



It's unlikely that you will arrive at an interview without knowing what exactly the employer is going to ask you. Thus, anticipating too many specific questions and rehearsing answers is not the best strategy to prepare you for an interview. Instead, focus on identifying and communicating your skills, experience, and goals, and connect them with the responsibilities of the job you're applying for, you'll be better prepared for a variety of questions.

Interview Questions Guide

PERSONAL

Tell me about yourself. What unique qualities would you bring to the job? *What are your strengths? Weaknesses?* What motivates you to put forth your greatest effort? **What achievements from your past are you most proud of?**

WORK EXPERIENCE

What prior work experience have you had and how does it relate to this job? How would your past supervisors describe you? *What were your most significant accomplishments in your prior work experience?* What did you enjoy most about your previous work experience? Least?

Questions FOR THE Employer

QUESTIONS NOT TO ASK

- Questions about the organization that you should research before the interview.
- Questions you can ask when the job offer is made: **What is the salary?** What are the benefits? *How much vacation/sick/holiday time will I get?* Are there educational benefits? How does one qualify for them? **Is overtime required? If so, how much?**

General Questions

EMPLOYER KNOWLEDGE

Why are you interested in this position? In this company? *What do you know about us?* What attracts you to this particular industry?

SCHOOL BACKGROUND

How does your college education relate to the job? What extracurricular activities did you participate in and what did you learn from them? **What was the most challenging aspect of obtaining a college degree?**

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Describe your ideal work setting or supervisor. How long do you plan to stay at our company? **Where do you see yourself in five years? What other types of jobs and companies are you considering? Why?**

QUESTIONS TO ASK (GENERALLY 3 TO 5 QUESTIONS ARE APPROPRIATE)

Why is the position available? What are you hoping a person in this position will accomplish? Or will accomplish in the first 6 months? **What are your expectations for new hires?** What will my responsibilities be as far as _____? (Areas not clear from the job description.) **What is the greatest challenge facing your staff, (department or organization) right now?** What are some characteristics of your company that make it attractive or different from other companies? **Will I be working on a team or in a group?** Who will my supervisor/supervisors be? *Do you do formal evaluations of your employees?* How often are they done? **Is there training provided on the job?** How long is the training period? Who will be training me? *When can I expect to hear from you? or When should I check back with you?* How will I be contacted? Phone, email?



Preparing for the Behavioral Interview

- ▶ Think of at least 5 success stories related to overcoming obstacles and getting along with people in challenging situations.
- ▶ Write outlines of your success stories using the **STAR method**. Be sure to tell all the parts of your “stories”.
- ▶ Practice telling about your success stories to a friend or mentor. Get constructive feedback.

Interview Questions Guide

STAR Method

(It's an acronym!)

SITUATION

Set the scene: where were you and when did this happen?

TASK

Clearly describe the challenge or task to be accomplished.

ACTIONS

Actions you took to complete the task. Reveal your skills! Don't be too modest.

RESULT

What was the outcome or result?

Example:

Tell me about a time when you handled a challenging situation.

SITUATION & TASK I was working in the production department of a large publishing company. We received a letter from a 9-year-old girl who was unhappy because the gold design had worn off the cover of a book we had published. She wanted a refund. My boss gave the complaint to me to handle.

ACTION I immediately requested a refund check from our accounting department. I also called our printer, who investigated and identified one run of books in which the covers had been improperly printed. I obtained a copy of the book with a properly printed cover, and sent the book, the refund check and a personal letter to the girl, thanking her for pointing out the problem and apologizing for the inconvenience.

RESULT The girl's mother called me to thank me for the response. She told me that she was going to recommend our books to all her friends with children.

EXAMPLE BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- ▶ Describe a time when you tried to persuade a person or group to do something they didn't want to do.
- ▶ Give me an example of a time when you faced a lot of obstacles to achieving a goal.
- ▶ Describe a time when you had trouble seeing eye-to-eye with a colleague.
- ▶ Give me an example of when you worked with a group or team of people to complete a project.
- ▶ Talk about a time when you were faced with a difficult decision and describe how it turned out.
- ▶ Describe a time when you had to cope with strict deadlines or time demands.
- ▶ Tell me about a time that you made a presentation at work that received critical feedback.