Sample Interview Questions

Why did you leave your job at _____?
What are your strengths?
What are your weaknesses?
What are your long-term and short-term goals?
How do you plan to achieve your goals?
What do you see yourself doing five years from now?
Why did you choose the career for which you are preparing?
What qualifications do you have that will make you successful in your chosen career?
Which three adjectives best describe you? Why?
Why do you want to work for us?
What can you offer our organization that no one else can?
What do you think it takes to be successful in an organization like ours?
What have you learned from your mistakes?
What do you know about our organization?
Why should I hire you?

Sample Suggestions

Job seekers have found the questions listed below as the most challenging, so we have identified some suggestions for tackling these difficult questions.

1. Tell me about yourself

You want to be sure to capture the interviewer’s attention with a clear, quick, and focused response. Also known as a “two-minute pitch” or “elevator speech”, you should give a summary of your background, focusing on why you are a good fit for this position in this organization.

Keep in mind that the employer is not interested in learning about your entire personal history. Before the interview, prepare an answer to this question by writing out your relevant or professional qualifications using the past, present, and future approach.
Choose four to five highlights of which you are most proud of (past and present) and be sure to back up these qualifications with examples.

2. What are your greatest weaknesses?

Be cautious in answering this, as this is not an opportunity to confess a major flaw in your personality that would disqualify you from further consideration. However, it should not be a strength cleverly disguised as a weakness (e.g., “I’m a perfectionist”).

In your answer include ways that you are trying to improve upon this weakness and anticipate several follow-up questions related to your weakness. It does not have to be a personality trait—you could choose a skill deficit or lack of experience, which may be easier to improve.

3. Why should I hire you?

Focus on what makes you unique and what you offer to an employer. Do not attempt to compare yourself with other applicants. Explain the combinations of skills and experiences you offer and why these will be valuable to this company.

4. What salary do you expect and/or require?

To answer this question properly, you need to do research into the position and the company. You want to be able to give the employer a salary range that you are comfortable with and that matches the standard rate for this position in this industry.

When stating your salary range, also adjust for the cost of living in the city of your choice. For additional help, refer to salary.com, glassdoor.com, and the NACE Salary Calculator.

**Behavioral Interview Questions**

Behavioral interview questions are based on the premise that past behavior predicts future performance; therefore, you should assess your skills and abilities so that you are prepared to answer any questions that require thorough descriptions of your past.

Identify the skills employers are most interested in and select examples that illustrate these skills. Below are sample behavioral questions that you may be asked during your interview:

**Leadership**

- Tell me about a time when you went above and beyond what was expected of you.
- Describe the most significant leadership role you’ve held. What was your greatest challenge?
• Have you ever had an idea or a goal to achieve something that required action by other individuals beyond yourself? How did you find or mobilize the resources to make the idea or goal become real? How did you manage the unforeseen events along the way?

Problem Solving/Analytical
• Tell me about a project you had in which you had to amass a huge amount of data and then analyze it.
• Can you tell me about a situation where your analysis of a problem was deemed to be incorrect? What did you do next?

Initiative
• Tell me about a project that you persevered through after initially wanting to abandon it.
• Tell me about a time when you worked under deadline pressure.

Communication
• Describe a situation in which you had to convince others that your view, approach or ideas were right.
• What is your approach in meeting new people? Describe how you might typically behave in a business context versus a social context.

Teamwork
• Describe a situation when you needed to sacrifice your personal objectives for the team’s benefit.
• Describe a situation where the true teamwork was the only means of achieving the most effective results. What were the elements of the team dynamic and how did you contribute to the dynamic?