

## Interview Questions

The interview is the opportunity for an employer to gain more information about you through questions and answers. They already know some information about you through your resume, but this is the chance to really sell yourself by providing specific examples of how you can be an asset to their company. There are many different interview styles that you may experience, and we'll touch on them here.

### **Behavioral Interview**

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Behavioral questions are asked in order to get specific examples of your past experience. The interviewer believes that your future performance is strongly related to your past behaviors. Employers can teach specific skills required for the position, so that is why they rely heavily on past behavior patterns. If you fail to provide specific examples to demonstrate your behavior patterns, the interviewer will never fully grasp why you make decisions or how you attained the results you listed on your resume.

In order to successfully answer these behavioral related questions, apply the STAR method as outlined below. STAR stands for Situation, Task, Action, and Result.

#### Situation

This section sets the tone for the story you are about to relay. Keep this section brief – maybe one or two sentences. Identify the setting by stating where you were, who was involved, and establish the timeline – be specific enough so the interviewer can follow along. Feel free to use examples from your previous job, internship, education, volunteer work, or any other related event.

Examples:

- "I had a recent situation at my current employer where I was working with my fellow interns..."
- "During one of my junior year classes, our group was tasked with reaching out to local employers..."

#### Task

This section is where you clearly and concisely state what your desired achievement was. You must prove to the interviewer that you understood your goal and set out to achieve it through planning and actions.

Examples:

- “After attending our new employee sales training session, I committed myself to being the top saleswoman among all of the new interns...”
- “My challenge was to create all new lesson plans for my first grade students...”

### Action

Show the steps you took to achieve your objective. Be sure to keep the focus on you – even if you are discussing the efforts of a team project. Cover the main points of what you did and state why you chose that course of action. Use real names and experiences to show your decision-making process. Be sure to list any obstacles you had to overcome and how and why you did not foresee them in your original plan.

Examples:

- “I first set out by calling a meeting with all my fellow campus organization members to make sure they all understood the scope of the project. Typically, we complete a project of this size in about four weeks, but we were asked to have the results in two weeks this time around. I stressed to our team how important this client relationship was to our campus status and that we would have to do everything possible to meet their deadline. We held daily meetings and I was always available for those members who needed assistance. The day before the deadline, we spent combed through a few minor details, but, in total, we felt prepared for our presentation.”
- “I designed a new step-by-step information packet for all new transfer nursing students. I presented this packet to a few of my classmates and they suggested that I try to present it to the department chair. After a few weeks, I successfully scheduled a few minutes to present my packet to the department chair.”

### Result

This is the time for you to take credit for your actions. Make sure the result is in line with your initial objective. Some questions to answer: “What happened?” “What did you accomplish?” “What did you learn?” Quantify your results whenever possible.

Examples:

- “Our presentation went great. The client loved our ideas and we scheduled a roll-out date of two weeks after the presentation.”
- “The department chair appreciated my initiative and concepts. She tweaked a few things, but my information packet was later implemented at the start of the next school year.”

## Behavioral Interview Questions

1. Tell me about a time when you were forced to make an unpopular decision.
2. Give me an example of when you motivated others.
3. Give me an example of when you had to make a split-second decision.
4. Give me an example of when you set a goal and were able to meet or achieve it.
5. Please discuss an important written document you were required to complete.
6. Tell me about a time where you had to work closely with a person even when they did not like you as a person (and vice versa).
7. Tell me about a difficult decision you have made in the past year.
8. Give me an example of when you took initiative and took the lead on a project.
9. Tell me about a time where you had to deal with an upset customer, co-worker, or group member.
10. Describe a time when you were faced with a stressful situation that demonstrated your coping skills.
11. What is your typical way of dealing with conflict? Give me an example.
12. Let's say you have five projects to complete in one day, but you only have time to complete three of them. How would you prioritize them?
13. Describe a time when you anticipated a problem before it came to fruition?
14. Give an example from your past that you think shows how prepared you are for this position.
15. Give me an example of when you tried to do something and failed.
16. Tell me about a time that you had to use your presentations skills to influence someone's decision.
17. Give an example of a time in which you had to conform to a policy with which you did not agree.
18. Tell me about a time you needed to get information from someone who was not very responsive. What did you do?
19. Tell me about a time in which you demonstrated great customer service.
20. Tell me about your first job. How did you learn the ropes?
21. Give an example of a time that you set a goal for yourself. Did you achieve that goal?
22. Describe a time that you had a long term project.
23. Tell me about a time at work that you completed all of your tasks and still had few hours left before you left. What did you do during those few hours?
24. What is your proudest professional accomplishment?
25. Tell me about a time when you worked under close supervision and loose supervision. Which one do you prefer?
26. Do you feel like you work well under pressure? Describe a time in which you did.
27. Give an example of when you did not meet the customer's satisfaction.
28. Tell me about a time that you failed. How did you deal with the situation?

## Open-Ended Interview

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Typically, most of the early interview questions will be open-ended. That is, they will ask you to talk about yourself and often run them through your resume. This is where you must revert back to knowing yourself – your work history, education, internship/volunteer history, skills, and qualities.

### Interview Tip

Think about what you have done in order to prepare yourself for this interview. Be concise with your answer or answers. Describe how you would be a good fit for the company and always focus on the positive.

### Open Ended Questions

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. Walk me through your resume.
3. Why did you choose this career?
4. Why did you choose your major?
5. Are you a team player?
6. What motivates you?
7. Tell me about some of your recent goals and how you went about achieving them.
8. What are your short term goals? Your long term goals?
9. What would be your ideal job?
10. What do you think it takes to be successful in this career?
11. Why should I hire you?
12. What are your greatest weaknesses? Greatest strengths?
13. Why did you choose to attend your college?
14. Describe your most rewarding experience during college.
15. What have you learned from your mistakes?
16. In what ways do you think you could contribute to our company?
17. Do you handle conflict well?
18. How would a friend describe you?
19. What were you favorite classes in college? Your least favorite?
20. What do you know about our company? What do you know about this position?
21. Do you have a geographical preference? Are you willing to travel? Are you willing to relocate?
22. Describe a situation in which you were successful.
23. What are your three greatest skills?
24. Did you participate in any extra-curricular activities in college? If so, what did you learn?
25. Why did you decide to seek a position with this company?
26. Do you handle pressure well?
27. What do you see yourself doing in five years?

## **Problem-Solving Interview**

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Employers sometimes like to throw a “curveball” question into the interview. These questions are designed to test your logical thinking skills, intelligence, ability to solve problems under stress, and ability to “think on your feet.” Most employers do not apply these questions to an interview, but it is a good idea to prepare yourself in case they do.

Before you answer one of these questions, be sure to listen to the entire question. If you miss something, ask them to repeat it. Don’t start talking right away – think the question through and gather your thoughts. Take the question seriously, support your thought process, and summarize your idea or solution.

Examples:

- How many T.V.’s do you think are in the U.S.?
- Why is a manhole cover round?
- If you could be any animal, what would you be? Why?
- Sell me this pen.