What is good customer service?

When you are applying for a retail or customer service position a typical job interview question is "What is good customer service?" The interviewer wants to know what you consider quality customer service and how you would be willing to provide it to customers.

Here is a selection of sample answers you can use to respond to questions about good customer service.

- Good customer service means having thorough knowledge of your inventory, experience with your products, and being able to help customers make the best choices for them.
- Good customer service is treating customers with a friendly, helpful attitude.
- Good customer service means helping customers efficiently, in a friendly manner. It's one of the things that can set your business apart from the others of it's kind.

How long do you expect to remain employed with this company?

When you respond, be sure to frame your response so that it's positive.

I've heard applicants say that they only want the job for a short amount of time or are planning to relocate or go back to school. Responses like that aren't going to impress the hiring manager who is looking to hire a long-term employee.

Sample Answers

- I believe that this company has the capacity to offer me a rich and satisfying career, and I would like to remain employed here for as long as I am having a positive impact.
- I would like to pursue my career here for as long as I have the opportunity to.
- I would like to remain employed here for as long as my services are needed.

Is there anything I haven't told you about the job or company that you would like to know?

It's your turn! As the interview comes to a close, one of the final questions you may be asked is "What can I answer for you?" Have interview questions of your own ready to ask. You aren't simply trying to get this job - you are also interviewing the employer to assess whether this company and the position are a good fit for you.

Here are questions to ask the interviewer so you can ensure the company is a good match for your qualifications and interests.

Interview Questions to Ask the Employer

- How would you describe the responsibilities of the position?
- How would you describe a typical week/day in this position?
- Is this a new position? If not, what did the previous employee go on to do?
- What is the company's management style?
- Who does this position report to? If I am offered the position, can I meet him/her?
- How many people work in this office/department?
- How much travel is expected?
- Is relocation a possibility?
- What is the typical work week? Is overtime expected?
- What are the prospects for growth and advancement?
- How does one advance in the company?
- Are there any examples?
- What do you like about working here?
- What don't you like about working here and what would you change?
- Would you like a list of references?
- If I am extended a job offer, how soon would you like me to start?
- What can I tell you about my qualifications?
- When can I expect to hear from you?
- Are there any other questions I can answer for you?

Interview Questions NOT to Ask

- What does this company do? (Do your research ahead of time!)
- If I get the job when can I take time off for vacation? (Wait until you get the offer to mention prior commitments)
- Can I change my schedule if I get the job? (If you need to figure out the logistics of getting to work don't mention it now...)
- Did I get the job? (Don't be impatient. They'll let you know.)

About You

What is your greatest weakness?

When you're asked what your greatest weakness is, one option is try to turn a negative into a positive. For example, a sense of urgency to get projects completed or wanting to triple-check every item in a spreadsheet can be turned into a strength i.e. you are a candidate who will make sure that the project is done on time and your work will be close to perfect.

Non-Essential Skills - An alternative approach is to analyze the key skills and strengths required for the position you are interviewing for and then come up with an honest shortcoming which is not essential for success in that job. For example if you are applying for nursing job, you might share that you are not particularly adept at conducting group presentations. In this case it will be critical to underscore your strength in one to one communication with patients while providing an example of your difficulty with presentations to large groups.

Skills You Have Improved - Another option is to discuss skills that you have improved upon during your previous job, so you are showing the interviewer that you can make improvements, when necessary. You can sketch for employers your initial level of functioning and then discuss the steps you have taken to improve this area and then reference your current, improved level of skill.

If you use this strategy be sure not to mention anything that you improved upon that is related to the job for which you are interviewing. You don't want your qualifications for the job to be questioned.

Note that the term "weakness" isn't used in the sample answers - you always want to focus on the positive when interviewing.

Sample Answers

- When I'm working on a project, I don't want just to meet deadlines. Rather, I prefer to complete the project well ahead of schedule.
- Being organized wasn't my strongest point, but I implemented a time management system that really helped my organization skills.
- I like to make sure that my work is perfect, so I tend to perhaps spend a little too much time checking it. However, I've come to a good balance by setting up a system to ensure everything is done correctly the first time.
- I used to wait until the last minute to set appointments for the coming week, but I realized that scheduling in advance makes much more sense.
- Sometimes, I spend more time than necessary on a task, or take on tasks personally that could easily be delegated to someone else. Although I've never missed a deadline, it is still an effort for me to know when to move on to the next task, and to be confident when assigning others work.
- I had difficulty with calculus during college, but I persevered with tutoring assistance and extra effort and completed 2 levels with a B minus average.
- I've learned to make my perfectionism work to my advantage at work. I am excellent at meeting deadlines, and with my attention to detail, I know my work is correct.

- I used to like to work on one project to its completion before starting on another, but I've learned to work on many projects at the same time, and I think it allows me to be more creative and effective in each one.

What is your greatest strength?

"What is your greatest strength?" is one of the easier interview questions you'll be asked. When you are asked questions about your strengths, it's important to discuss attributes that will qualify you for the job. The best way to respond is to describe the skills and experience that directly correlate with the job you are applying for.

Sample Answers

- When I'm working on a project, I don't want just to meet deadlines. Rather, I prefer to complete the project well ahead of schedule.
- I have exceeded my sales goals every quarter and I've earned a bonus each year since I started with my current employer.
- My time management skills are excellent and I'm organized, efficient, and take pride in excelling at my work.
- I pride myself on my customer service skills and my ability to resolve what could be difficult situations.

How will your greatest strength help you perform?

As a follow up to being asked about your greatest strengths, you may be asked about how your greatest strength helped your performance on the job. When you respond, relate your strengths to both the job description and your ability to perform at work.

Sample Answers

- My greatest strength is my ability to work with many different people. I enjoy learning from everyone I meet, and in this position I believe that will enhance my ability to perform on the team.
- My greatest strength is my ability to focus on my work. I'm not easily distracted, and this means that my performance is very high, even in a busy office like this one.
- My greatest strength is my ability to focus on the job at hand. I'm not easily distracted from the big picture.
- My organizational skills are my greatest strength. I'm capable of keeping many projects on track at the same time.

How would you describe yourself?

When you respond, keep in mind the type of position you are interviewing for, the company culture, and the work environment. Your answer should help show the interviewer why you're a match for the job and for the company.

- I'm a people person. I really enjoy meeting and working with a lot of different people.
- I'm a perfectionist. I pay attention to all the details, and like to be sure that everything is just right.
- I'm a creative thinker. I like to explore alternative solutions to problems and have an open mind about what will work best.
- I'm efficient and highly organized. This enables me to be as productive as possible on the job.
- I enjoy solving problems, troubleshooting issues, and coming up with solutions in a timely manner.

Describe a typical work week.

Interviewers expect a candidate for employment to discuss what they do while they are working in detail. Before you answer, consider the position you are applying for and how your current or past positions relate to it. The more you can connect your past experience with the job opening, the more successful you will be at answering the questions.

It should be obvious that it's not a good idea talk about non-work related activities that you do on company time, but, I've had applicants tell me how they are often late because they have to drive a child to school or like to take a long lunch break to work at the gym.

Keep your answers focused on work and show the interviewer that you're organized ("The first thing I do on Monday morning is check my voicemail and email, then I prioritize my activities for the week.") and efficient.

Describe your work style

When you are asked about how you work during an interview, it's important to impress the interviewer with your competency and accuracy, rather than just your speed.

Here are sample answers to the interview question "How would you describe your work style?"

- I am very focused on my work, and consequently, am able to work quickly.
- I keep a steady pace, and check my work as I go along, to prevent mistakes from snowballing.
- Because I am very organized, I am able to accomplish a lot in a limited amount of time.
- I'm organized and efficient and I'm able to multi-task very well.
- I'm always on top of my projects, but I do welcome input and will consult with team members to ensure we're all on the same track.

Do you work well with other people?

Hiring managers often mention that some of the interview questions which don't typically get the best responses from job applicants are questions about working with others. Companies want to know how you work well with other people and you'll need to say more than you enjoy working with others, which is the standard response.

It's important because even if your role in the company doesn't require a lot of communication, you will still need to deal with those you work with in a professional and personable manner.

In addition, regardless of the job, employers don't want to hire people who are difficult to get along with because that will cause workplace issues and conflicts. It can make sense to screen out applicants who don't have strong people skills, even if they have solid qualifications for the job.

Expanding Your Response

Candidates often say that they "enjoy working with people" but don't explain or expand upon their response. Anyone can say that they work well with people, but it's important to show hiring managers how you accomplish it.

How can you avoid the pitfall of giving a lame interview answer, but still make a viable point about your suitability for jobs requiring lots of interaction with people - and even for jobs which don't? What do you do that makes you a good people person at work? That's what the interviewer wants to know.

What's important is to show your prospective employer the skills you have and how you have used them in the workplace, using real-life examples.

Do you take work home with you?

Do you take work home with you is a tricky question, be ready. The longer the answer, the bigger the hole you've dug. Don't waffle and don't give an overly detailed answer with lots of ifs, ands, or buts.

Best Answer - When I need to, no problem. I realize the importance of meeting deadlines and getting work done on time.

How many hours do you normally work?

Be careful before you answer questions about how many hours a week you work. You don't want to be construed as a slacker or as someone who works too many hours.

At some companies, the norm is a 40 hour week and everyone goes home on time. At others, everyone might work 50 or 60 hours a week.

However, working a lot of hours isn't necessarily a good thing - it could mean you're not productive enough to get the job done in a reasonable amount of time.

So, unless you're sure about the company culture and expectations, the safest answer is not to mention a certain number of hours. Rather, mention that you work as much as necessary to get the job done.

How would you describe the pace at which you work?

When you're asked to describe the pace at which you work, be careful how you respond. This is another question where faster isn't necessarily better. Most employers would rather hire employees who work at a steady pace. Someone who is too slow to get the job done in a reasonable time frame isn't going to be a good hire. Neither is a candidate who works frenetically all day.

Options for answering this question include saying that you work at a steady pace, but usually complete work in advance of the deadline. Discuss your ability to manage projects and get them done on, or ahead, of schedule. If you work at a job where you have set criteria (i.e. number of calls made or responded to) that measures accomplishments, discuss how you have achieved or exceeded those goals.

How do you handle stress and pressure?

A typical interview question, asked to get a sense of how you handle on-the-job stress, is "How do you handle pressure?" Examples of good responses include:

- Stress is very important to me. With stress, I do the best possible job. The appropriate way to deal with stress is to make sure I have the correct balance between good stress and bad stress. I need good stress to stay motivated and productive.
- I react to situations, rather than to stress. That way, the situation is handled and doesn't become stressful.
- I actually work better under pressure and I've found that I enjoy working in a challenging environment.
- From a personal perspective, I manage stress by visiting the gym every evening. It's a great stress reducer.
- Prioritizing my responsibilities so I have a clear idea of what needs to be done when, has helped me effectively manage pressure on the job.
- If the people I am managing are contributing to my stress level, I discuss options for better handling difficult situations with them.
- I find that when I'm under the pressure of a deadline, I can do some of my most creative work.
- I'm not a person who has a difficult time with stress. When I'm under pressure, I focus, and get the job done.
- I find it exhilarating to be in a dynamic environment where the pressure is on.
- I find a fast pace to be invigorating, and thrive when the pressure is on.
- I've done some of my best work under tight deadlines, where the atmosphere was very stressful.
- I'm the kind of person who stays calm under pressure, and handles stress fairly easily.

It's a good idea to give examples of how you have handled stress to your interviewer. That way, they get a clear picture how well you can work in stressful situations.

What motivates you?

There isn't a right or wrong answer to interview questions about what motivates you. The interviewer is trying to understand the key to your being successful in the job he is interviewing for, and wants to make sure it's a good fit. Consider, in advance of interviewing, what actually does motivate you and come up with some specific examples to share during the interview.

Your response will vary based on your background and experiences, but, you will want to share your enthusiasm and what you like(d) best about your job. Here are some examples:

- I was responsible for several projects where I directed development teams and implemented repeatable processes. The teams achieved 100% on-time delivery of software products. I was motivated both by the challenge of finishing the projects ahead of schedule and by managing the teams that achieved our goals.
- I've always been motivated by the desire to do a good job at whatever position I'm in. I want to excel and to be successful in my job, both for my own personal satisfaction and for my employer.
- I have always wanted to ensure that my company's clients get the best customer service I can provide. I've always felt that it's important, both to me personally, and for the company and the clients, to provide a positive customer experience.
- I have spent my career in sales, typically in commission-based positions, and compensation has always been a strong factor in motivating me to be the top salesperson at my prior employers.

Are you a self-motivator?

When you respond, keep in mind that companies are seeking motivated and enthusiastic employees.

- Absolutely. I am a very active person, and I enjoy my work. I'm always looking for new and innovative ideas to bring to a project.
- I believe I am a self-motivator. I give my all to a project, and am always looking ahead to the next one at hand. Successfully completing one and moving on to the next is very exciting for me. I am passionate about my work, and truly enjoy working toward the next big goal.
- I have always been self-motivated. Coming from my background, not very much was expected of me after I finished High School. I always wanted more, and put myself through College and Grad School with very little support from my family. In the workplace, I bring that same drive to managing projects and deadlines.

What are your salary expectations?

Before you start talking pay (and salary negotiations) with a prospective employer, you need to find out how much the job (and you) are worth. You will need to take the time to research salaries. That way you will be prepared to get what you're worth and to get a job offer that's realistic and reasonable.

Salary Negotiations

Once you know what you *should* be earning, how do you go about getting it? Start by being very patient. When interviewing for a new position, do your best not to bring up compensation until the employer makes you an offer. If you're asked what your salary requirements are, say that they are open based upon the position and the overall compensation package. Or tell the employer you'd like to know more about the responsibilities and the challenges of the job prior to discussing salary.

Another option is to give the employer a salary range based upon the salary research you've done up front. Once you've received the offer you don't need to accept (or reject) it right away. A simple "I need to think it over" can get you an increase in the original offer.

And if you're ambivalent about the position a "no" can bring you a better offer too. I turned down a position I knew I didn't want, regardless of salary, and received three follow-up phone calls upping the compensation package. Be careful though, if you do definitely need that new job there's a risk that the employer may accept your declining the position and move on to the next candidate.

What do you find are the most difficult decisions to make?

There is no right or wrong answer to questions like "What are the most difficult decisions to make?" or "Describe a difficult work situation / project and how you overcame it." These are behavioral interview questions designed to discover how you handled certain situations. The logic behind these types of questions is that how you behaved in the past is a predictor of what you will do in the future.

Give concrete examples of difficult situations that actually happened at work. Then discuss what you did to solve the problem. Keep your answers positive ("Even though it was difficult when Jane Doe quit without notice, we were able to rearrange the department workload to cover the position until a replacement was hired.") and be specific. Itemize what you did and how you did it.

The best way to prepare for questions where you will need to recall events and actions is to refresh your memory and consider some special situations you have dealt with or projects you have worked on. You can use them to help frame responses. Prepare stories that illustrate times when you have successfully solved a difficult situation

Tell me about yourself.

You walk into the interview room, shake hands with your interviewer and sit down with your best interviewing smile on. Guess what their first question is? "Tell me about yourself."

Do you "wing it" and actually tell all manner of things about yourself? Will you spend the next 5 minutes rambling on about what an easy-going, loyal, dedicated, hard working employee you've been? If this is the case, you stand a good chance of having bored your interviewer to death thus creating a negative first impression.

Because it's such a common interview question, it's strange that more candidates don't spend the time to prepare for exactly how to answer it. Perhaps because the question seems so disarming and informal, we drop our guard and shift into ramble mode. Resist all temptation to do so.

Your interviewer is not looking for a 10-minute dissertation here. Instead, offer a razor sharp sentence or two that sets the stage for further discussion and sets you apart from your competitors

What has been the greatest disappointment in your life?

Your response to the question "What has been the greatest disappointment in your life?" will help the interviewer determine how easily you are discouraged.

If possible, tell about a personal disappointment i.e. the early death of a parent, child, or school friend. Believe it or not, it is okay to have not had a "greatest" disappointment.

What are you passionate about?

When you're asked what you're passionate about during a job interview it's a good opportunity to share what is important in your life. It's also an opportunity to show your dedication and what's important to you.

Your response doesn't need to be work focused, but do be sure that what you share isn't something that could potentially cut in to your working hours.

For example, you don't want to say that you're a mountain climber with the goal of climbing Mountain Everest or that you're getting ready for the Tour de France or looking to spend the winter skiing in Aspen.

- One of my greatest passions is helping others. When I was younger, I've enjoyed helping mom with household repairs. As I grew older, that habit grew and I desired to help others as well. I like helping people find solutions that meet their specific needs.
- I'm passionate about painting. I take an evening art class once a week and try to find time each weekend to paint. Painting is a good way for me to relax and even though I don't have much talent, I do it enjoy it.
- I lost my father to pancreatic cancer and ever since then, I have spent time volunteering to help raise awareness and funding for cancer research. I volunteer for PanCan, the advocacy group, and I'm part of their volunteer network. One of the things I'm passionate is to assist in finding a cure, however I can.
- I'm passionate about making a difference. When I'm involved with a project at work I want to do my best to achieve success. I feel the same way about what I do in my personal life.
- I'm an avid skier and I like to spend weekends and vacations on the ski slopes.

What are your pet peeves?

Your response to the question "What are your pet peeves?" will help the interviewer determine if you would be a good fit with the company culture.

- I do not have a pet peeve. If something is bothering me, I step back, analyze "why" and find a good solution. If you asked my teenage daughter she would tell you my pet peeve is the volume of her music.

What do people most often criticize about you?

The interview question "What Do People Most Often Criticize About You?" is asked to find out how sensitive to you are and how you accept criticism.

- There's no on-going criticism. I'm open to personal and professional growth and welcome the opportunity to improve.
- If humor is appropriate, this is a good time to use it. Example: I have a teenage daughter - few things I do are okay on her radar screen.

When was the last time you were angry? What happened?

When the interviewer asks "When Was The Last Time You Were Angry? What Happened?" he or she wants to know if you lose control. The real meaning of the word "angry", to an interviewer, is loss of control and it's important to know how you handle situations when you're angry.

- Anger to me means loss of control. I do not lose control. When I get stressed, I step back, take a deep breath, thoughtfully think through the situation and then begin to formulate a plan of action.

If you could relive the last 10 years of your life, what would you do differently?

When asking what you would do if you could relive your life, the interviewer is looking for a flaw in your interview. Always remember, the goal for the first few interviews is to get the next interview. For the interviewer, it is to weed out as many applicants as possible. Here's where a personal answer could work.

- I lost my mother to Alzheimer's. I wish I'd known more about the disease to help me through that difficult time.

If the people who know you were asked why you should be hired, what would they say?

When the interviewer asks "If the people who know you were asked why you should be hired, what would they say?" he or she wants to know what your perception is of what others think about your qualifications and abilities.

- I'm sure if you asked my friends that question they would say you should hire me because I have the skills outlined in the job description and I bring 10+ years of expertise to this position. Words they've used to describe me are: hard working, professional, trusted and a team player.

Do you prefer to work independently or on a team?

When the interviewer asks "Do you prefer to work independently or on a team?" he or she wants to know if you're a team player or would rather work on your own.

- I am equally comfortable working as a member of a team and independently. In researching the LMN company, your mission statement and the job description, I could see similarities to my previous position where there were some assignments that required a great deal of independent work and research and others where the team effort was most effective. As I said, I'm comfortable with both.
- At School and University, I enjoyed playing football and performing with the Drama Club. Each required a different kind of team play, but the overall goal of learning to be a member of a group was invaluable. I continued to grow as team member while on my debate team and through my advanced marketing class where we had numerous team assignments. I'm very comfortably working on a team, but I can also work independently, as well.

Give some examples of teamwork.

A typical interview question to discover how well you would work with other people is "Give some examples of teamwork."

- In my last position, I was part of a software implementation team. We all worked together to plan and manage the implementation schedule, to provide customer training, and ensure a smooth transition for our customers.
- Our team always completed our projects ahead of schedule with very positive reviews from our clients.
- I was part of team responsible for evaluating and selecting a new vendor for our office equipment and supplies.
- The inter-departmental team reviewed options, compared pricing and service, chose a vendor, and implemented the transition to the new vendor.

What type of work environment do you prefer?

When you are asked about work environments, your best bet is to say you're flexible because, at this stage in the interview process, you don't know what it will be like working for the company.

- I can be flexible when it comes to my work environment. What is the environment in the Engineering department here at Company Name? (Once they've described the work environment, include key phrases they've used when you describe your preferred work environment).

How do you evaluate success?

- I evaluate success in different ways. At work, it is meeting the goals set by my supervisors and my fellow workers. It is my understanding, from talking to other employees, that the GGR company is recognized for not only rewarding success, but giving employees opportunity to grow as well. After work, I enjoy playing softball, so success on the field is catching the winning pop-up.

If you know your boss is 100% wrong about something how would you handle it?

- An answer that works well is: "It depends on the situation and the personality of the supervisor." To elaborate, give examples:
- My present supervisor does not like to have his authority questioned. He's fairly new on the job and almost all of the people he supervises have been on the job longer than he has. He's never bothered to learn the procedures, how things are done or how the computer system works. But if any of us tell him that how he wants something done won't work, he gets extremely angry. So, I never tell him he's wrong. Never. Whatever he tells me to do, I smile and say "okay." Then if I know a way to get it done that will work, I do it that way, give him the results he wants and never tell him I didn't do it the way he told me to. He got the results and is happy. I saved myself the stress of being yelled at and gave him what he wanted, so I'm happy.
- My prior supervisor was more easy-going and if I told her "you know, I think it might work better if I do what you asked in such and such a way," she say "okay, try it."
- If I were a new hire on a job, I would probably not question a supervisor because I might think I didn't know enough. Except on the new job I'm going to. The director has admitted that she's new on the job and there are a lot of things that a secretary does that she doesn't know how to do, so she will be depending on me to know how to keep the office running.

Describe a difficult work situation / project and how you overcame it.

There is no right or wrong answer to questions like "What are the most difficult decisions to make?" or "Describe a difficult work situation / project and how you overcame it." These are behavioral interview questions designed to discover how you handled certain situations. The logic behind these types of questions is that how you behaved in the past is a predictor of what you will do in the future.

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The best way to prepare for questions where you will need to recall events and actions is to refresh your memory and consider some special situations you have dealt with or projects you have worked on. You can use them to help frame responses. Prepare stories that illustrate times when you have successfully solved a difficult situation.

Describe a time when your workload was heavy and how you handled it.

A typical interview question to discover how you manage your work is "Describe a time when your workload was heavy and how you handled it."

- While at the HKL plant, we were faced with a sudden order increase for the j-ball bearing. It was for a new customer. I immediately sat down with the production supervisor, our materials/supply manager, and the union steward. We were able to lay out a workable plan that maximized hourly costs, guaranteed materials were available and, with only a slight adjustment, meet the production deadline. While it was challenging and involved long hours, the pay-off was a signed contract with a new customer.
- When I was working on a software implementation team at ABC Company, we took over another company and had to transition many clients to a new product in a short amount of time. It took a lot of planning, time, hard work, and effort, but we were able to complete the project in a timely manner.

More job interview questions about your abilities.

The following are job interview questions about your ability to do the job.

- Tell me about a time that you worked conveying technical information to a nontechnical audience. *(The Interviewer wants to know how you relate to people outside your area of expertise)*

While I worked for Mr. Smith in the accounting department, I was selected to explain the financial section of the employee's paycheck to all new hires. After my first two sessions, I realized I needed to reframe my information so the new hires would have an accurate understanding of the impact of their decisions as it related to their pay. I worked with colleagues in human resources and marketing, and developed a training outline that was implemented at the other locations throughout the company.

- Tell me about a time that you worked with data, interpreting data, and presenting data. *(If you are in a non-technical profession, this question is designed to see if you are comfortable with information not directly related to your position)*

While at the GHI corporation, one of my job assignments was to work with the IT department to prepare the annual meeting brochure complete with financial data, graphs and related SEC requirements. I became proficient at designing graphs that gave an accurate picture of the financial data, as well as editing the legal information into a more readable format.

- Why do you think you will be successful at this job? *(The interviewer is concerned as to whether you see this as a career move, or stop-gap employment.)*

As my resume reflects, I have been successful at each of my previous places of employment. My research of your company, the job description outlined, and the information we've exchanged today, lead me to believe I have the skills and experience for which you are looking; and I'm eager to be a contributing employee.

- Tell me about a time that you participated in a team, what was your role? *(Companies, for the most part, do not want "Lone-Rangers" - - they are looking for employees who will adapt to the company culture and get along with others)*

In high school, I enjoyed playing soccer and performing with the Drama Club. Each required a different kind of team play, but the overall goal of learning to be a member of a group was invaluable. I continued to grow as team member while on the debate team and through my advanced marketing class where we had numerous team assignments.

More job interview questions about you.

When the questions are "personal", about you, it can be a very slippery slope. The answers below are guidelines so you can write out your answers long before you go to the interview. Then, when the question is asked, you can take the few seconds (expected by the interviewer) to think about the question and how you will frame your answer (which you already know).

- What would you do differently if you could start your working life over? *(The interviewer is looking for a detour that continues to be a professional block in your career.)*

Looking back over my career, I would have returned to school much earlier to complete my Master's degree. Even though I got my degree later than I had originally anticipated, I never lost sight of the goal.

- How do you balance life and work? *(The interviewer wonders if you've made arrangements for the days when your child is too sick to go to school and/or daycare or if you're "out of there" as soon as it's quitting time.)*

Being organized helps me balance my professional life and personal life. Consequently, I can be fully engaged while I'm at work. For those unexpected times, I have a good back-up system of child care for my children.

- What is your preferred way to communicate? *(This is a good opportunity to show you understand the importance of adjusting your preferences when necessary.)*

At home, I enjoy talking on the phone and emails. At work, I follow the established pattern. Each of my bosses, in the past, has had a preferred method I've followed their lead.

- Do you check voicemail and email when on vacation? *(The interviewer is wondering whether they will always be able to find you.)*

While on vacation, I can be reached for emergencies; however, I also know the people with whom I work are very capable of making good decisions while I'm away. I understand the importance of recharging my battery.

- What is your favorite book? How about your favorite movie? *(The interviewer wants to know whether you read to stay current and if you will fit into the company culture)*

(Include your personal favorites): I read many different kinds of books. My current "favorite" book is *The World is Flat* by Thomas Friedman. My favorite movie? *Miracle on Ice*.

- What historical figure do you admire and why? *(The interviewer wants to know whether you are well read and what characteristics you admire.)*

(Include historical figures you personally admire): Personally, I most admire Abigail Adams, John Adam's wife; professionally I admired the leadership style of Ronald Reagan.

- What did you do during this six month gap in employment? *(Many people at some point, will probably have a gap in employment. Do not "waste it".)*

For the first month, I worked on my "to do list" at home and accomplished a great deal. Then I began building a plan to reenter the workplace. While it took a little longer than I'd anticipated, I've learned a great deal about myself, am rested and looking forward to new challenges in the workplace

- What led you to this point in your life? *(The interviewer wants to know if you are unhappy, frustrated, or lost?)*

My "road of life" has been interesting, sometimes challenging and always rewarding. The steps along the way that have led to this point in my life are, in some ways, very different than I had imagined; however, I like who I am today in part because of my past. An example is when the second company on my resume suddenly closed their doors during a down-turn in the economy. For a very brief time, the road ahead was unknown; however, I discovered I had previously untapped strengths such as perseverance.

Work History

Name of company, position title and description, dates of employment

Interviewers expect a candidate for employment to be able to review their work history in detail. Be prepared to tell the interviewer the names of the companies you worked for, your job title, your starting and ending dates of employment, how much you earned and what your job entailed.

You'd be surprised how many job applicants fumble when asked about prior employment. Don't be one of them!

Refresh your memory prior to the interview by reviewing your resume, so you can speak about your prior work history in detail and accurately. If you don't have a resume, make sure what you tell the interviewer matches what you filled out on your job application. The best way to prepare is to download a sample job application ahead of time.

Complete the sample application and bring it with you when you are applying for employment.

This way you will be able to copy the information rather than having to remember dates and other employment information.

What were your expectations for the job and to what extent were they met?

In many cases, interviewers will want to know what you expected from your last job when you were hired, so be prepared to answer the interview question "What were your expectations for the job and to what extent were they met?"

There isn't a right or wrong answer to this question. The best way to respond is to discuss what you expected when you took the job and give examples of how the position worked out for you. If the job wasn't exactly what you expected, it's fine to mention that. However, you should focus on the job itself, not the company, your boss, or your co-workers (if they were a problem).

Do be careful how you answer and don't focus too much on the negative. Instead, address the highlights of the job. When responding, be specific. Prepare some examples to share with the interviewer in advance. For example, if your job involved creating web applications, discuss the specific programs you developed and the responsibilities you were given. If you were provided training and opportunities for professional development to help you achieve your goals, mention that, as well.

What were your starting and final levels of compensation?

Interviewers expect a candidate for employment to be able to provide the details of their compensation history. Be prepared to tell the interviewer how much you earned at each of your prior positions. Make sure that what you tell the interviewer matches what you listed on your job application. Refresh your memory prior to the interview by reviewing your salary history, so, you can speak in detail and accurately. Don't exaggerate or inflate your earnings. Many employers will check references and confirm your salary history prior to making a job offer.

A discrepancy between what you reported and what the employer says could knock you out of contention for the job

The best way to prepare is to download a sample job application ahead of time. Complete the sample application and review it prior to the interview.

What were your responsibilities?

When you are asked questions related to your current or previous positions, it's important to be specific and to be positive about what you did in your previous position(s).

The best way to respond is to describe your responsibilities in detail and to connect them to the job you are interviewing for. Try to tie your responsibilities in with those listed in the job description for the new position. That way, the employer will see that you have the qualifications necessary to do the job. Focus most on your responsibilities that are directly related to the new job's requirements.

It's also important to be honest. Don't embellish your job, because you don't know who the hiring manager will be checking with when they check your references.

What major challenges and problems did you face? How did you handle them?

When asked the job interview question "How did you handle a challenge?" be sure to include specific examples of how you handled a particular difficult situation. Discuss how you researched the issue and contributed to finding a solution. Examples of good responses include:

- During a difficult financial period, I was able to satisfactorily negotiate repayment schedules with multiple vendors.
- When the software development of our new product stalled, I coordinated the team which managed to get the schedule back on track. We were able to successfully troubleshoot the issues and solve the problems, within a very short period of time.
- A long-term client was about to take their business to a competitor. I met with the customer and was able to change how we handled the account on a day-to-day basis, in order to keep the business.

What have you learned from your mistakes?

When asked the job interview question "What have you learned from your mistakes?" be sure to give examples that turn a negative (a mistake) into a positive. Examples of good responses include:

- I think one of the most important things I've learned is persistence. Not to give up too soon, because the solution is probably right in front of me.
- I have learned to give every person a second chance, because first impressions can often be misleading.
- I used to think that there was one best solution to a problem, but I've learned that that kind of thinking limits the possibility of great success.

What did you like or dislike about your previous job?

When you're asked what don't like about your previous job, don't be too negative. The reason is that you don't want the interviewer to think that you'll speak negatively about the new job or the company when you're ready to move on, if you get this job. Rather, it makes sense to talk about yourself and what you're looking for in a new role. Sample Answer:

- I enjoyed the people I worked with. It was a friendly and fun atmosphere and I actually enjoyed going into work each morning. I felt the leadership team was great as well. They knew all of their employees on a first name basis and tried to make those personal connections. I also enjoyed that fact that the office tried to do community outreach with local organizations.
- One of the reasons I am leaving is that I felt I was not challenged enough at the job. As a fresh face in the working world, the company offers a great opportunity for a good entry level position; however, after being there for so many years, I felt I was not able to reach my full potential because of the lack of challenge and there was no room for advancement in the company. While I did enjoy working there and appreciate the skills I developed while with the company, I feel my skill set can be better utilized elsewhere, where my capabilities are more recognized and there is the opportunity for growth.

Which was most / least rewarding?

Interview questions about what was most rewarding and least rewarding can be tricky. You want to make sure that the things you say are least rewarding aren't responsibilities that are going to be a major part of the job you are interviewing for.

For example, if the last job you had involved extensive customer service telephone work that you hated, and if being on the phone doing something similar is even a minor part of the new job, don't mention it. Instead, focus on the tasks that were most rewarding and highlight those.

When interviewing, always be cognizant of the job you are interviewing for and tailor your response accordingly. Try to accentuate the positive, regardless of what question you have been asked, because you don't want to be construed as someone who is negative about work, in general.

What was the biggest accomplishment / failure in this position?

Your potential employer will want to know what you accomplished, and what you didn't, in your current or last position.

The best way to respond is to give an example of something you accomplished that is directly related to the job you are interviewing for. Review your resume and review the job posting. Find the best match and use that to show how what you accomplished will be beneficial to the company you are interviewing with.

If you wrote a targeted cover letter when applying for the job use the information you included to create your response. For example, if you are interviewing for a job at a school where you will need to manage student registration, explain to the interviewer how you registered students for courses, designed and managed registration software, and solved customer problems.

If you didn't fail at anything, say so. If you can think of an example, be sure that it's a minor one and turn it into a positive. For example, if you were working on a project that was behind deadline, explain to the interviewer how you adjusted the workload and the timeline to get back on track and ahead of schedule.

Questions about your supervisors and co-workers.

For the most part, the following questions may be asked to determine if you are a team player. Take a few seconds, when asked a difficult question, before you answer.

An interviewer is not expecting you to have a ready answer. However, the Boy Scout Motto - Be Prepared - - certainly applies here as well.

- Tell me about a time when you had to deal with a co-worker who wasn't doing his/her fair share of the work. What did you do and what was the outcome?

I worked closely with Ann who, for the most part, always carried her fair share of the work load. During a stressful time, working on a project with a deadline, I realized Ann's contributions to the project were almost minimal. I made the decision to wait until after the project to speak with her. I'm glad I did, because I learned she'd been going through a very tough time in her personal life and she appreciated my willingness to go the extra mile so the project was completed on time. As a result, our ability to work well together significantly increased.

- Give me an example of a time when you took the time to share a co-worker's or supervisor's achievements with other?

At my most recent position, one of my co-workers, Dan, did an outstanding job of calming an irate customer, solving the customer's problem and completing a sale. When our boss asked me how things were going, I told him everything was going fine and that Dan had just completed calming an irate customer and closing a sale. It was a win-win-win- for our boss, Dan and the customer.

- Tell me about a time that you didn't work well with a supervisor. What was the outcome and how would you have changed the outcome?

Early in my career, I had a supervisor (Judy) who was in a fairly good mood on Monday, but it deteriorated each day until by Friday, the supervisor was finding fault with everything I did. I didn't realize, until I left that position, that I had been a contributor to the decline in her mood. Judy would ask me how my weekend was (on Monday) and during the week she would ask how it was going. I would tell her how much fun I was having (I was single) and how I was looking forward to the weekend plans. After I left, I realized my life was in complete contrast to hers and I reminded her of it almost daily. When she asked the questions, I should have had a quick answer, and then asked her how she was doing!!!!

- Have you worked with someone you didn't like? If so, how did you handle it?

Yes, I've worked with someone whom I found difficult to like as a person. However, when I focused on the skills they brought to the job, their ability to solve problems and the two things I did appreciate, slowly my attitude towards them changed. We were never friends, but we did work well together.

- Tell me about a time that you helped someone.

Most recently, we had a new hire (Paul) that was really struggling with getting to work on time, and I knew the boss (Harry) was getting irritated. Over lunch one day I explained to Paul how important it was to our boss for everyone to be there at least 10 minutes early. It was personal with the Harry, but you could really get on his bad side when you were frequently late. The new employee was grateful for the advice. At his previous employment, the boss was only concerned about the work getting done on time; he/she did not "watch the clock".

- Tell me about a time that you misjudged a person.

There was a long-time employee (George) at my second company who was very gruff when he spoke to me. At first, I went out of my way to win the George's approval. Then I realized that was compounding the problem. So I observed how he interacted with other employees and discovered I wasn't alone. He was gruff to most people. I quit trying to gain his approval and, in the process, discovered he'd learned his behaviour from a former boss he'd had whom he admired.

- How do you get along with older (younger) co-workers?

- Suggested answer if your co-workers are older: There are times when I just know that a new way of doing something makes more sense to me; but, first hand, I learned that my "better way" may not be the best way to get the job done. As a consequence, I respect my older co-workers knowledge and I've learned how to make a suggestion at the appropriate time.
- Suggested answer if your co-workers are younger: I quickly realized it was not my job to "parent" the younger people with whom I work; it was my job to get to know them and for us to find common ground where we could effectively work together. It took time, but the result was worth the effort.

What was it like working for your supervisor?

A typical interview question is "What Was it Like Working for Your Supervisor?" The reason it's asked is to find out how you got along with your boss. Be careful how your answer. Interviewers don't like to hear too much (or much at all) about bad bosses because it could be someone from their company that you're talking about next time around.

I once had a job applicant who spent 10 minutes responding to this question. She told me how awful her boss was and how her company was a terrible place to work. It so happened that her boss was a good friend and golfing buddy of my boss - our company's CEO - and the company was one of our biggest clients. Of course, she didn't get the job.

Don't make the same mistake she did. Instead, accentuate the positive and minimize any difficult situations. Discuss the strengths your past supervisors had and how they helped you succeed in your positions.

What do you expect from a supervisor?

I appreciate a work environment where supervisors try to make personal connections with their employees.

In my last job, I liked the fact that management did not show favouritism and they were understanding of employee's needs, as well as their strengths. Of course, these things take time to know, but I would want my supervisor to try to know me in that way.

I would like to be able to go my manager if I have an issue or idea and to be able to feel comfortable to expressing my thoughts. I would also expect my supervisor to be open and honest with me and to let me know if there is anything I could do to improve upon or do differently in my work.

What problems have you encountered at work?

Review sample answers to the interview question "What problems have you encountered at work and how did you deal with them?" When you respond, be sure to include a positive outcome to the problems you reference in your answer.

- I feel that the best way to deal with any challenges is to meet them head on. When I found that one of my colleagues was saying things that weren't true behind my back, I went to him and talked it through. It turned out that he had misunderstood what I had said, and I was able to set the record straight with him, and my supervisor.
- Once I found a major flaw in the work of one of the most senior members of the department, which could have been very costly to the company if it had been overlooked. I went directly to him, and called it to his attention so he could fix it before it affected the final outcome.

Have you ever had difficulty working with a manager?

Review sample answers to the interview question "Have you ever had difficulty working with a manager?" Be careful answering questions about previous managers. You don't want to come across as difficult, and you want to cast any past experiences in the most positive light possible.

- I had a rocky start with a manager once, because we had different expectations for the flow of the workday. Once we talked about it, we realized that our goals were very compatible, and we were able to work very successfully together for several years.
- I have found that if I take the time to talk with my manager at the beginning of a project, we can all get off to a great start on the same page.
- I would say that I have never really had a problem working with anyone. I try to find our common ground, and get along with everyone's different personality.

Who was your best boss and who was the worst?

With the question "Who was your best boss and who was the worst?" the interviewer is trying to discover if you assess blame or carry a grudge. The interviewer also wants to determine if you are match for the leadership style of the company.

- I've learned from each boss I've had. From the good ones, what to do, from the challenging ones - what not to do.
- Early in my career, I had a mentor who helped me a great deal, we still stay in touch. I've honestly learned something from each boss I've had.

Describe your ideal boss.

As part of the interview process employers may want to assess how you will respond to supervision, whether you have any issues with authority, and the nature of your work style.

Your interviewer may ask questions about your preferred supervisor to help determine how well you will work within the company's management framework. Before you answer, think about the job you are interviewing for, and try to estimate how much management the employer will expect you to need.

You don't want to come across as needing either too much or too little supervision.

When the interviewer asks about what your ideal boss is like, it could be asked as a reflection upon your past supervisors (who was your best or worst boss) or in terms of your future preferences.

Here are some guidelines for responding to questions about your ideal boss:

- Try to strike a balance whereby you refer to your ability to work independently as well as your comfort with taking specific direction from a boss.
- Emphasize your adaptability by sharing how you have thrived with a variety of supervisory styles in your past. Be prepared to give examples of how you have been productive with different types of bosses.
- Consider the qualities of a manager that are attractive to you and which will also help an organization succeed.
- Never, under any circumstances, should you criticize a past supervisor. Your prospective employer will likely assume you are a difficult employee and side with your former employer.
- Don't get too carried away with your answer so as to imply that you have unrealistic expectations for some super human manager or that you will be too needy an employee.

Why are you leaving your job?

One of the questions that is typically asked in an interview is "Why are you leaving your job?" or "Why did you leave your previous job?" if you have already moved on. If you were fired from your job, use these answers to respond. If you left of your own accord, review these suggestions on how best to answer and tailor your response to meet your particular situation. Be direct and focus your interview answer on the future, especially if your leaving wasn't under the best of circumstances.

Don't Badmouth Your Boss

Regardless of why you left, don't speak badly about your previous employer. The interviewer may wonder if you will be bad-mouthing his company next time you're looking for work. I once interviewed a person who told me that her last employer was terrible. They didn't pay her enough, the hours were awful and she hated the job. That company happened to be my company's biggest, and most important, customer. And there is no way I would have hired someone who felt that way, justified or not, about our valuable client. So, she gave up any opportunity of getting the job as soon as she answered the "Why did you leave?" question.

Prepare answers to typical job interview questions, like this one, in advance. Practice your responses so you sound positive, and clear, about your circumstances and your goals for the future. Sample answers to the interview question "Why did you leave your job?"

- I found myself bored with the work and looking for more challenges. I am an excellent employee and I didn't want my unhappiness to have any impact on the job I was doing for my employer.
- There isn't room for growth with my current employer and I'm ready to move on to a new challenge.
- I'm looking for a bigger challenge and to grow my career and I couldn't job hunt part time while working. It didn't seem ethical to use my former employer's time.
- I was laid-off from my last position when our department was eliminated due to corporate restructuring.
- I'm relocating to this area due to family circumstances and left my previous position in order to make the move.
- I've decided that is not the direction I want to go in my career and my current employer has no opportunities in the direction I'd like to head.
- After several years in my last position, I'm looking for an company where I can contribute and grow in a team-oriented environment.
- I am interested in a new challenge and an opportunity to use my technical skills and experience in a different capacity than I have in the past.
- I recently received my degree and I want to utilize my educational background in my next position.
- I am interested in a job with more responsibility, and I am very ready for a new challenge.
- I left my last position in order to spend more time with my family. Circumstances have changed and I'm more than ready for full-time employment again.
- I am seeking a position with a stable company with room for growth and opportunity for advancement.
- I was commuting to the city and spending a significant amount of time each day on travel. I would prefer to be closer to home.
- To be honest, I wasn't considering a move, but, I saw this job posting and was intrigued by the position and the company. It sounds like an exciting opportunity and an ideal match with my qualifications.
- This position seemed like an excellent match for my skills and experience and I am not able to fully utilize them in my present job.
- The company was cutting back and, unfortunately, my job was one of those eliminated.

Why do you want to change jobs?

Hiring managers are often curious about why you want to change jobs. They often need to be reassured that you aren't covering for poor performance or difficult working relationships. When responding to questions about why you are switching jobs, it's important to provide reassurance that you are moving on for career reasons, not just to get out of a bad situation.

Here are some approaches you can use to reassure the interviewer that you are leaving your job for the right reasons.

- How to Respond: Why Do You Want Change Jobs?
 - Emphasize the positive reasons why you are targeting a job with their organization. Refer to specific aspects of the work and employer which correspond well with your interests and skills.
 - Frame your move as a path to advancing your career without disparaging your current job. One way to do that is to reference the aspects of the new job which appear to carry more responsibility. Even if the new job doesn't have a higher status, you could mention that you believe it would provide a springboard for future career advancement down the road (after you have spent considerable time in the first job and mastered it).
 - Integrate positive references about your current job in your response, so that it is clear that you are not fleeing a bad situation. You are just seeking to improve upon an already good situation. Of course, you should avoid any negative references to management or the number of hours worked.
 - Incorporate some positive reflections upon rewarding relationships with supervisors, co-workers and clients, whenever feasible.
 - Consider giving an external reason for leaving. Another option is to refer to factors such as relocating to a more urban area or looking for a job that is closer to home.
 - Be sure that it is clear that this is not the primary reason that you are applying for a job at the organization. The primary emphasis should always be placed on the fit of the job itself.

If it is a well-known (public) fact that your current employer has a shrinking market share or other financial problems you might refer to this issue after making a strong case for why the new job is suitable. Be sure to avoid sharing any proprietary information or painting an overly negative picture of your current employer's situation. A vague reference to your employer's difficulties will usually be sufficient.

Why did you resign?

Did you resign from your job or are you thinking about resigning? Not sure how to answer the interview question "Why did you resign?" or "Why are you resigning your job?" These suggested interview answers will help you prepare to questions about resigning from your previous job.

Interview Answers - Why Did You Resign From Your Job?

- I resigned because there were limited opportunities for advancement and I wanted to further my career.
- I graduated from college and resigned in order to find a position where I could use my education and related experience.
- To be honest, the position wasn't a fit and I decided it made sense to resign and to refocus my career path.
- I resigned because the position required me to be on-call evenings and weekends and it was difficult to arrange child care on short notice.
- I resigned because the position was part-time and my personal situation has changed so I need full-time employment.
- My skills weren't a good match for my previous employer's needs but it looks like they'd be a terrific fit for this position.
- I resigned from my job because I am interested in a new challenge and an opportunity to use my skills and experience in a different capacity than I have in the past.
- My family relocated to this area and my previous employer doesn't have an office here.
- I've been working as a temp, but I'm seeking a permanent position, so I resigned from the temp agency's staffing roster.
- I resigned for personal reasons, however, at this point in time, I am excited about moving into a new position.
- I'm seeking a new challenge and to grow my career and it was difficult to job search while working.
- I resigned due to family circumstances, however, I have regained the flexibility I need to work effectively in a full-time job.

Why did you quit your job?

One of the questions that is usually asked during a job interview is "Why are you quitting your job?" or "Why did you quit your job?" if you have already quit.

Review these suggestions on how best to answer questions about quitting your job and tailor your response to meet your particular situation. Prepare answers to typical job interview questions, like this one, in advance. Practice your responses so you sound positive, and clear, about your circumstances and your goals for the future. Sample answers to the interview question "Why did you quit your job?"

- I quit my job because my supervisor retired. I felt that after many years of working in the office that it was time for a change and this seem like the ideal time to move on.

- I was able to take advantage of an early retirement offer due to company downsizing and am ready for a new challenge.
- I resigned to focus on finding a job that is closer to home and will use my skills and experience in a different capacity.
- I don't have room to grow with my current employer and I'm ready to move on to a new challenge.
- I'm looking for a new challenge and to grow my career and I couldn't job hunt part time while working.
- I have been volunteering in this capacity and love it. I'm seeking to turn my passion into the next step of my career.
- I was laid-off from my last position when my job was eliminated due to downsizing.
- After several years in my last position, I'm looking for an company where I can contribute and grow in a team-oriented environment.
- I am interested in a new challenge and an opportunity to use my skills and experience in a different capacity than I have in the past.
- I recently achieved certification and I want to utilize my educational background and technical skills in my next position.
- I am interested in a job with more responsibility, and I am very ready for a new challenge.
- I left my last position in order to spend more time with an ill family member. Circumstances have changed and I'm more than ready for full-time employment again.
- I was commuting and spending an hour each day on travel. I would prefer to be closer to home.
- To be honest, I wasn't considering a change, but, a former colleague recommended this job to me and was intrigued by the position and the company. It sounds like an exciting opportunity and an ideal match for my qualifications.
- This position seemed like an excellent match for my skills and experience and I am not able to fully utilize them in my present job.
- The company was downsizing and I thought it made sense to seek another position before my job was eliminated.

What have you been doing since your last job?

If you have an employment gap on your resume, the interviewer will probably ask you what you have been doing while you were out of work. The best way to answer this question is to be honest, but do have an answer prepared. You will want to let the interviewer know that you were busy and active, regardless of whether you were out of work by choice, or otherwise. Here are some suggestions on how to explain what you did while you were out of the workforce.

- I worked on several freelance projects, while actively job seeking.
- I volunteered for a literacy program that assists disadvantaged children.
- My aging parents needed a temporary caregiver and I spent time looking after them.
- I spent time being a stay-at-home mom and volunteering at my daughter's school.
- I took some continuing education classes and seminars.

As I said, it doesn't really matter what you did, as long as you have an explanation. Hiring managers understand that people lose their job - it can happen to anyone - and it's not always easy to find a new job fast. Also, there are legitimate non-employment reasons for being out of the workforce.

Why were you fired?

Fired from your job? Don't know what to say in an interview? Here are twelve best job interview answers to the question "Why were you fired?"

- Being cut loose was a blessing in disguise. Now I have an opportunity to explore jobs that better suit my qualifications and interests. My research suggests that such an opportunity may be the one on your table. Would you like to hear more about my skills in working with new technology?
- My competencies were not the right match for my previous employer's needs but it looks like they'd be a good fit in your organization. In addition to marketing and advertising, would skills in promotion be valued here?
- Although circumstances caused me to leave my first job, I was very successful in school and got along well with both students and faculty. Perhaps I didn't fully understand my boss's expectations or why he released me so quickly before I had a chance to prove myself.
- The job wasn't working out so my boss and I agreed that it was time for me to move on to a position that would show a better return for both of us. So here I am, ready to work.
- After thinking about why I left, I realize I should have done some things differently. That job was a learning experience and I think I'm wiser now. I'd like the chance to prove that to you.
- A new manager came in and cleaned house in order to bring in members of his old team. That was his right but it cleared my head to envision better opportunities elsewhere.
- Certain personal problems, which I now have solved, unfortunately upset my work life. These problems no longer exist and I'm up and running strong to exceed expectations in my new job.
- I wanted my career to move in a different direction, and I guess my mental separation set up the conditions that led to my departure. But by contrast, the opportunity we're discussing seems to be made for me and I hope to eventually grow into a position of responsibility.
- I usually hit it off very well with my bosses, but this case was the exception that proved my rule of good relationships. We just didn't get on well. I'm not sure why.
- My job was offshored to India. That's too bad because people familiar with my work say it is superior and fairly priced.
- I outlasted several downsizings but the last one included me. Sign of the times, I guess.
- I was desperate for work and took the wrong job without looking around the corner. I won't make that mistake again. I'd prefer an environment that is congenial, structured and team-oriented, where my best talents can shine and make a substantial contribution.

The Future

What are you looking for in your next job? What is important to you?

One of the interview questions you may be asked is what you are looking for in your next job. The interview wants to know whether your goals are a match for the company's needs.

Best Answers

You can begin your answer with this question: Tell me, Mr./Ms. Interviewer, what is a typical career path at OPL for someone with my skills and experience?

(Based on the answer you can then respond to the original question using the phrases from the answer to frame your response).

What is important to you? Two things are very important to me. One is my professionalism at work; the second is my family life.

Where do you see yourself 5 years from now?

When you are interviewing for a new job, it can be hard to articulate where you would like to be in your career next year let alone five years down the road. Even when you do know, it's important to be careful how you respond because you'll need to tailor your answer to the job for which you are interviewing.

Here are tips for responding to questions about the next stage of your career, while affirming your interest in the role you are being interviewed for.

In order to prepare well for this question, research a reasonable career path which will flow from the position for which you are applying. How long does one ordinarily spend in that job? What are the next steps within five years?

Some employers will clearly outline pathways in the career section of their website. However, you may need to approach professionals in the field through alumni, family, friends or professional associations to gain an accurate picture.

Start With Your Interest in This Job

It is often advantageous to emphasize your interest in thoroughly mastering the initial position before moving on. If it seems like you are rushing past that first job, employers might question how motivated you are to carry out those duties.

After all, the hiring manager will probably want someone who will be happy and competent in that role for at least a year or two. Integrating a clear rationale into your answer regarding how your interests and skills equip you to do the job you are being considered for can help to alleviate any concerns about how long you will want to stay at the job.

When There is No Clear Career Path

Not all jobs are stepping stones to higher positions. For positions like counseling, sales, event planning, teaching and computer programming, for example, it will be perfectly appropriate to emphasize mastery of that job as your five year goal. Think about components of the job in which you can excel. For example for a sales job: "Within 5 years I would like to be recognized as an expert in terms of product knowledge, have developed very close relationships with clients, have significantly expanded the client base in my region and perhaps have been assigned some major national clients."

Goals = Results

Stating your goals in terms of results which you would like to produce is another angle for responding. So, for example, a prospective teacher for a district which is trying to upgrade performance on standardized tests might say "I would like to significantly increase the percentage of students reading at or above grade level through creative instructional methods." Of course, you would need to be able to share some examples of how you would achieve this.

Moving Up the Career Ladder

There are a few jobs where you are expected to move on after a couple of years, including some analyst positions in investment banking and consulting, as well as legal assistants and scientific research assistants (for new college grads). In those cases, you will have more leeway in your answers, but you will still want to establish how the job at hand makes sense given the skills and interests you would bring to the employer.

What are your goals for the next five years / ten years?

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How do you plan to achieve those goals?

As a follow-up to the interview question "What are your goals for the future?" the interviewer will often ask how you plan on achieving those goals. A good answer to this question will speak specifically about what you are going to accomplish and how you are going to accomplish it. Examples of good responses include:

- I plan on gaining additional skills by taking related classes and continuing my involvement with a variety of professional associations.
- I noticed that XYZ company (the company you are interviewing with) provides in-house training for employees and I would certainly be interested in taking classes that would be relevant.
- I will continue my professional development by participating in conferences, attending seminars, and continuing my education.

What are your salary requirements - both short-term and long-term?

Before you start talking pay (and salary negotiations) with a prospective employer, you need to find out how much the job (and you) are worth. You will need to take the time to research salaries. That way you will be prepared to get what you're worth and to get a job offer that's realistic and reasonable.

Salary Negotiations

Once you know what you *should* be earning, how do you go about getting it? Start by being very patient. When interviewing for a new position, do your best not to bring up compensation until the employer makes you an offer. If you're asked what your salary requirements are, say that they are open based upon the position and the overall compensation package. Or tell the employer you'd like to know more about the responsibilities and the challenges of the job prior to discussing salary.

Another option is to give the employer a salary range based upon the salary research you've done up front. Once you've received the offer you don't need to accept (or reject) it right away. A simple "I need to think it over" can get you an increase in the original offer.

And if you're ambivalent about the position a "no" can bring you a better offer too. I turned down a position I knew I didn't want, regardless of salary, and received three follow-up phone calls upping the compensation package. Be careful though, if you do definitely need that new job there's a risk that the employer may accept your declining the position and move on to the next candidate.

Graduate Internship/Work Experience Questions

When you are a college student or recent graduate, it's important to relate your college education, extracurricular activities, and experiences to the job for which you are applying. Here are sample questions you might be asked during an entry level job interview and sample answers. Do take the time to personalize your responses and connect them to your specific experience and qualifications.

- Have you completed any internships? What did you gain from the experience?
 - This past summer, I completed an internship with a major marketing firm in the city. I learned two key things about working in the business world. First, not one college course can prepare you as well as personal, hands on, experience. The second is, listen to what your coworkers have to say and watch what they do. Although they do not realize it, other employees can be your best resource to learn both what to do and what not to do in the office.
 - My university required all fashion design majors to complete a rotation of internships during the summer between junior and senior year. At first, I did not understand why we were spending the summer working, but once I started my rotation, I knew why they set the requirement. The internships helped me focus more specifically on what part of fashion design I was interested in. Without the personal experience, it would have been a shot in the dark and I may have had to go back to square one if I was not happy with my career choice.
 - I did not complete any internships during college, but I did use my last two summers to volunteer at a local homeless shelter. At the shelter, I worked with the social workers on a daily basis. I was able to assist with home visits, life skills, and employment issues, along with all the other resources and services offered to the unemployed at the shelter. Although it didn't have the formal internship title, it served the same purpose and gave me the same hands on experience I would have gotten by doing a social service internship with the county.

- Tell me about your work experience? How has it prepared you for a career?
 - I've had a job every summer since I was 16 years old. My primary reason to work was to have some extra spending money, but what I didn't realize was that I was actually sampling careers to see where I fit in. I worked as a kennel assistant at a local animal hospital during the summer before my freshman year of college. It was then that I discovered what I wanted to do for my career. I decided I would go to college and focus on becoming a small animal veterinarian and that's what I did. I have been working in the same animal hospital ever since.
 - I have not had much paid work experience as a teacher. I have spent most of my time outside of college and graduate school doing volunteer work at a private elementary school in my town. Because the summers are so short, and I was working to complete my certification, I wanted to gain hands on experience without worrying about finding a school that would hire me. Now that I am certified, finished my master's degree program, and have all those volunteer hours under my belt, I feel well prepared to apply for a full time teaching position.
 - My work experience has been nothing but top notch. When I completed my accounting degree, I went right to the best firm in the city and was hired as an intern. I was able to use the internship time towards my MBA, which I just complete this past spring. Working with the best of the best has made me an asset to any company that will hire me.

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Behavioral Interview Questions

In addition to being ready to answer these standard questions, prepare for behavior based interview questions. This is based on the premise that a candidate's past performance is the best predictor of future performance. You will need to be prepared to provide detailed responses including specific examples of your work experiences. Review examples of behavioral interview questions.

In a behavioral job interview, the company has decided what skills are needed in the person they hire and will ask questions to find out if the candidate has those skills.

Behavioral interview questions will be more focused than traditional interview questions and you'll need to respond with special examples of how you handled situations in the workplace. Review examples of the questions you may be asked during a behavioral job interview and think about how you would answer them. That way you'll be prepared ahead of time, rather than having to think of a response on the spot during the interview.

- Give an example of an occasion when you used logic to solve a problem.
- Give an example of a goal you reached and tell me how you achieved it.
- Give an example of a goal you didn't meet and how you handled it.
- Describe a stressful situation at work and how you handled it.
- Tell me about how you worked effectively under pressure.
- How do you handle a challenge?
- Have you been in a situation where you didn't have enough work to do?
- Have you ever made a mistake? How did you handle it?
- Describe a decision you made that was unpopular and how you handled implementing it.
- Did you ever make a risky decision? Why? How did you handle it?
- Did you ever postpone making a decision? Why?
- Have you ever dealt with company policy you weren't in agreement with? How?
- Have you gone above and beyond the call of duty? If so, how?
- When you worked on multiple projects how did you prioritize?
- How did you handle meeting a tight deadline?
- Give an example of how you set goals and achieve them.
- Did you ever not meet your goals? Why?
- What do you do when your schedule is interrupted? Give an example of how you handle it.
- Have you had to convince a team to work on a project they weren't thrilled about? How did you do it?
- Give an example of how you worked on team.

- Have you handled a difficult situation with a co-worker? How?
- What do you do if you disagree with a co-worker?
- Share an example of how you were able to motivate employees or co-workers.
- Do you listen? Give an example of when you did or when you didn't listen.
- Have you handled a difficult situation with a supervisor? How?
- Have you handled a difficult situation with another department? How?
- Have you handled a difficult situation with a client or vendor? How?
- What do you do if you disagree with your boss?

Practice Interview Questions

Review practice interview questions for a variety of different occupations, types of jobs, and types of interviews.

Accounting Interview Questions

Accounting interview questions are generally a mix of questions about accounting issues, your own accounting skills, and behavioral questions that demonstrate your abilities as an accountant. Here is list of a common accounting interview questions:

- What do you consider to be the biggest challenge facing the accounting profession today?
- Which accounting applications are you familiar with?
- Describe the advantages and disadvantages of different accounting packages you have used in your most recent accountant jobs.
- Describe any accounting process that you have developed or sought to improve.
- Describe a time when you helped to reduce costs at a previous accountant job.
- Describe a time when you had to use numerical data or a graph to convince a manager.
- Describe a time when you had to work exceptionally hard to provide great service to a customer or client. What did you do and what was the outcome?
- Describe a time when you faced a particularly demanding deadline to prepare a financial statement or report. How did you react? What was the result?
- How do you ensure that you do not forget details and ensure accuracy when you prepare monthly journal entries, record transactions, etc.?
- Describe a time when you had to explain a complex accounting issue to someone with without an accounting background. How did you help your audience understand the situation?

Business Analyst Interview Questions

Business analyst positions vary distinctly from one company to another. However, there are a number of questions that you are likely to be asked in any business analyst interview.

- What analysis and modeling techniques and methodologies have you found to be the most effective, and why?
- What are some of the most important points a business analyst must take care of when preparing a business plan?
- What diagrams and/or other materials do you use to capture and describe customer needs and convey technical information?
- How many business case engagements have you worked on? What was your involvement?
- Tell me about a time when you created long-range plans at a previous employer.
- How do you determine which Business Intelligence (BI) tools to use?
- If two companies are merging, explain what tasks you would implement to make the merge successful, and how you would implement those tasks.
- Explain the steps you must take to create use cases when working with specific document requirements.
- Describe three of the different types of diagrams that business analysts most often use.
- Define and describe the difference between basic flow, exception flow, and alternate flow in use cases.

Call Center Interview Questions

- Are you able to maintain accuracy while handling a large number of calls?"
 - My accuracy during the last 5 years has always been over 95%.
 - I am able to handle a large number of calls without my accuracy being compromised.
 - My accuracy has never been affected by the number of calls I am handling.
- Describe how you would handle a problem you were having with a co-worker.
 - I try to get along with everyone, and respect their opinions and boundaries. In the past when I have had a problem with someone, I have been able to work it out by talking with them.
 - If I were having a problem with a co-worker, I would try talking to them to see if we could work out our differences. If they weren't open to that, or if the problem remained, I would discuss it with my supervisor.
 - I would first talk to the person and try to figure out what was bothering them. If the problem continued after talking to them, I would bring it to the attention of my supervisor. In my experience, what can't be resolved by talking one on one with the co-worker should be brought to the supervisor right away, before it escalates.
- Do you multi-task well, or do you prefer to tackle one problem at a time?
 - I am fantastic at multi-tasking, in my personal as well as my professional life. I prefer to have many things going on at once to trying to complete one thing before moving to another.
 - I find it much more interesting to multi-task, and I find that I accomplish more than if I try to handle one problem at a time.
 - I find that I multi-task far better than I single task. When I tackle one problem at a time, I tend to dwell on the solution, while when I have multiple things to accomplish, I am able to focus on the most accurate solution right away.
- Do you enjoy working in a fast paced team environment.
 - I love it, the faster the better. I really enjoy being a part of a busy team.
 - I really enjoy being a part of a busy call center team. I find that in a fast paced environment, my efficiency improves.
 - I really thrive on a fast paced team environment. I enjoy the camaraderie of working as part of a team, and helping people together.
- Do you have good people skills?
 - I like working with people, and I have been told that I have good people skills. I think I communicate effectively and in a pleasant way.
 - I get along well with most people I meet, and people find me easy to talk to, so I think I have good people skills.
 - Throughout my career, I have always worked in customer service, and been known as a people person.
- How do you handle pressure?
 - I thrive on pressure. I really enjoy the excitement of a high pressure environment.
 - I find that when the pressure is on, my speed and accuracy increase.
 - I find that pressure in a work environment enables me to reach higher goals than when I am

Engineer Interview Questions

Interview questions for engineers vary based on whether you are applying for a position as an electrical, mechanical, computer, or other type of engineer.

However, almost any engineer job interview will include questions that assess your technological knowledge and your ability to communicate with team members and clients. Below is a list of common engineer interview questions.

- Tell me about the most challenging engineering project that you have been involved with during past year.
- Describe the most challenging written technical report or presentation that you have had to complete.
- Describe an experience with a difficult client. How did you handle the situation? What would you have done differently?
- Tell me about your greatest success in using logic to solve an engineering problem at a previous job.
- Give me an example of a time when you applied your ability to use analytical techniques to define problems or design solutions.
- What checks and balances do you use to make sure that you don't make mistakes?
- Do you have any patents? If so, tell me about them. If not, is it something you see yourself pursuing in the future? Why or why not?
- What engineering skills have you developed or improved upon during the past year?
- Which software packages are you familiar with? What is the most interesting thing you know how to do with one of these packages?
- What are you doing to stay up-to-date with the latest technology?

IT Interview Questions

When you are interviewing for an Information Technology (IT) job, in addition to the standard interview questions you will be asked during a job interview, you will be asked more focused and specific technical questions about your education, skills, certifications, languages and tools you have expertise in.

Review this list of IT interview questions and take the time to prepare responses based on your qualifications for the job. When responding give specific examples, whenever possible, of how you have handled a project or situation. Providing details will show the interviewer how and why you are qualified for the job.

- What interests you about this position?
- What are your technical certifications?
- What do you do to maintain your technical certifications?
- What automated-build tools or processes have you used?
- What development tools have you used?
- What languages have you programmed in?
- What source control tools have you used?
- What technical websites do you follow?
- Describe a time when you were able to improve upon the design that was originally suggested.
- Describe the most innovative change that you have initiated and what you did to implement this change.

- Given this problem (*problem is based upon job requirements*), what solution would you provide. Explain your thought process.
- How do you handle multiple deadlines?
- How do you keep current on this industry?
- How do you troubleshoot IT issues?
- Tell me about the most recent project you worked on. What were your responsibilities?
- Tell me about the project you are most proud of, and what your contribution was.
- Give an example of where you have applied your technical knowledge in a practical way.
- What is the biggest IT challenge you have faced and how did you handle it?
- You are working at a client site and the CTO of the client company has asked if she can see you. The CTO wants to know how much it would cost to bring in five more people on your team. She gives you very vague requirements of the job she is looking for you to do. What would you do?
- You have been asked to research a new business tool. You have come across two solutions. One is an on-premises solution, the other is cloud-based. Assuming they are functionally equivalent, why would you recommend one over the other?
- You have submitted a piece of code that has broken the client's website in production. You have found this bug while you were testing, and nobody else knows about it. What is your next move?
- You have learned that a business unit is managing a major component of the business using Excel spreadsheets and Access databases. What risks does this present, and what would you recommend be done to mitigate those risks?

Management Trainee Interview Questions

Management trainee interviews tend to focus on the applicant's ability to lead groups, delegate tasks, and perform other management duties. Because many candidates are recent college graduates with limited work experience, most behavioural questions can be answered with examples from work, school, or personal experience.

Below are a number of questions typical of a management trainee interview.

- Describe a time when you were involved in a group project and there was a dispute among group members. How did you handle the dispute? What would you have done differently?
- Tell me about a time when you had to motivate an associate. What did you do? If you were not successful, what would you have done differently?
- Where do you see yourself in 3-5 years?
- Give an example of a time when you sacrificed for a job (or for school).
- Describe your ideal manager.
- Describe your ideal employee.
- Tell me about a time when you disagreed with your manager or team leader. How did you handle the situation?
- Tell me about a time when you had to delegate a task to an associate.
- Describe a time when you had to teach a skill to a fellow associate. How successful were you?

- Tell me about a time when you identified a problem (at work, in a class, etc.), and suggested or designed a solution.

Marketing Interview Questions

Below is a list of questions commonly asked in interviews for a variety of marketing positions.

- Tell me about a marketing project in which you had to coordinate and manage a diverse team of people to achieve deliverables.
- Give me an example of a marketing campaign (either your own or someone else's) that you consider to have been very successful.
- Tell me about a campaign with which you were involved that did not go as well as expected. What do you think went wrong?
- What do you consider the 5 most important aspects of successful marketing?
- Tell me about a time when you successfully changed a customer's mind.
- Give an example of a time when you accomplished a marketing activity on a tight budget.
- How have you successfully incorporated online marketing tools into your previous marketing campaigns?
- How familiar are you with our target market?
- What marketing strategies would you consider using for our product?
- Why are you interested in our product/service?

Graduate Interview Questions

When you are a college student or recent graduate, it's important to relate your college education, extracurricular activities, and experiences to the job for which you are applying. Here are sample questions you might be asked during an entry level job interview and sample answers. Do take the time to personalize your responses and connect them to your specific experience and qualifications.

- Have you completed any internships? What did you gain from the experience?
 - This past summer, I completed an internship with a major marketing firm in the city. I learned two key things about working in the business world. First, not one college course can prepare you as well as personal, hands on, experience. The second is, listen to what your coworkers have to say and watch what they do. Although they do not realize it, other employees can be your best resource to learn both what to do and what not to do in the office.
 - My university required all fashion design majors to complete a rotation of internships during the summer between junior and senior year. At first, I did not understand why we were spending the summer working, but once I started my rotation, I knew why they set the requirement. The internships helped me focus more specifically on what part of fashion design I was interested in. Without the personal experience, it would have been a shot in the dark and I may have had to go back to square one if I was not happy with my career choice.
 - I did not complete any internships during college, but I did use my last two summers to volunteer at a local homeless shelter. At the shelter, I worked with the social workers on a daily basis. I was able to assist with home visits, life skills, and employment issues, along with all the other resources and services offered to the unemployed at the shelter. Although it didn't have

the formal internship title, it served the same purpose and gave me the same hands on experience I would have gotten by doing a social service internship with the county.