



Common Interview Questions

Although we can never be completely sure of the questions that will be asked in an interview there are some themes that are likely to be covered. To answer these questions well you should be able to provide real examples to back up your claim.

It can be hard to come up with ideas on the spot – especially when you are nervous. To avoid that awful moment of complete mind blank, prepare some examples in advance so that in the interview you can choose the most relevant one.



The Question

Tell me about yourself...

Why are they asking this?

Employers often use this as an icebreaker and a way to find out more about you, what sort of personality you have, what you are interested in and what you are good at. But this is not just about you, this also about them. They need to know what you bring to the role, and whether you would fit into the organisation.

This is the sort of question that sounds easy but it's worth preparing what you are going to say because there are things you really should and shouldn't talk about.

Talk about

- What school you go to
- Subjects you enjoy
- Sports you play
- Any clubs you belong
- Any hobbies or interests you have

Don't talk about

- Personal information like whether you have a boy/girlfriend
- Who you hung out with on the weekend
- Anything that could be considered inappropriate or just unnecessary



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The Question

What do you know about the position?

Why are they asking this?

Employers want to know how familiar you are with the company and position as this will show that you are genuinely interested in the job. How much you know or have bothered to find out about the role and the company is a good test of your interest levels.

Talk about

- What the company does
- How long it has been doing it
- How many staff work there
- Whether they have other businesses in other parts of the country.
- Praise the company with specific examples – e.g. the company has an excellent reputation in the community with a good record of providing excellent customer service

Don't talk about

- Vague or obvious information, e.g. it's a restaurant, it serves food
- Don't go overboard with your praise for the company, you don't want to be seen as insincere



The Question

What skills do you think you could bring to the role?

Why are they asking this?

Employers are keen to know whether your skills match the job.

Talk about

- Any 'technical' skills you have that are relevant to the position i.e. Use of a cash register, EFTPOS machine, computer database etc.
- Expand on your other 'transferable' skills: literally those skills you have gained from other jobs, activities or experiences that you can 'transfer' to the job e.g. communication skills, team player, conflict resolution, customer service.

Don't talk about

- Skills that are not relevant e.g. your unique party trick skills such as swallowing ten grapes at once.
- Don't list off every skill you have, make sure they are relevant to the position



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The Question

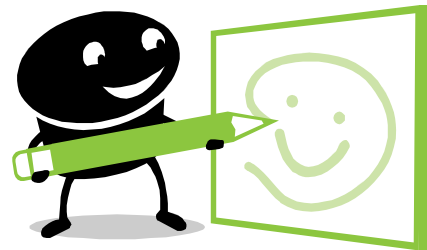
What are your strengths?

Why are they asking this?

The question gives interviewer a chance to see what motivates you and what you consider is important. They also want to see what will make you a great employee and how your strengths will compliment others in the team.

Talk about

- It can be a bit weird talking about what we are good at, but if ever there is a time to promote yourself – this is it!
- Be honest, keep it work related or link it to the skills we know employers are looking for like teamwork, communication skills and Initiative



The Question

What are your weaknesses?

Why are they asking this?

An employer wants to see how self-aware you are and again how you will fit into the team and company. It is important that you are able to show that you are aware of your weaknesses but you are working to improve them.

Talk about

- Work related weaknesses such as at school you sometimes struggle to stay focused in class
- Always let them know how you are overcoming your weaknesses – e.g. you have been working on this and you are much better now than you were two years ago

Don't talk about

Personal weaknesses such as relationship problems.





The Question

Do you have any questions for us?

Why are they asking this?

This question is a good way for employers to work out whether you're really interested in the position and whether you are a good fit (yes it comes back to that again). A well thought out question should demonstrate your interest in the job and in the company – e.g. how can I be successful in this company?

Talk about

- Make sure you ask something! Have at least two questions prepared
- Ask questions that demonstrate that you are interested in the well-being of the company not just yourself

Don't talk about

- Don't ask questions that are self-centred and suggest that you are only interested in you.



You should **ALWAYS** prepare some questions to ask at the interview.

Some suggestions of questions to ask are:

- Will I be given any training?
- Are there any opportunities for me to move up in the company after a period of time?
- Will I be expected to wear a uniform?
- How long is my traineeship?
- Does the job involve working over-time or weekends?
- Is there anything else you need to know about me that will help you make a decision on whether you will hire me?



What should I ask??

Common Interview Questions

Prepare your answers!

It's really important you prepare for some of the common questions asked in interviews. As well as the above questions, prepare some examples of how you would answer the following questions.

The examples we've given here should help you get started.

Question	Example 1	Example 2	Example 3
Give me an example of when you worked as part of a team.	I was a member of the school council. One of our roles was to raise money for the school through a variety of events. We all contributed and	I have played football with my local team for the past 2 years. I have really learnt the importance of working together and how much we could achieve ...	I have a part time job at the local café. It is very busy particularly on the weekends and each person must do their part to
How have you handled a difficult situation?	As a food and beverage attendant at my local café I often had to deal with customer complaints. I found the best way to do this was	While I was studying I had a lot of commitments outside of school. I found that I was getting behind in my work which was causing me stress. I organised a meeting with my teachers and came up with a study plan...	One of my classmates was being bullied by other students. I took the time to get to know her and I spoke to the other students involved and asked them to leave her alone.....
When have you successfully lead a group?	As a Beacon Student Ambassador I worked with a group of students to develop the Beacon program in my school and particularly focus on linking in with local businesses. We managed and ran a number of events all of which were attended by.....	I worked at my part time job for 3 years and in the last year I was given more responsibility and became shift leader. The most important thing I did in this position was	As the captain of my netball team I have lead my team to the finals on two occasions. While we lost the final the team was successful in many other ways including.....
Provide an example of a process or procedure that you have successfully followed.	At my part time job at the fast food restaurant I had to learn a number of processes, including how to open the store and get it ready for the day, how to produce individual items of food and how to clean various utensils and the store overall.	I volunteer for a charity which raises money for cancer. We regularly work at events and each time we are fully briefed on our role for the day, what health and safety processes we have to follow	I regularly cycle in a group. In order to make sure that we are all safe, we have to communicate in a certain way and take it in turns to lead the pack