

TYPICAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

The most qualified person does not necessarily get the job offer unless that person interviews with the most intelligence and personal appeal. Answering typical interview questions with the most finesse will help make you the top choice. Practice responding to these questions.

1. Tell me about yourself. What is your background? What has been your work experience?
(It is best to stick with a brief outline of your work history & not personal life.)
2. How would you describe yourself? Give me 10 adjectives that would describe you.
(Focus on characteristics that would be valuable in the work place.)
3. What are your short and long term goals? Where do you see yourself in five years?
(Be sure that the goals you express are in line with what the job can offer. Saying that you want to be a manager when you are talking to the manager of a small company is unwise.)
4. What would be the ideal job for you? Describe the kind of position you are seeking.
(Be sure that what you express is compatible with the requirements of this job. If you are not sure of what the company wants then answer broadly. "I am open to similar work to what I have done in the past yet I would be delighted to take on new challenges.")
5. What do you think you do best? What are your strengths? What are you most successful?
(Pick points that you think are needed the most for this specific position.)
6. What are your weaknesses? Give me an example of one of your biggest mistakes on a job.
(Try to pick weaknesses that are not important to doing well in this job or pick a weakness that is irrelevant such as "I sometimes am too honest and may hurt someones feelings.")
7. What did you like the least about your last job? What duties have you disliked in the past? What kinds of things would you try to avoid in your next job?
(Be careful about overly negative responses that make you look inflexible or sour. Pick little things like " I wasn't wild about the filing but all jobs have some unexciting duties.")
8. What was your favorite job and why? Which position was the most rewarding and why?
(Stick with job content over personalities, environment, location, or benefits.)
9. Who was your favorite boss and why? What qualities would an ideal boss have?
(Saying that a boss was "so nice" is a weak response. This is a great opportunity to shine. "I loved the way my last boss gave me so much responsibility and trusted my ability to make decisions on my own. He appreciated the improvements I made in our systems and paper flow. He allowed me to compose letters for him and respond to problems myself.")
10. What was your least favorite boss like? Who was your worst boss and why?
(This is a snake pit question. Don't elaborate too much! Be careful! Negative remarks can be interpreted as disrespect for authority, inability to be flexible, inability to let the rough and rude actions of a difficult boss roll off your back. Be diplomatic. "All bosses can have their difficult ways. My boss at ____ was the most demanding and difficult to please. I feel that I performed well for him even though he was probably the one I related to the least.")
11. Would you rather work by yourself or with others?
(Answer both positively. I am a team player yet I am most productive working on my own.)
12. What three accomplishments are you the most proud of? What are your job successes?
(Think of ways you have saved your employer money, made procedures more efficient. Also mention academic successes if it is relevant.)
13. Do you work well under pressure? Can you juggle several tasks and lots of deadlines?
(Give examples of projects or people that have been demanding and how you did well.)

14. How could you contribute to our company. What attributes do you have that we could use?
(Avoid trite remarks like "I'm a hard worker. I learn quickly." It may be better to say things such as "If you asked my previous boss what he appreciated about me I think he would tell you that I take initiative, that I have enthusiasm for my work and am not afraid of working hard or putting in overtime. I not only do my work accurately and quickly but I also take the interest in understanding the reasons behind the task at hand.")
15. What problems have you experienced on the job (or in school). How did you deal with it?
(This is another way of asking about your weaknesses, personality conflicts, negative attitudes about a job, ability to roll with the punches and deal with frustrations-be careful.)
16. What types of promotions or job changes have you experienced in the past.
(Sometimes promotions don't occur but greater responsibility is taken on-talk about it!)
17. Tell me about a typical day on your last job. What were the responsibilities in this job?
(Do not ramble. Be concise and explicit. Mention five responsibl  highlights of the job.)
18. Do you have plans to continue your education? What are your educational goals?
(Be careful. If your goals are not compatible with the future of this job you can be knocked out of the running. A company may also need overtime and evening courses may interfere. Continuing your education is usually respected. Give safe remarks such as "I like to take courses that will help me contribute more to my job and company if time permits.")
19. What courses in school did you like the best? The least?
(Try to select courses that might relate to the job. "English was one of my favorite classes because I am good at composition and writing. Accounting was very challenging to me and has been very practical for business and personal use. Foreign languages were my least favorite.")
20. Is salary more important to you than satisfaction with the type of work you do?
(This can be a feel-out question on if your salary is negotiable and if you are committed to your career. "Salary is important but is secondary to my satisfaction with work content.")
21. What do you like to do in your free time? What are your hobbies and interests?
(Have something intelligent and productive to say. Self improvement remarks win points. "I like to attend computer workshops, motivational seminars, and take business courses that might apply to my work. I also like to play tennis and go to sporting events.")
22. Do you need to be kept busy in a job? Can you get bored easily if a job isn't challenging?
(This can be a trap. If the job has peaks and valleys and you say you need to be kept busy you may be dropped from consideration. If you get bored easily you may be considered lacking in industriousness. "I prefer to stay busy but if there are some slow times I like to help out others or reorganize something at my desk. I am too productive to get bored.")
23. What do you think past employers would say about you? Who are your references?
(Be prepared with a list of business and personal references with phone numbers.)
24. What kind of work atmosphere are you the most comfortable in?
(Do you fit in with this group? Are they formal, relaxed, straight business, jokers and kidders, aggressive personalities, laid back, a bit stuffy, cussers, have a dress code, style queens, private offices, bull pen environment--all are related. "I think I can fit in with most any environment from informal and relaxed to the three piece suit environment. I tend to reflect the personality style of my boss and adapt to any situation.")
25. Why would you want this job? Why would you like to work for this company?
(Avoid focusing on benefits, financial stability of the company, location, and pay. Talk about your interest in the industry and admiration of the success of the company. Discuss how the content of the job would be satisfying and challenging and that the job would meet a lot of your goals. Say you have liked the people you have met and think you would fit in. Describe how your knowledge skills and training could contribute to the company.)