

5.2.8: Interview Questions

Learning Objectives

- Discuss various question types common in interviews

For most job candidates, the burning question is “What will I be asked?” There’s no way to anticipate every single question that may arise during an interview. It’s possible that, no matter how well prepared you are, you may get a question you just didn’t expect. But that’s okay. Do as much preparation as you can—which will build your confidence—and trust that the answers will come.

As you respond to the questions, try to remind yourself, that this is not so much “about you” as about the interviewer finding the right fit for this opening. The questions are establishing whether your skills and experiences will meet the needs of this company. That is where your research comes in. You can work to explain your background relative to this new environment. If the interviewer says, “Tell me about you,” that is not a cue to start with your earliest memory. Instead, focus on the specific knowledge and skills you possess as related to what you know about this position.

The simplest place to start is to have a list of about four to six examples of workplace actions that you are proud of. Think of times you excelled. Then think about how this same story might fit several situations. One story might show initiative, leading others, decision making, and more. With these stories in mind, when a question comes, pull out the best fit and reword it to match the specific question. Try creating that list now, then use the question banks below to see what fits and what other situations you might need to have mentally ready.

There is no substitute for going through as many questions as you can prior to the interview. As you practice on your own, do not just read these questions and think. Do sit in front of a mirror and answer the questions fully. This is the practice that will set you up for adapting to various interview situations.

To help you reach that point of sureness and confidence, take time to review common interview questions. Think about your answers. Make notes if that helps. Then conduct a practice interview with a friend, a family member, or a colleague. Speak your answers out loud. Below is a list of resources that contain common interview questions and good explanations/answers you might want to adopt.

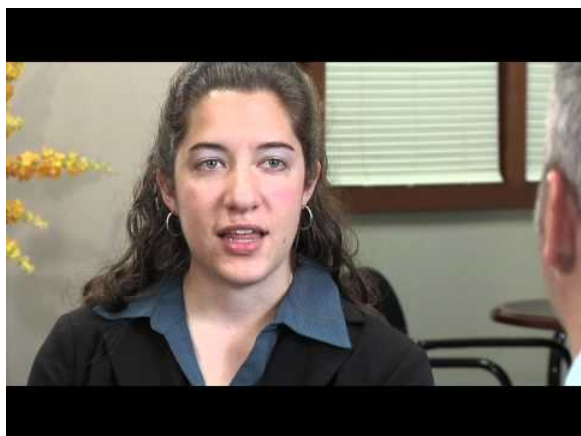
If you can use the databases below to find questions to practice with, record yourself. Then watch the recording and score each response against the [STAR technique](#) discussed earlier. From these databases, look at the broad categories of questions so that you may prepare some responses and examples for each category. Some categories may be:

Type	Example	Considerations
Goodwill, Greetings and Get Acquainted	Tell me about yourself.	No more than two minutes. List the highlights of your resume with a brief example, if possible.
Gauging Your Interest	Why are you interested in this position?	Make this position tops on your interest list, without ever alluding to any other search. Avoid sounding like this might be any other than a first choice (For example, “When I happened to see your ad” makes the job posting sound trivial to you.)
Your Experience and Accomplishments	How has your education prepared you for this position?	Be confident. Everyone knows you have not done this job yet, but you must sound like you are ready for this job. Avoid the natural hesitation you may feel (“I think I’ll be great” versus “With these skills, I can...”)

Type	Example	Considerations
The Future	What would you most like to accomplish if you get this position?	There's no need to over promise or worry, but do demonstrate you have a plan for this job or for life versus just hoping things will work out. Offer some realistic career goals based on some practical skill or education you have.
Challenging	What type of people do you have no patience for?	We all have weaknesses. Being aware of them is a great skill. Turning them to our advantage is even better. "While I get along well with most people, those who complain rather than try to find a solution can be hard on my patience."
Situational	If you were aware a co-worker was falsifying data, what would you do?	The employer probably wants to see how you handle difficulties on your own and what logical process you may use to solve problems. Remember to focus on the company's outcome and expense while not compromising your own standards.
Behavioral	Describe a time you worked as part of a team.	While all interview responses work well with the STAR technique, this is the type of question best suited to it.

Why Should We Hire You

From the Ohio State University Fisher College of Business Career Management Office, here is a video featuring representatives from recruiting companies offering advice for answering the question "Why should we hire you?" As you watch, make mental notes about how you would answer the question in an interview for a job you really want.



A YouTube element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: pb.libretexts.org/bcsfm/?p=654

? Read More

In closing, we suggest reading the essay "It's Like Online Dating," by Jackie Vetrano. In this essay, the writer compares job hunting—including résumé creation and cover-letter writing—to online dating. In this last section, she concludes with a look at the job interview and compares it to a first date.

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