

Things to ask during an interview

During an interview, ask the right questions to learn more about the job opening and to reflect a thoughtful mindset that will benefit the company.

When you go in for a job interview, it helps to take along a list of questions that you have already practiced asking. While most interviewees prepare to answer a prospective employer's questions, a wise applicant will learn to ask the right questions, too.

1. **Wait for the right time.** Don't jump into the conversation to ask things that may seem irrelevant to the interviewer. When a conversational lull occurs, ask your prepared question on the most recent job aspect that was discussed or on a related topic. You don't have to fill every verbal void. But watch for opportunities to show that you have been thinking about the job and would like to know more.
2. **Ask about the job.** If one hasn't already been provided, inquire about a job description. This printed section, which is probably part of a company's procedures or departmental operations manual, should list details about day-to-day tasks as well as periodic duties, like preparing reports. Look it over and ask about things that are not included. Avoid delicate issues like pay and benefits, however.
3. **Inquire how the position fits into the company flow chart.** In addition to understanding the job that you are applying for, it helps to know how the job connects to the rest of the organization. You will want to get a sense of who to report to and who supervises your supervisor in the chain of command. This will help to provide an overview of the company's structure and give you an idea of possible promotion opportunities in the future.
4. **Find out what type of employee the company is looking for.** Your question might sound like this:
 - "What kind of person are you looking for?"
 - "What specific skills do you value most?"
 - "How will this person's role impact the company?"
 - You might ask about additional responsibilities for someone in this position, such as a training or orientation schedule, expected overtime, helping others during "down" time, and so on.



5. **Ask about the company's history and growth.** Showing interest in the organization gives the impression that you care about the organization and not just a paycheck. If you have researched the company prior to your interview, you can begin with a factual observation before leading in to your question:
 - "I noticed on the company Web site that your grandfather started the business. Was this his first company?"
 - "Your annual report mentioned a 7% productivity increase last year. Do you expect to continue that trend this year?"
6. **Offer additional information about yourself through a question.** Instead of thrusting more background or work history on the person who is interviewing you, shape the potential into a question instead. Even though the interviewer is already asking questions, it doesn't hurt to appear eager to comply and to make yourself available in more detail:

"Are there any areas of my CV for which you would like more information?"

 - "Did I mention that 75% of my college education was funded by scholarships?"

Thoughtful questions reveal an intelligent mind. Plan insightful questions before your next interview to get your interviewer's attention and keep his or her respect.