

Answering Interview Questions

1. Tell me about yourself?

- Remember, 'tell me about yourself' does not mean they want your life story. Outline several of your strong points and accomplishments.
- Do not become nervous if an interviewer remains silent or use non-committal sounds like "uh-huh" or "hmmm."
- Mention achievements such as grades, honors, and scholarships.
- Mention hobbies or special interests if related to the job, e.g. designing websites.
- Discuss what you learned from previous employment or how your volunteer work helped you develop your organizational, time management and leadership skills.
- When you run through your accomplishments, make a summing-up statement and then stop talking.

2. What qualifies you for this job?

- If the position is highly specialized or technical, offer specific skills that you have gained and demonstrated, e.g. IT skills
- If the position is an entry level job, think of general skills and qualities that you have gained over the years, for example your ability to organize information, teamwork skills, or the fact that you are a quick and willing learner.
- Be prepared to provide specific examples of your skills or traits.

3. Why should we hire you?

- What makes you unique? Consider your collection of skills and personality traits that the employer would value.
- With regard to skills, if you have experience with the type of activities needed in the new job, discuss those in detail.
- With regard to personal traits, consider the characteristics that YOU would want in an employee, and then express them. For example: willing to learn, flexible, able to meet deadlines, work well with others, and conscientious.
- Be sure you can provide concrete examples to support what you say!

4. Why do you want to work for this company?

- Avoid giving unprofessional answers like: it's closer to home, the salary is better here.
- Read brochures and catalogues of the company and list 2 or 3 things that you have learned about the company that makes it sound like a good match for you and why.
- Mention that you like the kind of work being offered and feel you would be good at it and why.

5. Where do you see yourself in five years?

- Mentioning any specific goal might be risky; this goal might be taken seriously and ruin the chance of getting the job. So be realistic and try to mention the goals that won't lead the interviewer underestimate you.
- You do not want to give the impression that you're simply using this company as a stepping stone to another career or that you will leave when something better comes along.
- A good answer would be - I see myself spending time learning my job, then gradually gaining increased responsibility.

6. What are your weaknesses?

- This might sound like a tricky question, but never get worried. You can discuss a weakness and how you overcame it.
- Everyone has weaknesses, but when answering this question in a job interview, stay away from personal qualities and focus on professional traits. Describe what steps you taken to overcome your weaknesses so that you can demonstrate areas of improvement.
- An example might be talking about improving your communications skills to be a more effective presenter and stating that you joined Toastmasters to strengthen these skills.
- Never mention a personal quality. If you talk about your temper, your tendency to gossip or the fact that you're lazy, you may as well pack up and go home right then.

7. What are your strengths?

- Describe a strength that is related to the job. For example, if you are applying for an Administrative Assistant position, discuss your skill with MS Office, and that you are very friendly and like working with people.
- If you really enjoy new challenges and tackle them in an organized manner, this would be a useful strength in almost any situation.
- You can talk about your ability to find unique solutions to problems. Be prepared with some concrete examples, since that may be the follow-up question.

8. What salary are you looking for?

- Never discuss the amount of money you need to live on, only what the job is worth.
- Unsure of the pay? Don't refuse to discuss salary, if you don't want to name a price, say - "in my last job my salary was \$30,000," or "I am hoping for an increase over the salary I'm taking now."

9. Why are you leaving your present job?

- Never say anything negative about your current job.
- Don't mention money as a motivation, you might then lead the interviewer to think that you might quit a job if another company offers a more pay to you.
- Good reasons: indicate a desire for greater responsibility and challenge, your need to move to be closer to your family, or the need to reduce travel time.

10. If we were to talk to your former supervisor or teacher, what would they say about you?

- If you can remember specific things that were said, and who said them, then use those examples. Such as, "my supervisor at the bank told me that he respects my strong work ethic and knows he can count on me. For example, when he went on vacation, he left me in charge of the front counter."
- If you can't think of specific examples, then choose to discuss the traits that employers look for generally, such as time management, friendliness, or reliability, and mention these along with concrete examples.

11. What would you do in this situation? (Hypothetical Situations)

- These questions test your problem solving abilities. Keep the stages of problem solving in mind when answering:
 - Collect information
 - Analyze the information
 - Organize the information in order of importance
 - Get expert advice or opinion
 - Make a decision
 - Share the decision
 - Implement the decision

12. Do you have any questions for us?

- What are some of the objectives you would like to see accomplished in this job?
- What changes would you like to see implemented by the person you hire to fill this position?
- What/How would you describe a typical week/day in this position?
- What challenges or significant changes do you foresee for the company in the near future?
- How would you describe the responsibilities of the position?
- What can I tell you about my qualifications?
- When can I expect to hear from you?
- Are there any other questions I can answer for you?
- When will you be making a final decision?