

## Interview Tips

A candidate's previous experiences and education are the best indicators of future performance. A job interview is typically focused on the following questions to gain information in five areas:

1. They want to know if you are qualified for the position by asking:
  - What are your strengths?
  - How are you qualified for this job?
  - What do you feel you will bring to this job?
2. They want to know what motivates you by asking:
  - Where do you see yourself five years from now?
  - What did you like most about your last job?
  - Are you willing to relocate?
3. They want to know how you handle conflict by asking:
  - What did you like least about your last job and supervisor?
  - How do you handle conflict with coworkers?
  - Why did you leave your last job?
4. They want to know if you are a good fit by asking:
  - What kind of people do you find hard to work with?
  - Do you prefer to work as a team or on your own?
  - Of your many qualities which ones do you feel will benefit you most here?
5. They want to know if you are sincere in your desire to work for their company by asking:
  - What can you accomplish here that you cannot in your current position?
  - What do you know about the company?
  - Do you have any questions for me?

### Answering Common Interview Questions

1. **Tell me about yourself.** A strong answer will tell the interviewer why you chose this career and why are you interested in their position. They are not interested in your personal life unless it is directly related to the job.
2. **Why did you leave your last job?** Stay positive regardless of the circumstances. Never say disparaging comments about a previous employer. Be prepared to answer this for every job you have had.
3. **What experience do you have in this field?** Remember academic experience and on-the-job experience go hand-in-hand. If you only have academic experience, be specific and share what you learned from it. Include your internships, clinical rotations and volunteer experience.
4. **What do you know about this organization? Why do you want to work for this organization? Please explain how you would be an asset to this organization/why should we hire you?** This is your opportunity to highlight your best qualities and explain how they relate to the position being discussed. Be sure to speak with confidence and excitement!
5. **Do you prefer to work on a team or alone?** The best way to answer this question is that you are a team player but are able to work alone with minimal supervision. Be sure to have examples

ready that show you perform for the good of the team and that illustrate your ability to take initiative.

6. **What are your long-term goals? Where do you see yourself in five years?** Here an employer is looking for longevity in an applicant. Be sure to give the impression you are looking for a long-term commitment and emphasize how this position aligns with your goals.
7. **Have you ever been fired from a position?** If you have not, say no. If you have, be honest, brief and avoid saying negative things about the people or organization involved. What did you learn from the experience?
8. **Tell me about a suggestion you made that improved a process at a previous job? Tell me about an accomplishment from your previous work experience?** Tell a story that demonstrates the initiative and successful outcomes.
9. **Tell me about a time you didn't get along with someone at work.** They ask this question to explore your interpersonal skills. Be sure to illustrate a situation where you used your ability to separate the people from the problem and were able to address the problem, not the person.
10. **Tell me about a problem you had with a supervisor.** Explain the problem and how it was resolved. Again, they are looking for interpersonal skills.
11. **What are your greatest strengths?** A powerful answer will explain how your strength has contributed to success.
12. **What is your greatest weakness?** It's okay to be honest when revealing a potential weakness. Just make sure you can describe how you've recognized it, developed strategies to overcome it and what you've learned about yourself because of it. Choose a weakness that will not prevent you from performing the job you are applying for. Provide examples of how you are working on your weakness. Only focus on work-related weaknesses. Try not to sound too scripted.
13. **What have you learned from mistakes on the job?** Here you have to come up with something or you strain credibility. Make it small, well-intentioned mistake with a positive lesson learned and positive outcome.
14. **Tell me about your dream job.** The employer is trying to find out if this job will fulfill your long-term goals and ultimately, whether you will stick around or be looking for advancement with another company. Reiterate how this position aligns with your personal values and goals.
15. **What motivates you to do your best on the job?** Some examples are challenges, achievements and recognitions.
16. **Do you have any questions for me?** They want to hear that you are truly interested in finding a good fit.
  - Ask questions about the position and the organization but avoid questions where the answers can easily be found on the company website.
  - Avoid asking questions about salary and benefits until a job offer is made.
  - A powerful way to end the interview is to ask: "What is the most important thing you are looking for in the person you hire?" Then follow up by explaining how you meet that requirement.

Portions of this work have been adapted from the <http://www.jobinterviewquestions.org> and [www.bls.gov/OCO](http://www.bls.gov/OCO)