

The goal of an interview is to determine whether the candidate will be outstanding in the job, and that means evaluating the skills and attitude required for that job. Review the questions below to understand what types of questions you may be asked in an interview, and you can read the resources to prepare more.

## 27 Most Common Job Interview Questions and Answers

- Tell me a little bit about yourself...
  - Connect the dots on your resume, so the interviewer understands **why** you've done the various things on your resume and what motivates you
  - Highlight key learnings, skills acquired, or personal anecdotes
- What are your biggest strengths?
  - CliftonStrengths results are a great top 5 strengths answer to give
  - Provide a specific set of strengths and be prepared with a STAR story that demonstrates each of your strengths
- What are your biggest weaknesses?
  - Choose an actual weakness that you're working to improve
  - Share what you're doing to overcome that weakness
  - No one is perfect
  - Be humble and self-aware
  - Be willing to honestly self-assess and then seek ways to improve
- Where do you see yourself in five years?
  - Share your hopes, dreams, interests, and aspirations
  - Explain how the experience from the job you are applying to can help you get there
- How did you hear about the job?
  - Don't say you were scouring job boards and applied to 50 other jobs
  - Do say that you heard about it from a colleague, a current employer, by following the company - show that you know about the job because you want to work there
- Why do you want this job?
  - Go deeper and talk about how the position is a perfect fit for what you hope to accomplish
- What do you consider to be your biggest achievement?
  - Requires an answer relevant to the job
  - If possible, tell a STAR story with a clear, positive outcome that aligns with the type of work you are being hired to do in this role
  - If you are going to work on a team, then talk about a team accomplishment
  - Your objective is to share achievements that let the interviewer imagine you succeeding in the position
- Out of all the candidates, why should we hire you?
  - Briefly reiterate key points and strengths you already covered
  - Reframe this to answer "What do you feel I need to know that we haven't discussed?" to tell a new STAR story to give more information about yourself and why you are the best solution for the company's problems they hope to solve with this new hire
  - Use it as a chance to highlight things you haven't touched on previously
- Tell me about the last time a family member, friend, coworker, or customer got angry with you. What happened? How did you resolve the conflict?
  - Conflict is inevitable when a company works hard to get things done
  - Do not push the blame for the problem, nor the responsibility for fixing the situation onto someone else

- This is a good time to demonstrate that you are someone who is willing to admit when you are wrong, step up to take ownership to fix the problem, and learn from the experience
- Finish your STAR story by highlighting what you personally learned from the situation to improve your future performance and decrease the probability of repeat problem
- Describe your dream job.
  - Make it relevant to the job you are applying for
  - Work backward: Identify things about the job you're interviewing for that will help you if you do land your dream job someday, and then describe how those things apply to what you hope to someday do
  - Find some threads to connect this job to your dream job to demonstrate your commitment to the organization and role if hired
- Why do you want to leave your current job? (if currently employed)
  - Don't say bad things
    - Don't talk about how your boss is difficult
    - Don't talk about how you can't get along with other employees
    - Don't bad-mouth your company
    - Complaining and gossiping in interviews and life is bad form
  - Instead, focus on the positives a move will bring
    - Talk about what you want to achieve
    - Talk about what you want to learn
    - Talk about ways you want to grow, about things you want to accomplish
    - Explain how a move will be great for you and for your new company

#### [Favorite Interview Questions from Daily Graph](#)

- What's your favorite part of your current or previous job?
  - Highlight the type of work you enjoy doing and connect it to value you create
- What are you learning right now?
  - Show that you have a growth mindset
  - This can be something you are learning in school or in your free time
  - It's better to make it relevant to the job if possible
- Tell me something about yourself I can't find out on Google.
  - Be creative and show more of your personality
- I'm going to give you five minutes: Teach me something new.
  - What are you really good at that you could teach a friend or boss about?
  - This doesn't have to be work-related and can connect to your hobbies or interests
- Give me a single sentence to tell my CEO about you later today.
  - Prepare this one in advance by thinking about what high level advice you would give to the owner of the company about an idea that could improve their business
- What do you do when you're not working?
  - School, extracurriculars, hobbies, family commitments, service projects, etc.
- What's your secret superpower?
  - Express yourself and share what you are really good at
- Tell me about some people who you have helped in your career.
  - Early on in your career, this will most likely be a teacher or coach who has inspired you to reach your potential
- If I was to ask your friends 3 words to describe you what would they be?

- Think about your personal brand and what characteristics most people associate with you
- What is an article or book you read recently that changed your mind about something?
  - It's a good idea to read a couple of articles and do some research online about topics relevant to the industry and company you are applying to
- Who do you admire?
  - Talk about your role models and the characteristics they have that you want

### **First Round Screening Calls**

- Tell me your salary requirements for this position.
  - Be prepared with a number in mind for how much you want to earn
- Tell me about your interest and experience in our company's industry.
  - Be prepared with a response about why you are interested in working with this company in this industry
- Tell me what you know about our company.
  - Do you research
  - Read through their website
  - Review all their social media platforms, including LinkedIn
  - Prepare 3-5 questions about the company based on something you saw and want to learn more about (i.e., "I saw on your website that the company delivers services X, Y, and Z. If I was lucky enough to be hired for this position, how would my role be involved with X?")
- In 50 words or fewer, describe what skills and knowledge you can bring to our team.
  - Refer to your personal cliff notes
- Tell me about a problem you solved creatively.
  - STAR story that highlights your creativity and problem solving
- Tell me about a successful team you were on and what made it successful.
  - STAR story about a team you were on that worked together well and achieved your desired results together
- Tell me about a team you were on that was not successful and why it wasn't successful.
  - Reflect on a team that didn't work out as well and be careful not to put down or blame other team members
- What's one change that could have made a difference?
  - Reflect on that experience and come up with a solution that could have improved the results
- Tell me about something at work in the recent past that was frustrating. What did you do about it?
  - Communicate how you deal with frustration in a work-appropriate way
- Tell me about constructive feedback you have received that you found particularly of value and how you have used that feedback.
  - Show that you are coachable and always open to learning from people who are more experienced than you
  - This is a great way to highlight something that you are actively getting better at and will be able to do a better job for the company

### **Company, Values, and Character Questions**

- How do you describe what our company does?
  - Do research on the business, their products/services, and types of customers
- What do you do when you get bored? What do you do when you are feeling stressed?
  - Mindlessly scrolling through Instagram is not the best answer

- Show that you can take initiative to entertain yourself, learn something new, make a connection with a friend or family member
- Think back to a time in your past career and you didn't get along with someone. Picture this person in your mind. If they were sitting here with us right now, how would they describe you?
  - If you respond by saying you have always gotten along with everyone, they will know you are lying, and it's bad
  - If you think of someone and only have them say nice things about you, or blame them for why you didn't get along, it's also unrealistic and bad
  - The goal is actual reflection and self-awareness about your personality and shortcomings in the relationship to present how you can adjust your behavior
- In addition to the A, B, and C company values, name another value we should consider.
  - Do research online to know what the company's values are and find ways to demonstrate you align with those values in your interview responses
  - Come up with a new value that aligns with their culture

### **Program-Specific Questions**

- Why do you want to be the [job title]?
  - Connect this answer to your longer-term career goals
- What part of the scope of work are you most interested in and why?
  - As you review the job description, identify the parts of the work that are most interesting, and be prepared to explain why you are interested in that type of work
- How has your experience and education prepared you for a career as an [job title]?
  - STAR story to connect a previous experience to why you will be great here
- How do you stay up-to-date with what is happening in the industry?
  - Prepare a couple of websites, authors, blogs, or books you've browsed
- What are your favorite resources in this space?
  - Prepare a couple of websites, authors, blogs, or books you've browsed
- What tools or habits do you use to manage your time and projects?
  - Demonstrate that you are thoughtful about your time, will show up on time for work, and be able to manage multiple projects along with schoolwork or other life commitments

### **Problem Solving Questions**

- Tell me about a time when you had to deal with an unexpected problem at work — how did you resolve the issue?
  - STAR story
- Tell me about a time when you had to deal with a difficult client. What was the result?
  - STAR story
- Tell me about a time when you had to deliver critical feedback. What was the result?
  - STAR story
- What is 25 times 25?
  - Not looking for the right answer necessarily (625)
  - It's good to think out loud during this type of question to communicate your thinking process and show how you would deal with something that you don't know the answer to

## **Who: The A Method for Hiring Interview Questions**

### **Screening Interview**

- What are your career goals?
  - Shares career goals that match company needs
  - Talk about areas of curiosity that you want to learn more about
  - Highlight skills you want to acquire that are outlined in the job description
  - Connect this job opportunity to your academic studies, major, and career path
  - Talk about how spending 3 months (if internship) to 3-5 years in this role with the company aligns with your career goals
- What are you great at professionally?
  - Highlight strengths and include STAR stories and examples to demonstrate those strengths in action via professional anecdotes
- What are you really not good at or not interested in doing professionally?
  - Be humble and self-aware
  - Reference things you did in a previous job that you didn't enjoy and are not part of this job description
  - Avoid saying you are not interested in doing anything that's explicitly on the job description for this role
- Who were your last 5 bosses, and how will they each rate your performance on a 1-10 scale when we talk to them?
  - Be honest and transparent in your response here
  - The interviewer has Threat Of Reference Check to call and ask
  - Hopefully, they are all 8 or higher
- Digging deeper - the interviewer may ask additional questions such as:
  - What is a good example of that?
  - How does that make you feel?
  - How would you respond if asked to do [something you're not interested in]?

### **Who Interview**

5 simple questions for each job or work experience, beginning with earliest and working your way forward to the present day

- What were you hired to do?
  - Give a clear window into your goals and targets for a specific job
  - Explain how success was measured in the role
  - Talk about your mission and key measurable outcomes you achieved
  - Highlight the competencies you possess that enabled you to excel in that job
- What accomplishments are you most proud of?
  - Generate a wonderful discussion about the peaks of your career
  - A Players talk about outcomes linked to expectations
  - A Players include numbers, metrics, and data to support their success stories
  - B or C players talk generally about events, people, or aspects without results
  - Be an A Player!
- What were some low points during that job?
  - Everybody has work lows, so be prepared to talk about something you didn't like
  - Don't blame others or put people down
  - Don't talk poorly about an old boss because the interviewer will think you will say the same things about this company after you leave
- Be prepared to answer additional questions about low points such as:
  - What was your biggest mistake?
    - Extreme ownership for the situation focused on what is within your control
  - What would you have done differently?
    - Think back on the situation and come up with a proposed better solution or course of action

- What part of the job did you not like?
  - Talk about an element of that job that is not related to an element of the new job you are applying for and be respectful to the old company
- In what ways were your peers stronger than you?
  - Talk about how much you enjoyed working with a specific teammate who was better than you in a specific area (i.e., Excel functions) who taught you more about that area and improved your skills
  - Show that you benefit and learn from working with people who are stronger than you in various areas
- Who were the people you worked with? Specifically, what was your boss's name, and how do you spell that?
  - Threat Of Reference Check
    - Always be prepared to give a reference for any previous job on your resume
    - If anyone explicitly asks for reference check contact information, you need to call email that person to let them know you listed them as a reference, and the company may contact you
    - It's helpful to include a link to the job description you applied to, so the reference can be prepared to talk about you in a positive light for that role
  - What was it like working with him/her?
  - What will he/she tell me were your biggest strengths and areas for improvement?
- Why did you leave the job?
  - A Players are highly valued by their bosses
  - A Players decide to leave a job after being successful (pull)
  - B or C players are pushed out of a job by a boss who did not value them (push)
  - Pull > Push

### Focused Interview

This type of interview is focused on the outcomes and competencies of the internal scorecard for this role. You will not know exactly what core competencies are on the scorecard for this role. Here's an example of [Critical Competencies for A Players](#). Your interviewer is using this (typically third round) interview as an "odds enhancer" to increase the likelihood of successfully hiring an A Player.

- The purpose of this interview is to talk about \_\_\_\_\_.
  - They will fill in the blank with a specific outcome or competency, such as a person's experience selling to new customers, building and leading teams, creating strategic plans, acting aggressively and persistently, etc.
- What are your biggest accomplishments in this area during your career?
  - Think about what core competencies are associated with the topic of the interview, and then come up with anecdotes and stories from your experience that highlight your competency with it
- What are your insights into your biggest mistakes or lessons learned in this area?
  - Be humble, self-aware, and acknowledge growth opportunities

### Red Flags to Avoid in Interviews

- You don't mention past failures
- You exaggerate your answers

- You take credit for the work of others
- You speak poorly of past bosses, colleagues, or really anyone
- You cannot explain job moves
- You don't have support from people most important to you (family)
- You have never had to hire or fire anybody (for manager role)
- You seem more interested in compensation and benefits than the job itself
- You try too hard to look like an expert
- You are self-absorbed
- You have no questions to ask about the company or role at the end of the interview
- Questions to avoid
  - How much is the pay?
  - What do you do in this company again?
  - What other jobs are available here?
  - Are you religious?
  - Can I watch Netflix here?
  - Can I get a higher salary after a while?
  - Do I have to show up here every day, or can I work part-time or remotely?
  - I forgot your name—can you remind me?
  - Do you check references?
  - Does the company give any warnings before firing people?
  - Do you guys have casual Fridays, or do I have to dress professionally all the time?