

Questions Questions Questions

that might be asked
in an interview

Most hiring decisions are made at the first interview. How you come across in that interview could be as important as your experience and job talents, so it pays to be well prepared.

The information here is in the form of broad questions about yourself. Practice answering the following possible interview questions with a friend or relative.

A job interview gives you the opportunity to showcase your qualifications to an employer. As part of your preparation, you should learn about the organization. Have a specific job or jobs in mind, and review your qualifications for the job.



Interviewing publications:

- Hidden Elements of Interviewing
- Keys to Successful Interviewing
- Informational Interviewing
- Prove It!
- Telephone Tips and Techniques

Publications available in these topic areas:

- Resumes and Applications
- Job Search
- Job Readiness

General questions



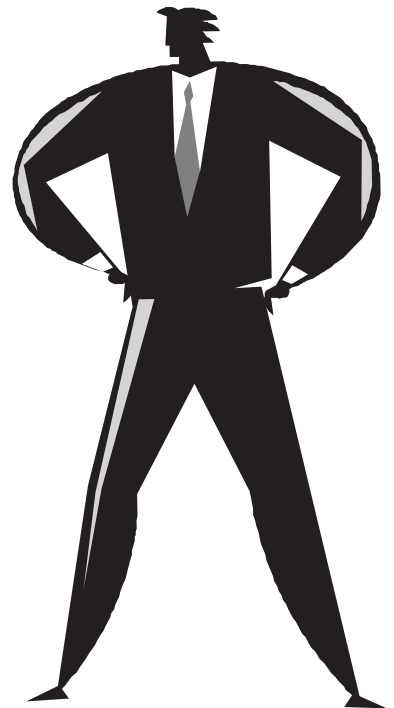
1. Tell me about yourself.
2. What do you really want to do in life?
3. Why did you choose this field?
4. What are your strengths? Weaknesses?
5. Why should I hire you?
6. What qualifications do you have that make you think you would be successful in this job?
7. How do you determine and evaluate success?
8. How/what do you think you can contribute to this company?
9. What qualities should a successful worker possess?
10. What do you expect from your supervisor?
11. What two or three accomplishments have given you the most satisfaction?
12. In what kind of work environment are you the most comfortable?
13. How do you work under pressure?
14. Why do you want to work here?
15. What do you know about our company?
16. What criteria do you use to evaluate the company you hope to work for?
17. Do you have a geographical preference? Why?
18. What is your attitude toward relocation?
19. What kinds of decisions are easy/hard for you to make?

20. Describe yourself in 5 words.
21. What would past supervisors/teachers say about you?
22. How do you think your peers would describe you?
23. What are your salary expectations?
24. How many days of work/school did you miss last year? How many times were you late? Why?
25. What do you think this job involves?
26. What would be your first action once you got this job?
27. If hired, how long would it take before you become productive?
28. Do you have any questions you'd like to ask?
29. How would you describe your ideal job?
30. We all have areas we need to improve in. In what areas do you feel you need to improve in order to strengthen your work performance?
31. Why do you think you're more qualified than other applicants I've interviewed?
32. How do you react when given orders?
33. Do you have dependable transportation?
34. Are you (creative, flexible, a self-starter, organized, etc.)? Give me an example.
35. What personal characteristics do you believe are necessary for success in this field?
36. Which of your parents has had the most profound influence on you? Explain.
37. This field is constantly changing. How have you adapted to change in your past experiences?
38. What have you done for your own professional development in the last few years?
39. What do you do to keep current professionally?
40. This position requires a responsibility, reliability and dependability. Prove to me that you have all three.
41. How do you plan and organize major projects?
42. What are the most important rewards you expect in your career?
43. Which is more important to you: The type of work you're doing or the money you receive for doing the work?
44. What motivates you to put forth your greatest effort?
45. What have you learned from your mistakes?
46. How do you get along with others?
47. What do you like to do in your spare time? Do you have any hobbies?
48. Do you prefer to work alone or with others? Why?
49. Do you consider yourself to be more of a leader or a team player?
50. What kinds of people do you find easy/difficult to work with?
51. What types of books, magazines, movies do you prefer?
52. What book have you read most recently? How long ago was that?
53. How much initiative do you take?
54. What do you do for fun?
55. What part does family play in your life?

56. Describe your best friends.
57. How much of an effort is it to be tolerant of people with backgrounds or interests different from your own?
58. I'm interested in how you manage your time. Describe the system you use to structure your time and establish priorities.
59. What makes you unique?
60. What professional or community groups are you active in?
61. Describe your personality.
62. Tell me about a time you used effective listening and communication skills to resolve a problem situation.
63. Give an example of a time you used your fact-finding skills to gather information for solving a problem, then tell me how you analyzed this information to come to a decision.
64. Describe a situation in which you had a positive influence on the actions of others.
65. Give an example of a time when you had to go above and beyond the call of duty in order to get a job done.

Education-related questions

1. Do you have plans for continued studies? An advanced degree?
2. What did you like/dislike about school?
3. You never received your degree. Why is that?
4. Describe your educational background.
5. Describe your most rewarding educational experience.
6. Which school subjects did/do you like the best? Why?
7. Which school subjects did/do you like the least? Why?
8. Which extracurricular school activities did/do you participate in? What did you learn through your participation?
9. What kind of grades did/do you get in school? Do you consider your grades to be an accurate indicator of what you can do? Why?
10. What led you to choose your major field of study? Your college?
11. How was your education financed?
12. How did you spend your vacations while in school?
13. Do you feel your education was worthwhile? Why?



Work experience, employment status questions

1. Cite a specific example of a problem you encountered at work and how you dealt with it.
2. You've been out of work for a while. What have you been doing between jobs?
3. What kinds of machines, tools, or equipment can you operate?
4. Why did you leave your last job?
5. What did you like/dislike about your prior jobs?
6. Why do you want to change careers?
7. Have you ever been fired? Why?
8. Why have you changed jobs so often?
9. Give me an example of a time when your employer's policy didn't agree with your own. How did you deal with the situation?
10. What did you like about your boss? Dislike?
11. What are some of the things about which you and your supervisor disagree?
12. This position offers less responsibility and pay than your most recent position. Why are you interested in this position?
13. Your resume states that you were laid off. If your former employer were to recall you, what would you do?
14. Tell me about a typical work day at the last company.
15. What have you learned from the jobs you've held?
16. Would you raise any objections if we were to check with your former employers for references?
17. Tell me about any performance based raises, promotions, bonuses or special assignments you were given.
18. What extra out-of-the-ordinary job responsibilities have you taken on?
19. Have you done this type of work before? Describe.
20. Describe how your job related to the overall goals of your department and your company.
21. What aspects of the job do you consider top priority?
22. Talk about times you felt angry on the job.
23. Tell me how you've moved up in the organization.
24. Describe the most significant presentation/report/document you have had to complete.

More questions to consider

You may be asked about your personal life or health that may not be related to the job. If you believe you are denied a job because of the way you answered any of these questions, you may want to contact the Department of Workforce Development, Equal Rights Division, in Madison at 608/266-6860, or Milwaukee at 414/227-4384.

1. Are you married, divorced, separated, or single?
2. How old are you?
3. How is your health?
4. Do you go to church regularly?
5. Tell me about your financial debts.
6. Do you rent or own your home?
7. What religious, political, or social organizations do you belong to?
8. Are you practicing birth control?
9. Do you plan on having more children?
10. Were you ever arrested? Why?
11. How much do you weigh?
12. How tall are you?
13. What does your spouse do for a living? Your parents? Describe.
14. What arrangements have you made for child care? Do you have back-up child care arrangements? Have you lost work time due to problems with your children? Explain.
15. Have you ever had any serious illness or injury? Describe.
16. Are there any personal, family, or health conditions that would limit your ability to function in this position? Explain.

Management and supervisory questions

1. What is your management philosophy? Style?
2. Describe the process you've used to hire employees. Have you had any hiring surprises or disappointments? Explain.
3. What experience have you had with major expansions or reductions in workforce?
4. How many employees have you fired? For what reason? Give me an example of how you went about firing an employee.
5. How would your employees describe you?
6. Do you maintain close checks or loose reins on your staff? Why?
7. What are your feelings about an open door policy?
8. Define Total Quality Management.
9. What things do you think contribute to your success as a supervisor/manager?
10. What things do you think might interfere with your effectiveness as a supervisor/manager?
11. In what ways do you feel you have improved as a supervisor/manager during the last few years?
12. How do you motivate staff?
13. Define participative management. Explain any experience you've had using this management.
14. Define a difficult employee. How do you deal with such an employee? Give me a specific example.

A note for employers

This information is intended to assist job applicants with preparations for interviews. It is not intended for employers in preparing questions. Employers are responsible for asking questions which provide information about a person's ability to do the particular job. The examples herein may not be the best or most appropriate questions to ask.

The best questions depend on the job. Employers may wish to review, "Avoiding Loaded Interview Questions" (ERD-4825-P), published by the Equal Rights Division, Department of Workforce Development.

Goal-directed questions

1. What are your short-range and long-range career goals and objectives? When and why did you establish these goals? How do you plan to achieve them?
2. What do you see yourself doing 2 years from now? 5 years? 10 years? 25 years?
3. What do you expect your salary to be 5 years from now?
4. How long do you plan on working?
5. How long do you plan on working here?
6. What specific goals, other than those related to your occupation, have you established for yourself?
15. How does your company plan to grow/expand in the next few years?
16. May I see the area where I would be working?
17. May I speak with one or two employees?
18. Why is this company a good place to work?
19. Do you have any company literature I could take with me?
20. Is there any probation period?
21. How will my performance be evaluated?
22. What can you tell me about the new products/services the company is planning to introduce?

Examples of questions you may want to ask in job interviews

1. What happened to the last person who had this job?
2. What strengths or abilities would the ideal candidate possess for this position?
3. Would you describe the duties of this job?
4. How many people have held this position in the last 2 years?
5. What kinds of equipment, machines, tools will I be working with?
6. Is there anything I can do or study to get a head start on learning this job?
7. What hours will I be working if hired?
8. What is the normal pay range for this position?
9. Is training provided? If so, what types of programs do you offer?
10. Will I work alone or with other people?
11. Who do I report to ... directly and indirectly?
12. What are the chances of moving up in this company?
13. What are the greatest problems you think I may face in this company?
14. What are the key tasks and responsibilities for the open position?
23. What is the company's position within the industry?
24. What are the challenges this company/department is facing?
25. Describe a typical work day.
26. Where does this position fit into the organizational structure?
27. How would you describe the working atmosphere of your company?
28. Does your company encourage participation in community projects?
29. What are some things you feel could be improved by the person you hire?
30. Why have you gone outside the company to fill this position?
31. Is this a new position?
32. How would you characterize your leadership style?
33. Could you describe how this job relates to the overall goals of the department and the company?
34. What are some of the more important objectives that you would like to see accomplished on this job?

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