

Tricky Interview Questions and Answers

Q. Why do you want this job? / Why do you want to work here?

This is the time when you can go into a pitch about you, your abilities and skills, but also speak more about the company and what excites you about that particular role/organisation.

You want your answer to be as unique as possible, and align with the company's principles, values, philosophy, or culture. They could be seeing a fair few candidates for the role, so this is your chance to stand out and sell yourself, demonstrating why you want the job and would be the ideal person for the organisation. It's the natural next step for you and this is the right organisation in which to further your career. Show off your knowledge about the business. Make all that research worthwhile.

Show direct interest in them and what they do, as well as showing enthusiasm and passion in the role, whilst highlighting what aspects you would really enjoy/thrive at.

Q. What are your strengths?

Ensure that the strengths, skills and experiences you mention are relevant to the job. Try and relate your strengths back to the job spec and give examples of why you're strong in these areas.

Q. What are your weaknesses?

This is a question which can trip people up in interviews. You don't want to say a fundamental character flaw, but also want to avoid any typical clichés they will have heard many times before, such as 'I'm a perfectionist'!

Name a relevant weakness that relates to the workplace (for example that you struggle with delegation) then say what you're doing to address it and show that improvements are already being made by you. Do not say something that is a character or personality flaw, for example 'I'm always late' / 'I'm so stubborn'.

Q. What's been your most significant success at work?

This is about your personal achievements and contribution. Interviewers aren't interested in the great team you work with. If you have limited work experience, you could talk about achievements outside work. But relate them to the job you are applying for.

Q. What is the biggest mistake you ever made?

The same rules apply to this question as the weakness question. Most people fall into the trap of not being genuine with their response when answering tricky weakness / mistake questions, or they pretend that their weaknesses / mistakes are trivial or irrelevant. We all have one, but what's important is how you dealt with your biggest mistake and what you learnt from the experience.

Q. What is the greatest challenge you have ever faced?

Keep it relevant to the job and be positive. Once again, interviewers will want to know how you met the challenge, overcame it, and what you might do differently, with the wisdom of hindsight, in a similar situation.

Q. How do you cope with difficult colleagues?

It's all about trying to understand a situation from someone else's perspective — that's teamwork. Show that you can accept differences in the workplace and how you address these within the team.

Q. Where do you see yourself in 5 years?

When asking this question, the interviewer wants to know if you are a good fit for the job role long term. What your future motivation, goals, and ambitions are, and they also want to check you aren't just taking this job to then quickly move on to bigger and better things.

They have a need for this specific role, so you don't want to look like it's just a 'stop gap' for you and you're going to leave as soon as something better comes along. Explain your goals and aspirations for work, and how they align with this role and

organisation. Be passionate about the industry, explaining how your career goals fit in with the organisation's objectives.

Q. You've changed jobs three times in the past five years, why should I think you are more serious about this one?

Great opportunities came your way, and you would have been foolish to turn them down. Or you took a job to achieve a particular goal and, having succeeded sooner than you expected, it was time to move on in your career path, but unfortunately those particular roles didn't allow for that growth or opportunity. You look forward to being embedded in a company for the long-term and be known as loyal, trustworthy, and reliable.

Q. What's your current salary?

If they ask about your salary, it is always best to be honest, but make sure to include all your perks and bonuses as those are important factors when considering moving jobs. The interviewer can always contact your current / previous employers to check.

You could ask the interviewer if there is a salary band for this job before answering a figure, or you could say you are currently looking at positions where the salary is at least X amount (making sure this is your minimum). You could also state what you think a fair salary is for the role you are interviewing for and/or that you are open to discussing the numbers once you know more about the details of the position.

Q. Do you have any questions for us?

This is a great opportunity to show your interest in the role or organisation and leaves a good lasting first impression with the interviewer. It's important to have some questions lined up for the interviewer at this point as you want to look like you have a particular interest in this role, as well as finding out that it is definitely the right role for you.

You could ask more about the role and what challenges the company faces, about the company culture, whether they have any reservations about your application, or what the next steps are.

Q. Tell me about yourself.

Start by saying who you are and why you have applied for the role: describe what you've done, how you got to this point, and why you're now keen to explore the type of role you are interviewing for.

For example, thank you so much for this opportunity, I've recently been doing XYZ (for example graduated or the type of role you've been in) and I think the opportunity would be the perfect next step for me in my career, stating what drew you to the role.

You can go on to saying some personal hobbies, which will allow the to see if you are a good culture fit. Try to link in how they give you skills suitable for this role, e.g. teamwork.

Q. How would your friends describe you?

An employer may ask this question as it gives the interviewer some more insight into your personality outside of work. It can tell them more about your character, confidence and also your self-perception, as well as give them an idea as to how others view you.

Try to use words or phrases that you know the interviewer will be looking for to do the job. You want to say things that show how you can add value within the role, and also show that you are a good culture fit for the team.

If you need help with any unexpected questions you have encountered during an interview, need any help with your job search in general, or want to discuss your future career goals contact us today.

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