

Typical Interview Questions

(Adapted from *WorkWise*)

1. Can you tell me a little something about yourself?

This is the time to refer to the information you usually put on your resume. Mention some of the following: hobbies and interests; clubs and organizations to which you belong; work experience; career goals. Keep the conversation professional. This is not the time to talk about how much you like playing video games.

2. Have you ever done this type of work before?

Each position has its own special features, so you will not have done the exact job before. You have probably done similar work though. Don't say you have never done this job. Talk about the experiences you have had that relate to the position you are seeking. Mention your ability to learn quickly.

3. Why should I hire you?

You have worked hard to identify your personal traits and characteristics. You know yourself and you must be able to tell the employer that you are reliable, dependable, and able to get along with others. You need to be able, positively and without bragging, to mention the skills that have been a part of your home and school education.

4. Why do you want to work for me? Why do you want to work here?

Any answer here must be an honest one. The employer wants to know if you are serious about the position or whether you are planning to use it as a stepping-stone to something else. Mention the reputation that the company, business, organization or individual has and how you want to be associated with that. Mention that you think this position will give you something that you can do well and enjoy. Think of what the advantages are and why you wanted this job in the first place.

5. Why did you leave your last job? I see that you didn't stay at it for a long time.

The employer is looking to see if you had any difficulties in your last position that could occur again in this job. If you were fired, it is better not to mention this but to say that your needs were not met in the previous job. You desired another position that better matched your skills and abilities. Do not criticize your former employer because the interviewer might think that you would do the same to his/her company. You may have also had a good reason to leave: the job was temporary or seasonal or the company had a layoff. Maybe the hours were too demanding now that you're in school.

6. Is there anything that would prevent you from performing effectively at this job?

The employer is trying to see whether you might be absent a lot because of illness or other circumstances. Honesty related to this question is the best policy.

7. May we call your previous employer?

The interviewer is trying to determine why you may have left a previous position. If possible, answer yes. If any problems arose in your last work site, don't mention them. Just explain that you left because you were seeking new job skills or opportunities and that you would prefer he/she called your references. The employer is trying to find an information source to determine your strengths, weaknesses and work style. If you've never had a job before, be prepared to offer names of other references who can speak on your behalf.

8. Considering this job and its expectations, what do you think are your greatest strengths?

You must know enough about the company, business or organization to be able to discuss how your talents and abilities relate to the job description. An applicant who demonstrates familiarity with the work site and its reputation is held in high esteem by an interviewer.

9. Are you looking for a permanent or temporary job?

You might not have thought about whether you imagine yourself at this job for a long time or if this is an intermediate step while you think about your future. The question, though, is a legitimate one for the employer because if he/she is interested in you as an employer, he/she probably wants to know that you can be counted on for a long period of time.

10. When can you be available for work?

It is okay to answer this question with a question. Ask the interviewer when he/she would need you so that you can make plans to be available. If you currently have a job, explain that you need to give your current employer two weeks notice. The interviewer will appreciate that you want to be fair to your current employer.

11. If you had a choice of any job, what type of work would you choose and why?

It isn't as important to name a particular occupation, as it is to categorize your skills into an occupational field where they can be used. Answers such as "I am interested in preserving the environment, working with young children, improving the health care of older citizens, working with my hands, or working for myself" all show that you have seriously considered your future.

12. Tell me about a problem that you had to deal with in your last job. How did you analyze the situation and determine a solution?

The interviewer wants to find out about your analytical skills and ability to solve problems. If the answer you give shows that you tend to keep quiet about problems, the interviewer might think that you don't have initiative and will not speak up when confronted with a similar problem on a new job. If your answer shows that you are mature, diplomatic, and a creative thinker, the interviewer will be impressed.