

# Common Interview Questions by Type

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You'll be asked a variety of different types of questions during a job interview. Your responses should be targeted for the job you are interviewing for; they should show the employer why you're a good fit for the position and the company and why you'd be the best person to hire.

Take time to prepare for the interview by reviewing your response to common interview questions **OUT LOUD**. Remember to use key words from the job description in your responses. Relax and take your time answering, but be conscientious to the length of your responses.

## → *Traditional Questions:*

- Tell me about yourself.
- What are your strengths and weaknesses?
- What have been your most satisfying accomplishments?
- What were your most/least satisfying jobs?
- Why did you leave your most recent job?
- How did you get along with your last supervisor and co-workers?
- How well do you work under pressure?
- Why did you choose your major?
- What college coursework did you enjoy the most? The least?
- What extra-curricular activities and interests have you been involved in?
- What are your short term and long range career goals?
- What position in the company do you want to advance toward?
- What do you know about the company?
- What interests you about our product/service?
- Why do you think you might like to work for the company?
- Why should we hire you?
- Why do you think you are qualified for the position?

## → *Situational Questions:*

Situational interview questions are hypothetical questions about what may happen on a job. You would be asked to assess a situation and provide solutions on how you would handle it.

In many cases, situation based questions involve problem solving and handling difficult situations in the workplace. The best way to respond is to provide actual examples of how you handled a similar situation in the past. That way, you're providing the interviewer with concrete information on how you would handle the situation.

- An irate customer is using abusive language, how would you handle the situation?
- You have a very busy week coming up, how do you manage your week and make realistic deadlines?
- If you were working on a team and a member was not "pulling their weight" what would you do?
- If you had unlimited leisure time, how would you spend it?
- A salesman comes in to talk to your boss without an appointment, how will you handle this?
- In instances where you are required to assert yourself, what do you do to assert yourself effectively?
- Assume that you are a candidate for promotion, why should you be promoted?
- If you were to start your own company, what would that company do?
- If a manager or supervisor was not available and a problem arose, what would you do?
- You are working on a project and someone disagrees with your ideas, what would you do?
- You are working with someone who is difficult to get along with, how do you handle this person?

## → Behavioral Questions:

Behavioral interview questions are open-ended questions that generate information about past performance. This is based on the premise that: *Past behavior is the best predictor of future performance.*

You are almost guaranteed to come across behavioral interview questions during a job interview. To answer these questions, provide specific examples; don't be vague, they want the details. The STAR Technique is often used to answer this type of question:

<b>Situation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Detail the background. Provide a context.</li><li>•Where? When?</li></ul>
<b>Task</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Describe the challenge and expectations.</li><li>•What needed to be done? Why?</li></ul>
<b>Action</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Elaborate on your specific action.</li><li>•What did you do? How? What tools did you use?</li></ul>
<b>Result</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Explain the results: accomplishments, recognition, savings, etc.</li><li>•Quantify when possible (i.e., saved the company \$10,000 dollars)</li></ul>

*The following behavioral questions are broken down by skills and traits employers might seek:*

### **Adaptability:**

- Tell of some situations in which you have had to adjust quickly to changes over which you had no control. What was the impact of the change on you?
- Describe a time when you were faced with a stressful situation that demonstrated your coping skills
- Give a specific example of a policy you conformed to with which you did not agree.

### **Analysis:**

- We can sometimes identify a small problem and fix it before it becomes a major problem. Give an example(s) of how you have done this.
- In a supervisory or group leader role, have you ever had to discipline or counsel an employee or group member? What was the nature of the discipline? What steps did you take? How did that make you feel? How did you prepare yourself?
- Recall a time from your work experience when your manager or supervisor was unavailable and a problem arose. What was the nature of the problem? How did you handle that situation? How did that make you feel?
- Recall a time when you were assigned what you considered to be a complex project. Specifically, what steps did you take to prepare for and finish the project? Were you happy with the outcome?
- What one step would you have done differently if given the chance?
- What was the most complex assignment you have had? What was your role?

### **Communication:**

- Tell of a time when your active listening skills really paid off for you-maybe a time when other people missed the key idea being expressed.
- What has been your most successful experience in speech making?
- Tell me about a situation when you had to speak up (be assertive) in order to get a point across that was important to you.
- Have you ever had to "sell" an idea to your co-workers or group? How did you do it? Did they "buy" it?
- Describe a recent unpopular decision you made and what the result was.
- Describe a situation in which you were able to use persuasion to successfully convince someone to see things your way
- Tell me about a time when you had to use your presentation skills to influence someone's opinion.
- Please discuss an important written document you were required to complete.

### **Customer Service:**

- Tell of the most difficult customer service experience that you have ever had to handle-perhaps an angry or irate customer. Be specific and tell what you did and what was the outcome?

### **Decision Making & Problem Solving:**

- Give me an example of a time when you had to keep from speaking or making a decision because you did not have enough information.
- Give me an example of a time when you had to be quick in coming to a decision.
- Tell me about a difficult decision you've made in the last year.
- Give me an example of a time when you used your fact-finding skills to solve a problem.
- Describe an instance when you had to think on your feet to remove yourself from a difficult situation.
- Give me a specific example of a time when you used good judgment and logic in solving a problem
- Give me an example of a time when you had to make a split second decision.

### **Initiative:**

- Describe some projects or ideas (not necessarily your own) that were implemented, or carried out successfully primarily because of your efforts.
- Describe a situation that required a number of things to be done at the same time. How did you handle it? What was the result?
- Give me an example of when you showed initiative and took the lead

### **Job Motivation:**

- Give examples of your experiences at school or in a job that were satisfying. Give examples of your experiences that were dissatisfying.
- Give me an example of a time when you went above and beyond the call of duty.
- Describe a situation when you were able to have a positive influence on the action of others.

### **Leadership:**

- What is the toughest group that you have had to get cooperation from?
- Have you ever had difficulty getting others to accept your ideas? What was your approach? Did it work?
- Give me an example of a time when you motivated others.

### **Planning & Organization:**

- Describe a time in school when you had many projects or assignments due at the same time. What steps did you take to get them all done?
- Give me an example of an important goal which you had set in the past and tell me about your success in reaching it.
- Describe a time when your schedule is suddenly interrupted? What did you do?
- Tell me about a time when you delegated a project effectively.

### **Sensitivity:**

- Give an example of when you had to work with someone who was difficult to get along with. Why was this person difficult? How did you handle that person?
- Describe a situation where you found yourself dealing with someone who didn't like you. How did you handle it?
- What is your typical way of dealing with conflict? Give me an example.
- Tell me about a time you were able to successfully deal with another person even when that individual may not have personally liked you (or vice versa).

### **Teamwork:**

- Describe a situation where others you were working with on a project disagreed with your ideas. What did you do?
- Describe a situation in which you found that your results were not up to your professor's or supervisor's expectations. What happened? What action did you take?
- Tell of a time when you worked with a colleague who was not completing their share of the work.
- Who, if anyone, did you tell or talk to about it? Did the manager take any steps to correct your colleague? Did you agree or disagree with the manager's actions?
- Describe a situation in which you had to arrive at a compromise or guide others to a compromise

### **Technical & Professional Knowledge:**

- Sometimes it's easy to get in "over your head". Describe a situation where you had to request help or assistance on a project or assignment.
- Give an example of how you applied knowledge from previous coursework to a project in another class.

### **Work Standards:**

- Compare and contrast the times when you did work which was above the standard with times your work was below the standard.
- Describe some times when you were not very satisfied or pleased with your performance. What did you do about it?
- What are your standards of success in school? What have you done to meet these standards?
- How have you differed from your professors in evaluating your performance? How did you handle the situation?