

## Common Interview Questions

The most effective way to prepare for an interview is to anticipate the interview questions you will be asked and plan your best answers. Below is a list of commonly asked interview questions. Use the job description to help you identify the main requirements of the role and the questions which are likely to be asked.

For each interview question or position requirement, identify specific qualifications, experiences or stories from your work, study or community background. Use this material to demonstrate your ability to the job or how the firm would benefit from employing you.

Remember, the objective of an interview is for an employer to determine your suitability for the role and whether your attitude and motivation fits with the culture of the firm. They will be evaluating your strong and weak points, qualifications, skills and personal attributes.

## Traditional Interview Questions

In the table below are some commonly asked interview questions which are asked in a traditional interview.

Question	Your Response
<b>Tell me about yourself.</b>	This is a great opportunity to sell yourself. In your answer highlight how your skills, knowledge and experience relate to the job and firm profile.
<b>What are your strengths?</b>	Tailor your strengths to the job and highlight relevant skills, knowledge and experience.
<b>What are your weaknesses?</b>	This question is about the interviewer assessing your own self awareness rather than your weaknesses. Turn a weakness into a positive by describing it as an area for development and what steps you have taken to try and improve.
<b>What do you see yourself doing in 5 years?</b>	Answer in general terms about the type of situation you would like to be in, and the way you would like to develop your skills and progression.
<b>Reasons for leaving your current or last position.</b>	Use this question as an opportunity to focus on the future. Keep it positive and make the reason for leaving a constructive one such as a new challenge, increased responsibility or learning opportunities, more favourable location. Never criticise your current or previous organisations, always compliment them. Acknowledge if your current is being made redundant.
<b>What do you like most about your current position?</b>	The interviewer is evaluating your fit with the position you are interviewing for. Make your answer relevant to the position requirements.
<b>What do you like least about your current position?</b>	Avoid criticising your boss, management or co-workers. Give a general answer and refer to something which is lacking in your

	current situation and which you seeking in a new job or work environment (eg growth or training opportunities or new projects not offered in your current role, but potentially is available with the position you are interviewing for.)
<b>What do you know about our company/firm?</b>	Use material from your research of the company to answer this question. Give your impression of the reputation the firm has and how its reputation is one of the reasons why you are applying for the role.

### Competency Based Interviews and the STAR Technique

In more structured interviews, the interviewer will ask questions relating to key competencies required for the role and organisation. They will ask you to respond with detailed examples about your experiences. Examples of competencies are problems solving, teamwork, time management, customer/client service focus, taking initiative, planning and organising.

These questions can be answered using a three step process called a STAR (or PAR) statement. Use work examples that are relevant to the question, and fairly recent. If you have little work experience, refer to an achievement at school or outside activity. Relate the skills you used to the position and question.

<b>Situation or Task or problem</b>	Describe the situation that you were in or the task that you needed to accomplish. You must describe a specific event or situation, not a generalized description of what you have done in the past.
<b>Action you took</b>	Describe the action you took and be sure to keep the focus on you. Even if you are discussing a group project or effort, describe what you did - not the efforts of the team. Don't tell what you might do, tell what you did.
<b>Results you achieved</b>	What happened? How did the event end? What did you accomplish? What did you learn? If the end result was not the desired result, what did you learn from the situation/experience?

Examples of competency based questions which can be answered using the STAR technique:

- What has been one of your greatest achievements in your job?
- How do you manage your time & prioritise your duties?
- How do you deal with conflict at work?
- Give an example of when you have had to work under pressure.
- How do you deal with difficult colleagues or clients/customers?
- Have you met your budget/ performance targets? How have you achieved this?
- Tell me about a big challenge or difficulty you faced and how did you achieve it?

- What management style brings the best out of you?
- Have you had an idea which has been implemented by the company? Tell me about it.

### **Behavioural Based Interview Questions**

Behavioural based interviews are a form of competency based interviews which require you to answer the question in greater detail and depth. Interviewers use this technique to evaluate your experience and behaviours you've shown in past roles to help determine your potential for success.

Because you might be asked a variety of possible behavioural questions, the best way to prepare is to have a six to eight example stories that can be adapted to many behavioural questions, e.g., you might have an example of one situation that can cover behavioural questions on client service focus, problem solving or organisational skills. Some behavioural questions want to know how you responded to negative situations. Choose negative situations from which you learnt something or had a positive outcome.

Use the STAR technique to help describe your example.

[Click here to download examples of behavioural based interview questions.](#)