

Interview Questions

- Most people dread interviews but they are your opportunity to prove to the interviewer that you are the best person for the job
- Be enthusiastic and confident when responding to questions. Do not rush your answers and do not ramble on and on either. Try to, um, avoid, like, using unnecessary words and um, repeating yourself or, like, annoying phrases, you know?
- A good technique is to write out your answers to the questions you anticipate and then edit them to make them more concise. Then practice your polished answers out loud, over and over and over.
- Try to get someone to help you do a 'mock interview'. This is a great way to practice.
- Most questions will relate either to your ability to do the job or to the type of employee you will be. The employer's objective is to find the best person for the job and as a result they want to know:

Can you do the job?	(Skills, abilities & qualifications)
How will you perform in the job?	(Interest, attitude & motivation)
How will you fit into the organisation?	(Personality & social skills)

- It is important to remember that there are no correct answers to interview questions but there are incorrect answers.
- Try to give examples of past experiences wherever possible. Examples are without doubt the greatest way to demonstrate your skills and abilities.

Typical interview questions

- **Tell me about yourself? (Can you sell yourself?)**

Considering that this is often the first question an interviewee faces it is surprising how it is commonly the question that most people dread. The key is preparation.

Keep your answer to one or two minutes; do not ramble. Use your CV as a starting point for this answer and focus upon both your personal & professional skills/abilities/values. Always be honest.

Talk about your best traits only, especially those that relate to the position for which you are applying. Highlight the experiences and accomplishments you are most proud of.

Remember to tailor your response to the specific job. By studying the job description, you will have a good idea to the skills and experience that the employer is searching for. Work these into your answer.

- **What do you know about our company? (Have you taken the time to find out what we do?)**

It is imperative to do your homework before the interview as it will help you to stand out from the other candidates. Spend time researching the company as this will help you to demonstrate an informed interest.

Explain how your qualifications and goals complement the company's mission statement, values and ethos (give an example if possible).

- **Why do you want to work for us? (Can you add value to the company)**

Place emphasis on what you can contribute and how, state your skills, experience, etc. Do not mention company perks as your motivation for wanting to work for them.

- **Where would you like to be in 5 years time? (How committed and motivated will you be?)**

Simply explain that you would hope to make a success of the role you are applying for. Mention how you are always eager to undertake further training in order to improve your performance and range of skills.

- **Why did you apply for this job? (How motivated are you?)**

Explain why you want this job and not why you are looking to leave your current job (if applicable).

Mention how the company fits with your personal values/ethos and that you believe that the position will give you an opportunity to use your skills in order to further the mission of the organisation.

- **Why should we hire you? (What makes you different to the other candidates?)**

Use buzz words from the Job Description/Person Specification to inform your answer.

Elaborate on your knowledge, experience, abilities and skills and link them directly to the Job Advert criteria.

Do not say you are the best qualified person because you will never be in a position to know if this is true. The interviewers will make this choice.

- **How do you handle stressful situations? (Can you cope with problems efficiently?)**

Give an example of a stressful/difficult situation that you have dealt with in the past. Tell them how you overcame the situation. What skills did you deploy? Do not be afraid to admit that you would ask for assistance if necessary.

If it is true that you actually work better under pressure then say so.

- **What are your greatest strengths? (Tell us a reason to hire you?)**

This is one of the best opportunities to highlight your skills. Determine which skills would fit best with the position you are applying for (the Job Description/Person Specification will help). From this list pick three skills which you possess and elaborate on each one by providing an example.

- **Do you have any weaknesses? (Are you self aware and capable of developing?)**

The key to disclosing a weakness is to talk about how you have attempted to overcome it.

- **What do you do in your spare time? (Are you a rounded person?)**

Prepare an example for this question. Promote any voluntary or socially related activities and the skills & experiences you have gained from this.

The interview is a two way process

At the end of the interview the employer will usually ask if you have any questions about the job or company. As a result it is always important to prepare a few (two will usually suffice) in advance.

Do not ask any question that shows you have not done your research about the company

The questions you develop will be wholly dependent upon the position you are applying for. A suitable question is:

Will there be any training opportunities?

Throughout the interview

- Listen carefully, seek clarification if necessary (it is ok to ask for the question to be repeated)
- Illustrate answers with real concrete examples and evidence
- Remain positive at all times
- Keep answers specific and to the point
- Do not be afraid to take time to respond to a question
- Be alert to the body language of the interview panel
- Speak clearly, smile and show enthusiasm
- Know what you want to say and find the opportunity to say it

What creates a bad impression?

- Poor personal appearance. Sunday best not Friday night best
- Negative attitude
- Lack of interest and enthusiasm
- Lack of preparation
- Poor knowledge of the role
- Failure to give concrete examples of skills
- Lack of career plan