

## 10 questions to expect in an interview

Use these tips on answering the top ten interview questions to help you in your next job search.

### 1. Tell me about yourself

Keep it short and work-focused. This is not the time to talk about your dog named Roger and your rock band (unless, of course, you're interviewing to be in a rock band).

### 2. Tell me about your current job responsibilities

As much as possible, link your current responsibilities to the job you are interviewing for. Focus on the big picture, rather than the details. A good summary for an office worker might be "As an administrator, I provide office support for six people, including their word processing, photocopying, and billing".

### 3. Where do you see yourself in five years?

What the interviewer is really asking is - are you just looking for a job, or is this part of a bigger plan for your life? It's a good idea to have an answer that shows that you have plans for the future, and that this job fits in with those plans. Avoid flip or overly ambitious answers like "I'll be president of the company by then".

### 4. What's the most difficult challenge you've faced, and how did you overcome it?

Identify the characteristics that helped you overcome the challenge, such as perseverance, planning, organizational skills, or out-of-the-box thinking. Avoid very sad or very personal stories.

### 5. What techniques do you use to deal with difficult people?

The interviewer is using this to learn about your people skills. Think about some situations that you've been in where there have been difficult people - what were some of the most effective ways for you to get things done, in spite of the problems?

### 6. What are your greatest strengths and weaknesses?

Let's face it - this question has become a cliché. Focus on two or three strengths that would be helpful in this job - your people skills, your attention to detail, or whatever you can genuinely describe as strengths. Be prepared to give an example of how you've used that strength, as that's a common follow-up question. Often people are advised to answer that their weakness is really a hidden strength, as in "My weakness is that I'm a work-aholic". Be careful with this - you may want to select a weakness that is a minor problem that you can honestly say you're working to improve.

### 7. Why are you a good match for this job?

If you have a good description of the job, turn this into a great marketing opportunity. Link your experience, skills and personal style to the job requirements. If you don't have a lot of information about the job yet, you need to hedge by saying something like, "From what I can



tell so far, my experience with daily customer interaction matches your needs for a competent people-person. I'm still getting a feel for the job - Could you tell me more about what you think is important?"

#### 8. Why are you leaving your current job?

Keep this positive and professional. Do not go into the details of a messy job situation, or speak badly of your current boss or co-workers. If you must describe a problem, use very broad terms, such as "The company has been having some financial issues", or "Right now, there are limited opportunities for internal transfers". If you go into details, the interviewer will wonder what you might say about him someday.

#### 9. How do you deal with multiple deadlines for different projects?

It's the age of multi-tasking. Be prepared with some examples of you've coped with this in the past.

#### 10. Why do you want to work for us?

To answer this question, you need to know something about the company. Luckily, you've researched the company ahead of time, and have discovered some things that make this company attractive. It could be their reputation for innovation, their work in an area that interests you, their demand for excellence. You should have a few reasons ready, and be prepared to give examples.

Think through some of answers to these top ten questions before you go to your interview. Many people find practicing with a friend helps. Having done your preparation, you'll feel more relaxed and ready to make a great impression.