

Sample Interview Questions

Choose 6-10 questions, depending on how long your answers are.
When possible, use the STAR method for answering questions.

√ Tell me a little about yourself. (This question should ALWAYS be included)

Recruiters have indicated that this is one of the most important questions, however, many candidates, unprepared for the question; skewer themselves by rambling, recapping their life story, delving into ancient work history or personal matters.

Think about what it is that makes you stand out, and what you have that an employer would want and discuss it.

□ What do you like most about your current (or most recent) job?

Be careful not to pick anything that can make you look like a slacker. (Long lunches or being able to get away with things are obviously out of the question). Think about your positive characteristics, and how you were able to use them. Make sure to show a lot of enthusiasm with your answer.

□ Tell me about your greatest strengths. Why?



(Use the STAR method for answering this question)

This question seems simple, but be prepared. You don't want to come across as egotistical or arrogant. Nor is this a time to be humble.

Tell what you feel your greatest strength is, and give an example from your most recent and most impressive achievements that shows this characteristic.

As a general guideline, the 10 most desirable traits employers love to see in their employees are:

1. A proven track record as an achiever
2. Intelligence...management "savvy"
3. Honesty and integrity
4. A team player
5. Likeability, positive attitude and a sense of humor
6. Good communication skills
7. Dedication... a willingness to walk the extra mile to achieve excellence
8. Clear goals

9. Enthusiasm and a high level of motivation
10. Confidence and leadership skills

Tell me about one of your favorite accomplishments. Why did you enjoy it?



(Use the STAR method for answering this question)

Tell me about your qualifications (or why you're qualified for this position).

Think about the qualifications that are important in your line of work. Describe a few situations where you used these qualifications to achieve a goal.

Have you had any recent relevant training or received any certifications?

Discuss any training you've had recently, and how it has helped you in your career.

Do you have any other related job experience?

Discuss any prior jobs you've had that are related to the type of work you're currently seeking and what you accomplished while you were there. This is similar to the "previous experience" section of your resume, but does not need to be as structured or organized.

If you've held a lot of short term jobs, only discuss the ones that are relevant. If you've held the same job for a long amount of time, mention that in your answer.

What do you feel will be your greatest challenge accepting a new position?

Similar to the question "What do you think is the most difficult part of being a [desired position]"...

Mention general challenges that everyone goes through (like becoming familiar with the new company culture), and discuss why you'll be able to step up to the challenge.

Tell me about your experience with [skill or software relevant to your line of work].

This question lets the potential employer know that you're experienced in what they're looking for.

If you're using this video resume to apply for a specific position, pick some of the key words the employer used in the job description and discuss your experience with those requirements.

If this is a general video resume to be viewed by several employers, pick out common requirements that employers are seeking for the type of position you're applying for, and discuss those.

Describe how your skills have developed.

This is a good question for someone who has more experience. Give a summary that tells where you started, and how you got to where you are today. Talk about projects that were particularly challenging, how you got through it, and what was the result (what additional skill did you learn).

Do you have a college degree?

Obviously, only choose this question if you have a college degree, or if you're in the process of obtaining one.

Talk about your degree, school, and what you feel you got out of it. Discuss your GPA if it's 3.5 or higher.

If I were to talk with your [current/former] [co-workers/employees/supervisors], how would they describe you and why?

Where do you see yourself in a year? In 5 years?

One reason interviewers ask this question is to see if you're settling for this position, using it merely as a stopover until something better comes along. Or they could be trying to gauge your level of ambition.

If you're too specific, i.e., naming the promotions you someday hope to win, you'll sound presumptuous. If you're too vague, you won't seem goal oriented.

Reassure the viewer that you're looking to make a long-term commitment. As for your future, you believe that if you perform each job at hand with excellence, future opportunities will take care of themselves.

What do you consider to be a lengthy term of employment, and what do you need in order to stay with a company for that amount of time?

Similar to “where do you see yourself in 5 years”. The employer wants to know how long you intend to stay.

Consider what it would take for you to stay with a company indefinitely (challenges, opportunities...) and discuss them.

What do you have to offer that other's don't?

This is your opportunity to tell why you shine. What are your best characteristics or talents that could benefit a potential employer? Use the STAR Method to give an example of where you used these skills to benefit your employer.

What drives or motivates you?

The interviewer is trying to understand the key to your being successful in the job you're being considered for.

Your response will vary based on your background and experiences. Here are some examples (compliments of about.com):

- *I was responsible for several projects where I directed development teams and implemented repeatable processes. The teams achieved 100% on-time delivery of software products. I was motivated both by the challenge of finishing the projects ahead of schedule and by managing the teams that achieved our goals.*
- *I've always been motivated by the desire to do a good job at whatever position I'm in. I want to excel and to be successful in my job, both for my own personal satisfaction and for my employer.*
- *I have always wanted to ensure that my company's clients get the best customer service I can provide. I've always felt that it's important, both to me personally, and for the company and the clients, to provide a positive customer experience.*
- *I have spent my career in sales, typically in commission-based positions, and compensation has always been a strong factor in motivating me to be the top salesperson at my prior employers.*

How well do you work under pressure?



(Use the STAR method for answering this question)

Assure them that you can work under pressure. Think of an accomplishment you achieved while working under pressure and describe it.

What are your outside interests?

This is a good question for shattering any stereotypes that could limit your chances. If you're over 50, for example, describe your activities that demonstrate physical stamina. If you're young, mention an activity that connotes wisdom and institutional trust, such as serving on the board of a popular charity.

You want to be a well-rounded, not a drone. But your potential employer would be even more turned off if they suspect that your heavy extracurricular load will interfere with your commitment to your work duties.

Above all, remember that they're hiring you for what you can do for the company, not your family, yourself or outside organizations, no matter how admirable those activities may be.

- Describe the perfect job for you.

The best way to answer this question is to describe what your target position is offering, being sure to make your answer believable with specific reasons, stated with sincerity, why each quality is attractive to you.

- What do you think is the most difficult part of being a [desired position].

Unless you phrase your answer properly, the employer may conclude that whatever you identify as "difficult" is where you are weak.

First, redefine "difficult" to be "challenging" which is more positive. Then, identify an area everyone in your profession considers challenging and in which you excel. Describe the process you follow that enables you to get splendid results...and be specific about those results.

Example: "I think every sales manager finds it challenging to motivate the troops in a recession. But that's probably the strongest test of a top sales manager. I feel this is one area where I excel." (Describe your process and the results you've achieved)

- Tell me about your day yesterday. What did you do and how did you add value?



(Use the STAR method for answering this question)

- Why are you looking to change jobs?

Whatever answer you give to this question, NEVER say anything negative about your former employer, co-workers, or any of the tasks you were asked to perform.

- Describe a situation in which you were able to use persuasion to successfully convince someone to see things your way.



(Use the STAR method for answering this question)

- Describe a time when you were faced with a stressful situation that demonstrated your coping skills



(Use the STAR method for answering this question)

- Give me a specific example of a time when you set a goal and were able to meet or achieve it.



(Use the STAR method for answering this question)

- Who has inspired you in your life, and why?

The biggest trap here is irrelevance. If you ramble about your high school basketball coach, you've wasted an opportunity to present qualities of great value to the company.

Think about your mental "Board of Directors" – Leaders in your industry, from history or anyone else who has been your mentor. Give examples of how their words, actions or teachings have helped inspire your achievements. Think about an which highlights qualities that would be highly valuable in the position you are seeking.

- Tell me about a time when you had to use your presentation skills to influence someone's opinion.



(Use the STAR method for answering this question)

- Give me a specific example of a time when you had to conform to a policy with which you did not agree.



(Use the STAR method for answering this question)

- Discuss an important written document you were required to complete.

 (Use the STAR method for answering this question)

- Tell me about a time when you had to go above and beyond the call of duty in order to get a job done.

 (Use the STAR method for answering this question)

- Tell me about a time when you had too many things to do and you were required to prioritize your tasks.

 (Use the STAR method for answering this question)

- Give an example of a time when you had to make a quick decision.

 (Use the STAR method for answering this question)

- What is your typical way of dealing with conflict? Give me an example.

 (Use the STAR method for answering this question)

- Tell me about a recent situation in which you had to deal with a very upset [customer/co-worker].

 (Use the STAR method for answering this question)

- Tell me about a difficult decision you've made in the last year.

 (Use the STAR method for answering this question)

Be prepared with a good example, explaining why the decision was difficult...the process you followed in reaching it...the courageous or effective way you carried it out...and the beneficial results.

- Describe a time when you anticipated potential problems and developed preventative measures.



(Use the STAR method for answering this question)

Make sure it's a recent event, and if at all possible, professional (not personal).

Can you give me some references?

The best answer for this question is to refer them to your LinkedIn site where you have several referrals. If you have any particularly impressive references, go ahead and mention them, who they are, and how you know them. Include information on how they can contact them.

How can I contact you if I have any more questions?

Include your phone number and email address. Make sure to give a personal email account and phone number, NOT your current office email or phone.

Other (any question(s) you'd like us to ask)

If there's anything about yourself that you'd like to talk about, let us know. We'll ask the question so you can answer