



Common Interview Questions

To demonstrate at an interview that you are the right fit for the role, preparation is vital. Use these common interview questions to prepare succinct, relevant responses; matching your skills and attributes to the needs of the company and role wherever possible. Remember to also prepare a suite of compelling examples to help convince the interviewer that you are the best person for the job. Preparation, positivity and proof are your keys to interview success.

Q. Tell me about yourself.

This is a commonly asked question designed to break the ice. A strong, succinct answer will quickly gain the interviewer's attention and separate you from other candidates who may be tempted to divulge their life story. Give a brief, concise description of who you are and your key qualifications, strengths and skills. Tailoring your answer to the role on offer and declaring the strongest benefit that you offer an employer will leave the interviewer compelled to know more.

Q. Why do you want to work here?

The interviewer is trying to gauge your enthusiasm for the role as well as your level of knowledge about the company. Give specific examples of things that attracted you to the company and elaborate on your strengths, achievements and skills and how they match the position description, making you the right fit.

Q. What are your strengths?

The interviewer wants to know what you are particularly good at and how this would fit into the role. Choose a few of your key strengths that are required for the role and give examples of how you have demonstrated them successfully in the past. Strengths could include the ability to learn quickly; composure under pressure; ability to multi-task; team focus or your ability to work autonomously.

Q. What are your greatest weaknesses?

The interviewer is trying to gauge your self-awareness. We all have weaknesses so it's best not to say you don't have any. Avoid using the word 'weakness' and instead talk about an 'area for improvement' that is not vital for the job, or specify a 'challenge' that you are working to overcome. Demonstrating a willingness to develop yourself and face challenges turns the answer into a positive.

Q. What have been your achievements to date?

The interviewer wants to know if you are a high-achiever and ascertain how your accomplishments will be beneficial to them. Select one or two recent accomplishments that are directly related to the job on offer. Identify the situations, the actions you took, skills you used and the positive outcomes; quantifying the benefits where possible. Show how you can bring what you learned to the new role.

Q. What is the most difficult situation you have faced at work?

The interviewer is trying to find out your definition of 'difficult' and whether you can show a logical approach to problem solving. Select a tough work situation that was not caused by you. Explain the way you approached the problem, including the actions you took and the solution you applied to overcome the problem. Give your answer with the air of someone who takes setbacks and frustrations in your stride, as part of the job.

Q. What did you like/dislike about your last role?

The interviewer is trying to find out your key interests and whether the job on offer has responsibilities you will dislike. Focus on what you particularly enjoyed in your last role and what you learned from it, drawing parallels to the new role. When addressing what you disliked, be conscious not to criticise your last employer. Choose an example that does not reflect on your skills (such as company size) or which reveals a positive trait (such as your dislike for prolonged decision making).

Q. Why do you want to leave your current employer?

This should be straightforward. Reflect positively on your current employer but state how you are looking for more challenge, responsibility, experience and a change of environment. Explain how your current role can no longer provide you with these things, but how you believe the role on offer presents an opportunity for growth that will make full use of your strengths and potential.

Q. What are your goals for the future?

A sense of purpose is an attractive feature in an applicant, so this question is designed to probe your ambition and the extent of your career planning. Your commitment is also under question, but avoid blankly stating that 'I want to be with your company'. Instead, describe how your goal is to continue to grow, learn, add value and take on new responsibilities in the future that build on the role for which you are applying.

Q. How do you respond to working under pressure?

The interviewer wants to see that you have composure, problem solving skills and can stay focused in difficult conditions. Give an example of a time when you were faced with a stressful situation (not caused by you) and how you handled it with poise. Describe the context, how you approached the situation, the actions you took and the positive outcome. Demonstrate how you remained calm, in control and got the job done.

Q. Tell me about a successful team project that you have been involved in. What was your role and what made it a success?

The interviewer is trying to gauge your interpersonal skills and team contribution. Outline the project objectives, your responsibilities, the actions you took to assist the group and the successful results. Provide evidence of how you were a keen collaborator and how your contribution was critical. You also want to demonstrate that you value teamwork and understand its key attributes such as honest communication, a shared purpose and effective problem-solving.
