**Sample Interview Questions with Suggested Ways of Answering**

**Q.** Tell me about yourself.

**A.** This is the dreaded, classic, open-ended interview question and likely to be among the first. It's your chance to introduce your qualifications, good work habits, etc. Keep it mostly work and career related.

**Q.** Why do you want to leave your current job? (Why did you leave your last job?)

**A.** Be careful with this. Avoid trashing other employers and making statements like, "I need more money." Instead, make generic statements such as, "It's a career move."

**Q.** What are your strengths?

**A.** Point out your positive attributes related to the job.

**Q.** What are your weaknesses?

**A.** Everybody has weaknesses, but don't spend too much time on this one and keep it work related. Along with a minor weakness or two, try to point out a couple of weaknesses that the interviewer might see as strengths, such as sometimes being a little too meticulous about the quality of your work. (Avoid saying, "I work too hard." It's a predictable, common answer.) For every weakness, offer a strength that compensates for it.

**Q.** Which adjectives would you use to describe yourself?

**A.** Answer with positive, work-oriented adjectives, such as conscientious, hard-working, honest and courteous, plus a brief description or example of why each fits you well.

**Q.** What do you know about our company?

**A.** To answer this one, [research the company](http://jobsearchtech.about.com/library/weekly/aa080299.htm) before you interview.

**Q.** Why do you want to work for us?

**A.** Same as above. [Research the company](http://jobsearchtech.about.com/library/weekly/aa080299.htm) before you interview. Avoid the predictable, such as, "Because it's a great company." Say why you think it's a great company.

**Q.** Why should I hire you?

**A.** Point out your positive attributes related to the job, and the good job you've done in the past. Include any compliments you've received from management.

**Q.** What past accomplishments gave you satisfaction?

**A.** Briefly describe one to three work projects that made you proud or earned you pats on the back, promotions, raises, etc. Focus more on achievement than reward.

**Q.** What makes you want to work hard?

**A.** Naturally, material rewards such as perks, salary and benefits come into play. But again, focus more on achievement and the satisfaction you derive from it.

**Q.** What type of work environment do you like best?

**A.** Tailor your answer to the job. For example, if in doing your job you're required to lock the lab doors and work alone, then indicate that you enjoy being a team player when needed, but also enjoy working independently. If you're required to attend regular project planning and status meetings, then indicate that you're a strong team player and like being part of a team.

**Q.** Why do you want this job?

**A.** To help you answer this and related questions, study the job ad in advance. But a job ad alone may not be enough, so it's okay to ask questions about the job while you're answering. Say what attracts you to the job. Avoid the obvious and meaningless, such as, "I need a job."

**Q.** How do you handle pressure and stress?

**A.** This is sort of a double whammy, because you're likely already stressed from the interview and the interviewer can see if you're handling it well or not. Everybody feels stress, but the degree varies. Saying that you whine to your shrink, kick your dog or slam down a fifth of Jack Daniels are not good answers. Exercising, relaxing with a good book, socializing with friends or turning stress into productive energy are more along the lines of the "correct" answers.

**Q.** Explain how you overcame a major obstacle.

**A.** The interviewer is likely looking for a particular example of your problem-solving skills and the pride you show for solving it.

**Q.** Where do you see yourself five (ten or fifteen) years from now?

**A.** Explain your career-advancement goals that are in line with the job for which you are interviewing. Your interviewer is likely more interested in how he, she or the company will benefit from you achieving your goals than what you'll get from it, but it goes hand in hand to a large degree. It's not a good idea to tell your potential new boss that you'll be going after his or her job, but it's okay to mention that you'd like to earn a senior or management position.

**Q.** What qualifies you for this job?

**A.** Tout your skills, experience, education and other qualifications, especially those that match the job description well. Avoid just regurgitating your resume. Explain why.

**Q.** Why did you choose your college major?

**A.** The interviewer is likely fishing to see if you are interested in your field of work or just doing a job to get paid. Explain why you like it. Besides your personal interests, include some rock-solid business reasons that show you have vision and business sense.

Go to the URL below for sample interview questions from the Web.  
<http://jobsearchtech.about.com/od/interviewquestion1/>

<http://jobsearchtech.about.com/od/interviewquestion1/l/aa031201_3.htm>

**Interview Questions to Ask**

During the interview, you will likely be asked if you have any questions. Interviewers expect you to have questions about the company, the group you would be working in and the job that you are interviewing for. Here are some sample questions to ask during an interview. Which questions you actually ask depends on the tone of the interview as well as the level of the person interviewing you. I have split the questions into groups based on who they would be aimed at: hiring manager, peer, and HR/Recruiter. You don’t want to bombard the interviewer with dozens of questions, but you do want to have an accurate picture of the position, as well as the company and group culture(s). At the end of each interview, ask if it is okay to follow up with them later if you have further questions. This is an excellent time to ask for a business card, which will also allow you to send each interviewer a [thank you letter](http://jobsearchtech.about.com/od/resumesandletters/tp/Interview_Thank_Yous.htm) after the interviews are over.

**Interview Questions to Ask - For the Hiring Manager:**

* How would you describe your company culture?
* What is your vision for your department over the next two to three years?
* What major challenges are you currently facing as a manager?
* What makes your company better than your competitors?
* What are the areas where your competitors are better than your company?
* Who do you consider your customers to be?
* What can you tell me about the other people in the organization I would be working with? Can I meet with any of them before accepting an offer of employment?
* What are the most important skills and attributes you are looking for in filling this position?
* What is your management style?
* What is your preferred method of communicating with your team?
* What is the organization’s plan for the next five years, and how does this department or division fit in?
* What specific skills from the person you hire would make your life easier?
* What are some of the skills and abilities you see as necessary for someone to succeed in this job?
* What do you see as the most important opportunities for improvement in the area I hope to join?
* What are the attributes of the job that you’d like to see improved?
* What is your company’s policy on attending seminars, workshops, and other training opportunities?
* What attracted you to working for this organization?
* What have you liked most about working here?
* How will my leadership responsibilities and performance be measured? By whom?
* (If this a new position) What made you decide to open up this position?
* How would you describe your own management style?
* What are the most important traits you look for in a subordinate?
* How do you like your subordinates to communicate with you?
* What personal qualities or characteristics do you most value?
* How would you describe the experience of working here?
* What are a couple of misconceptions people have about the company?
* What happened to the person who previously held this job?
* From all I can see, I’d really like to work here, and I believe I can be a great addition to your team. What’s the next step in the selection process?
* Before I leave, is there anything else you need to know concerning my ability to do this job?

**Interview Questions to Ask – For Peer Level Interviewers**

* Why did you decide to join this company?
* Were your expectations met?
* Do you enjoy working here? (yes) Why? (no) Why not?
* Have you ever considered leaving the organization? (if yes) Why did you decide to stay?
* Tell me about a typical working day for you.
* How many hours a day do you typically work?
* Do you work weekends? How many and how many hours typically?
* How much travel is involved in your job?
* How do you like working for your manager? What do you like most about working for him/her? What do you like least?
* What do you consider to be your company's greatest strengths and weaknesses?
* Does the company support you in training? How specifically?
* What do you know now that you wish you knew before you started in your position?

**Interview Questions to Ask - For HR or the Recruiter:**

 What can you tell me about the position?

 What can you tell me about the department?

 How would you describe your company culture?

 How much does the position pay? What is the compensation range for this position?

 What benefits are provided to your employees?

 Do you have a tuition reimbursement plan?

 Do you have an employee stock purchase plan? Do you participate?

 What is the typical career path for this position?

 What type of internal and external training do you provide?

 How are performance appraisals conducted within your organization?

 I know that for the position for which I am interviewing, the company decided to recruit from outside the organization. How do you decide between recruiting from within and going outside?

 Why do you enjoy working for this company?

 How would you describe the work environment here?

 What do you consider to be the organization’s strengths and weaknesses?

 How soon are you looking to fill this position?

 What is the next step for consideration?

 When will you be making a decision on this position?

 How do my skills compare with those of the other candidates you have interviewed?

 Before I leave, is there anything else you need to know concerning my ability to do this job?