

Common Interview Questions and Answers

Review the following questions and discuss their possible answers. The list of questions and answers here is in no way all-inclusive, but will cover some of the most common questions: Share a SAR (Situation - Action - Result) example.

1. What is your greatest strength?

Discuss attributes that will qualify you for the job. Describe the skills and experience that directly correlate with the job you are applying for.

When I'm working on a project, I don't want to just meet deadlines. I prefer to complete the project well ahead of schedule.

2. What is your greatest weakness?

Avoid repeating the word "weakness." Describe a weakness that you have professionally, not personally, and focus on what you are doing to improve.

I found recently that there were aspects of Excel that I didn't feel comfortable using. I have been working on that by taking an advanced course in Excel and by taking on projects where I can use my newly gained knowledge.

3. What did you like least about your last employer or supervisor?

Stay positive and don't bash your previous employer.

My last supervisor and I had different ideas about whom to include on projects. However, when I focused on the expertise she brought to other aspects of project management, I began to appreciate her much more. It made it easier for me to work with her on projects.

4. Why did you leave your last job?

This is not an opportunity to badmouth your former boss or company. Be upfront, but positive.

I would like to be upfront. I found myself looking for more challenges. I am a dedicated employee and didn't want my lack of satisfaction to impact my work for the employer.

5. Explain the gaps in your work history.

Be honest and come prepared with an answer about what you have been doing. Let the interviewer know that you have been actively engaged in something, whether it be community service or obtaining more education.

I have been volunteering for a literacy program in my community, where I have learned skills in training, preparation and mentoring.

6. Where do you see yourself in five years?

Connect your answer to the job you're applying for.

My long-term goals involve growing with a company where I can learn and produce quality home products for its customers.

Common Interview Questions and Answers (continued)

7. What do you know about this company?

Use your research to answer this question.

8. Why do you want this job?

This is another opportunity to talk about what you can do for the company.

Your company is one of the top in its field. You have several new products that you are ready to market and release soon, and I want to be a part of helping your company be successful.

9. What do you think is reasonable pay for this position?

This is another place to show you have done your homework.

Based on my research, people in this position with my level of expertise earn between ___ and ___. I would be willing to negotiate in that range.

Questions To Ask In An Interview

An interview is a two-way street. Usually the employer will ask you if you have any questions for them at the end of the interview. Be ready with questions that demonstrate your knowledge of the company. For example, "I read on the company website that employees have recently done presentations at XX conference. Is that a typical opportunity for the job for which I am interviewing?"

Remember: Don't ask about pay, benefits or retirement.

Sample questions:

- Why was this position created?
- What are the primary duties during the first six months?
- What is the most urgent or challenging part of the job?
- What are the expectations of the supervisor?
- What is your company's management style?
- Can you tell me about your performance appraisal system?
- When will you be making your decision?
- How would you describe the culture of this company?

