

Common Interview Questions

Preparing for interviews is an important step in landing the job you want. This guide outlines questions you're likely to be asked and offers tips to help you plan clear, confident answers. Use it to reflect on your experience and get ready to make a strong impression.

OPENING

Tell us a little about yourself.

Employers look for: a 1–2 minute professional summary of how your background prepares you for this job.

- ✓ Use “SEE” to describe your Strengths, Education and Experience. End by describing how this background motivates you to do the work of this position.
- ✗ Avoid talking about your personal information or what you can gain as these are not the employer's focus.

Why have you applied for this position?

Employers look for: your passion, motivation and goals to contribute to this industry, job and company.

- ✓ Describe your “why” for being interested in this industry and the skills you can bring to this role. Tell the employer what positive impact you hope to make in this position for this company or industry.
- ✗ Avoid pay, benefits, vacation, location near home or other benefits to yourself.

JOB KNOWLEDGE & CREDENTIALS | What would the employer find useful from your background?

What do you know about the company?

Employers look for: candidates who invest time in researching their company beyond the job description.

- ✓ Provide a snapshot of their business including their mission, values, projects, history and future plans. Mention what makes them unique in the industry among their competitors and show them your knowledge of current industry news and trends.
- ✗ Avoid talking only about the information in the job ad and the home page. Dig deeper in your research.

What training do you have that relates to this role?

Employers look for: A combination of formal qualifications, other related courses and on-the-job training

- ✓ Mention relevant training you have had and describe 1-2 specific examples of outcomes you can achieve as a result of taking this training.
- ✗ Avoid simply listing your qualifications. Don't expect employers to know what you have learned.

How did your education prepare you for this role?

Employers look for: what you can achieve for them as a result of your education.

- ✓ Discuss skills you have learned through applied learning opportunities such as projects, placements, internships or co-op and describe how they will help you perform the work tasks in the job ad.
- ✗ Avoid focusing only on your grades. Employers want to know how you can apply your learning.

PERSONAL

Where do you see yourself in ... years?

Employers look for: candidates whose career plans and interests relate to the job and to the industry

- ✓ Talk about your plans for the future and what impact or difference you want to make in the job/industry
- ✗ Avoid personal goals that are not related to the job or industry.

Greatest strength and/or weakness

Employers look for: one strength required for the position and one weakness that you have improved upon.

- ✓ Name your weakness first. Describe specific ways you are working on improvement and the positive results. Next, name your strength. Include an example of how you have used this strength in the past.
- ✗ Avoid listing too many strengths and don't spend too much time on the weakness.

BEHAVIOURAL | Workplace scenarios that are common in the role can be answered with the STAR method

Common Behavioural Questions:

- Give an example of a time when you had to deal with conflict in the workplace.
- How did you deal with a high pressure or stressful situation?
- Can you give us an example of a challenging project you've worked on?
- Tell me about your best accomplishment.
- Tell me about a time when you made the wrong decision.
- Describe a time when you demonstrated teamwork skills to achieve something.

Employers look for: a specific example that tells a story from start to finish. Must have a positive outcome. Draw from school, work or volunteering experiences.

- ✓ Use the **STAR method** to briefly describe:
 - a specific Situation you have experienced
 - the Task or challenge that needed to be addressed
 - the Actions you took to resolve the situation
 - the positive Results and benefits to the employer, team, project, customer etc.
- ✓ **Pro Tips:**
 - Focus less time on the Situation and Task, and more time on your Actions and Results.
 - Describe what you learned from this experience.
- ✗ Avoid giving general answers instead of specific examples from your own experience.
- ✗ Avoid using family/personal examples

CLOSING

Why should I hire you?

Employers look for: confidence in how your unique strengths will help you to be successful in this position.

- ✓ Talk about your unique skills, qualities and experiences and how you will use them on the job. Focus on the benefits you can bring to the role and the company. Highlight why you fit with the position. This is a great time to highlight key skills that haven't been mentioned or have been missed.
- ✓ **Ask for the job** - Tell the employer how interested you are in the position and the company

Any questions for us?

Employers look for: 3 questions to show enthusiasm and interest as well as a dedication to succeed.

- ✓ Don't pass this up! Ask about major projects, company mission or recent news that you have read about them, show you are engaged!
- ✓ Ask "What is the next step in the hiring process?" so that you know what to expect.
- ✗ Avoid asking about pay, benefits, vacation. Instead, focus on highlighting how you are the best candidate.