

Interview Questions

Q. Tell me about yourself.

A. This is a common introductory question for many interviewers. It gives you an opportunity to market yourself. Concentrate on job-related accomplishments and information; this is not the time to talk about your personal life.

Q. How would your previous supervisor(s) describe you?

A. Focus on qualities such as being “a team player,” “organized,” “thorough,” “have initiative,” etc.

Q. How have your education and experience prepared you for this job?

A. Discuss how your education has given you the tools to succeed, and experience has given you the opportunity to apply your education.

Q. What made you decide to apply for this position?

A. Indicate how your interest and skills, and abilities match the job description. You may also state that you’ve heard positive things about the company.

Q. Why did you leave your last position?

A. Answers such as relocation, career enhancement or advancement, or pursuit of educational goals are all acceptable responses. Try to stay away from words such as “fired,” “terminated,” or “personal reasons”. Avoid saying anything negative about previous employers. If asked about your relationship with previous employers concentrate on positive traits. For example: Your previous supervisor may not have been a very good supervisor, but they may be an excellent public speaker.

Q. What do you know about our organization?

A. Do your research! Get company information from the Internet, company brochures, people who work for the company, etc.

Q. What can you bring to our organization?

A. Discuss job-related accomplishments. Emphasize experience, skills, training, machine proficiency, etc., that will help the organization.

Q. What are your salary expectations?

A. You may reply with a salary range which you have researched for your career field and geographic location. Or you may reply with your own question such as, “I would hope to receive a salary that your company finds fair for a person with my skills and abilities. What is the salary range for this position?”

Try to avoid mentioning salary until you have a firm job offer. Remember, pay isn’t everything. Being able to move up the career ladder once you are in the organization may pay higher dividends in the long run.

Salary can also come in the form of benefits. Negotiate for:

- Additional annual leave, sick leave, paid holidays, education leave, etc.
- Health benefits.
- Insurance (life, long and short term disability).
- Paid parking.

- Retirement plan, stock options, 401K.
- Merit promotions, pay raises, bonuses.
- Tuition or training reimbursement.

Q. What are your strengths and weaknesses?

A. Start with a weakness. Identify a problem area and then tell how you are working on the problem. For example: “My typing speed is not as fast as I’d like it to be, but I am taking an evening typing class at the local college to increase it”. Try to avoid work-related weaknesses.

Talk about three strengths. They can be:

- Education or training.
- Skills that relate to the job.
- Abilities that will enable you to get the job done.
- Personal qualities such as honesty, enthusiasm, dependability, high energy, hard working, positive attitude, etc.

Provide a work-related example for each strength.

Q. How long do you plan to stay at our company? Or where do you see yourself in five years?

A. Stress performance in doing the best job possible in the new position. Concentrate on gaining additional knowledge and experience so that you can become more valuable to the company. For longer term goals, emphasize completion of educational goals and certifications that directly apply to the position.

Q. What major problems did you encounter in your last job and how did you overcome them?

A. Tell a success story of a past accomplishment, remembering to always stay positive. Never criticize former co-workers.

Q. Do you have any questions?

A. Prepare a list of four or five questions. Ask:

- When will a decision be made?
- Who will I report to?
- What will be the major focus of the job during the first few months?
- What additional information do you need from me to make me your candidate of choice for this position?

Q. Describe a time when you worked on a project as part of a group or team.

A. Include information on:

- Goal of the project.
- What went well.
- Your role.
- What challenges you faced and how you overcame them.

Q. Tell me about a situation in which you had to resolve a conflict.

A. Try to give a work or volunteer experience. Do not use a family conflict. Clearly list the steps you took to resolve the situation. Include how you know that you succeeded.