



COMMON INTERVIEW QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS



~ a guide for the keen job seeker - Part 1

The Business and Employment Centre



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When you've got a job interview coming up, good preparation is essential. By planning and practicing your answers, you can boost your confidence and increase your chances of getting the outcome you want.

Interviewers want to hear about your career history, your attributes and skills, and how your competencies match those specific to the job. They also want to know whether you're a good fit for their team. The more accurately you can predict their questions, the better you can prepare the most persuasive answers.

But how do you know in advance what you'll be asked?

The good news is that interviews tend to follow a common pattern. And most of them use very similar questions. By understanding why interviewers follow some classic lines of inquiry, you can prepare the best possible responses, and have plenty of great examples ready to use.

We've created this resource to help you to get ready for your next interview. It lists the most-asked interview questions, along with advice about preparing great answers for all of them. You can read them all or click on a particular question from the list on the following pages to jump straight to it.

Some of the questions that you're asked in your interview may be phrased differently to the ones we've provided. And you should always be ready to be asked about specific aspects of the role. But, if you invest time in crafting strong answers to all the questions here, you'll be ready to perform confidently and convincingly in every interview that you face.

Preparing Your Answers

Opening Questions

These questions give you plenty of scope to make a positive first impression. Strong answers here will help to set the tone and direction of the interview as a whole.

1. Tell me about yourself

Give a clear, concise and compelling outline of who you are and what you've achieved. Let your interviewer see something of your personality and interests, and explain to them why you believe that you're the person they're looking for. However, avoid getting bogged down in too much personal detail at this stage. Instead, focus on the key skills and experience that you have that are relevant to this job.

A good tactic is to discuss your present, your past, and your future. Start by summarizing your current position. Then, fill in details of skills that you've gained from previous roles. Finally, explain how this new job represents your ideal next step.

If possible, include one or two specific, measurable achievements, such as improvements that you've delivered or performance targets that you've exceeded. Use this question as an opportunity to demonstrate how you are ideally suited to this role. And show your confidence and enthusiasm from the start.

2. Why do you want to work for this company?

Demonstrate your knowledge of the company: its history, where it's going in the future, and what its priorities are right now. And make clear that your own career goals point the same way.

Explain how your key strengths will help the company to move forward – and how working there will allow you to excel. Be as specific as you can about why this company, above any other, is the best place for you to have an impact, and why you're so excited to apply.

3. What interests you about this particular job?

Show that you know exactly what this job entails, why you'd enjoy it, and how well-equipped you are to take it on. As with the previous answer, link the role to your career ambitions and goals, outlining why it suits you so well at this stage in your career.

Make it clear that you're aware of the challenges involved, and that you're excited about facing them. And be sure to focus on what you have to offer, as well as how you're hoping to benefit in return.

4. How did you hear about this position?

No matter how you did hear about it, emphasize what it was about the role that interested and excited you. This is also an opportunity to highlight your professional connections, and to explain any existing links with the company that fueled your desire to apply.

Overall, show that you're well-informed about your industry, organized in your approach to career development, and eager to seize good opportunities when they arise.

5. What do you know about our organization?

Show that you have a clear picture of the past, present and future of the company. It's important to know key facts, such as how long it's been in business, where it operates, and how well it's doing financially. Say something about the market it operates in, including any current challenges or trends.

But also talk about the company's values, and how these inform its targets and goals. And mention something that you'd like to learn more about – if you were to secure the job.



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