

Common Interview Questions

1. What are your strengths?
2. What are your weaknesses?
3. Why are you interested in working for [*company name here*]?
4. Where do you see yourself in 5 years? 10 years?
5. Why do you want to leave your current company?
6. Why was there a gap in your employment between [*date*] and [*date*]?
7. What can you offer us that someone else can not?
8. What are three things your former manager would like you to improve on?
9. Are you willing to relocate?
10. Are you willing to travel?
11. Tell me about an accomplishment you are most proud of.
12. Tell me about a time you made a mistake.
13. What is your dream job?
14. How did you hear about this position?
15. What would you look to accomplish in the first 30 days/60 days/90 days on the job?
16. Discuss your resume.
17. Discuss your educational background.
18. Describe yourself.
19. Tell me how you handled a difficult situation.
20. Why should we hire you?
21. Why are you looking for a new job?
22. Would you work holidays/weekends?
23. How would you deal with an angry or irate customer?
24. What are your salary requirements?
25. Give a time when you went above and beyond the requirements for a project.
26. Who are our competitors?
27. What was your biggest failure?
28. What motivates you?
29. What's your availability?
30. Who's your mentor?
31. Tell me about a time when you disagreed with your boss.
32. How do you handle pressure?
33. What is the name of our CEO?
34. What are your career goals?
35. What gets you up in the morning?
36. What would your direct reports say about you?
37. What were your bosses' strengths/weaknesses?
38. If I called your boss right now and asked him what is an area that you could improve on, what would he say?
39. Are you a leader or a follower?
40. What was the last book you've read for fun?
41. What are your co-worker pet peeves?
42. What are your hobbies?
43. What is your favorite website?
44. What makes you uncomfortable?
45. What are some of your leadership experiences?
46. How would you fire someone?
47. What do you like the most and least about working in this industry?
48. Would you work 40+ hours a week?
49. What questions haven't I asked you?
50. What questions do you have for me?

How to answer 7 of the most common interview questions:

“Tell me about yourself.” While this isn’t exactly a question, answering this the wrong way could really hurt your chances of getting a job, Teach says. “I was once told by an HR executive that this can actually be a trick question. Hiring managers can’t ask you certain questions legally but if you go off on a tangent when answering, you may tell them some things about you that are better left unsaid.” The worst way to approach this request is to tell them your life story, which is something they’re definitely not interested in. The best way to approach this is to only discuss what your interests are relating to the job and why your background makes you a great candidate.

“What are your strengths and weaknesses?” It’s easy to talk about your strengths; you’re detail oriented, hard working, a team player, etc.—but it’s also easy to get tripped up when discussing your weaknesses, Teach says. Never talk about a real weakness unless it’s something you’ve defeated. “Many hiring managers are hip to the overused responses, such as, ‘Well, my biggest weakness is that I work too hard so I need try to take it easy once in a while.’ The best answer is to discuss a weakness that you’ve turned around, such as, you used to come in late to work a lot but after your supervisor explained why it was necessary for you to come in on time, you were never late again.”

“Where do you want to be five years from now?” “What employers are really asking is, ‘Is this job even close to your presumed career path? Are you just applying to this job because you need something? Are your long-term career plans similar to what we see for this role? How realistic are your expectations for your career? Have you even thought about your career long-term? Are you going to quit after a year or two?’” says Sara Sutton Fell.

Show them that you’ve done some self-assessment and career planning. Let them know that you hope to develop professionally and take on additional responsibilities at that particular company. “Don’t say something ridiculous like, ‘I don’t know’.

Teach says no one can possibly know where they’ll be in their career five years from now but hiring managers want to get a sense of your commitment to the job, the company, and the industry. “In fact, I would even mention that it’s hard for you to know what job title you may hold five years from now but ideally, you’d like to have moved up the ladder at this company based on your performance. You’re hopeful to be in some management position and your goal is to help the company any way you can.” If you give the impression that this job is just a stepping stone for you, it’s unlikely the hiring manager will be interested in you.

“Please give me an example of a time when you had a problem with a supervisor/co-worker and how you approached the problem.” “I think that the hardest thing about work isn’t the work, it’s the people at work,” Teach says. Most employees have a problem with a supervisor or co-worker at some point in their career. How they handle that problem says a lot about their people skills. If you can explain to the interviewer that you were able to overcome a people problem at work, this will definitely help your chances of getting the job, he says.

“What are your salary requirements?” “What employers are really asking is, ‘Do you have realistic expectations when it comes to salary? Are we on the same page or are you going to want way more than we can give? Are you flexible on this point or is your expectation set in stone?’” Sutton Fell says.

Try to avoid answering this question in the first interview because you may shortchange yourself by doing so, Teach says. Tell the hiring manager that if you are seriously being considered, you could give them a salary range—but if possible, let them make the first

offer. Study websites like Salary.com and Glassdoor.com to get an idea of what the position should pay. “Don’t necessarily accept their first offer,” he adds. “There may be room to negotiate.”

When it *is* time to give a number, be sure to take your experience and education levels into consideration, Sutton Fell says. “Also, your geographic region, since salary varies by location.” Speak in ranges when giving figures, and mention that you are flexible in this area and that you’re open to benefits, as well. “Be brief and to the point, and be comfortable with the silence that may come after.”

“Why are you leaving your current job?” Hiring managers want to know your motivation for wanting to leave your current job. “Are you an opportunist just looking for more money or are you looking for a job that you hope will turn into a career? If you’re leaving because you don’t like your boss, don’t talk negatively about your boss—just say you have different work philosophies”, Teach says. If the work was boring to you, just mention that you’re looking for a more challenging position. Discuss the positives that came out of your most recent job and focus on why you think this new position is ideal for you and why you’ll be a great fit for their company.

“Why should I hire you?” A hiring manager may not ask you this question directly but every question you answer in the interview should contribute to helping them understand why you’re the best person for the job. **“Stay focused on why your background makes you an ideal candidate and tell them how you are going to contribute to that department and that company,”** Teach says. “Let the interviewer know that one of your goals is to make their job easier by taking on as much responsibility as possible and that you will be excited about this job starting on day one.”

Salpeter suggests you print and highlight the job description, looking for the top three or four most important details. “Do they include terms such as, ‘cross-functional team,’ ‘team work,’ and ‘team player’ several times?” If so, your answer to, “Why should we hire you?” (asked directly or as an underlying question) should mention and focus on your abilities as they relate to teams.

“What are your future plans?” Companies would like to know that their employees have clear goals and are guided by a career plan. However, try not to be too specific and tell your aspirations in a generic sense. For example, explain that you expect to have a job that is an ongoing challenge and allow you develop professionally and personally. In this type of question it is advisable to say your concern to learn and appreciate what the company offers you.

“What was the biggest mistake you have made?” Here, the interviewer wants to know your ability to learn and not repeat the same mistakes. They also will see how you act in difficult situations and your ability to solve problems.

“Would you describe your previous boss?” To answer this question it is advisable to avoid saying anything that may sound negative because, it could lead to misinterpretations about your attitude to authority and supervision. An example of a good answer might be:

“My last boss was very experienced, because he had managed a number of important companies in the last 20 years. He was proud of his staff because they worked in and independent way and meet all the goals assigned. ”

What characterizes a good boss/co-worker from your point of view? This is a question that tries to evaluate if you fit in a company and if you can work with all kinds of people. To

answer this question it is advisable to not mention anything tangible: **I can get along with everyone. Some of the most important things for me are: the good treatment and of course that my boss/co-workers is qualified for the job.**

What irritates you about your boss/co-workers? As you probably already know, this is a trap question because the interviewer wants to know if you are tolerant with other people. To answer this question, it is advisable to think a moment and say you can adapt to any kind of people and behaviors. An example of good answer might be: **In all my previous jobs, I have never had any problem with any colleague because I try to understand people. I think that this will be a friendly place to work.**

What do you see yourself doing in ten years? This is a difficult question to answer because, not many people have specific goals in a given period of time. One of the most common mistakes that people make when answering this question is that most times they have very high goals that could be interpreted only as illusions and not as real goals. An example of good answer might be: **Nobody can predict what is going to happen in 10 years, but I hope I have contributed with the progress of the company and growth both professionally and personally.**

Why should we hire you? This is probably the most difficult questions to answer because, most times this question can decide whether you are hired or not, only if your answer is convincing enough. An example of a good answer might be: **"Well, I have a relevant experience for the job and I think that this company offers me great challenges and opportunities for growth. In addition I am really motivated to work in this company". Be more precise in terms of knowledge, skills and know-how, related to the job itself, your work experience and professional background (see "why should we hire you?").**

Other important common interview questions you have to consider are:

What was the major problem you had in your job?

How do you handle criticism?

How long would you expect to work in this company?

What role do you tend to play in a team?

How do you spend your free time?

What type of decisions do you have difficulty making?

Do you have any blind spots?

Do you have any suggestion for us?

Can you say 'no'?

Comment this news (knowledge of current news, opinion to give, etc.).