**2019 Guide - Interview Questions and the Best Answers**

**How to Prepare for the Job Interview: The Most Common Interview Questions and Best Answers**

Congratulations! [Your resume is outstanding](https://novoresume.com/resume-templates) and your cover letter is a hit. You got a response from a recruiter, and the company wants you to come in for an interview. Now what?

Landing a job interview can seem like a battle in itself. Getting selected to meet with the organization in person feels validating, but it can also be scary. Now you have to live up to the expectation you set through your resume and cover letter.

Don’t let the thought of having to answer a series of job interview questions get you worried. This guide will help get you ready. We’ll go over:

* What to expect from a job interview
* Common interview questions you will be asked
* How to answer interview questions
* Sample interview questions and answers
* Additional job interview preparation

**What to Expect From a Job Interview**

The first thing you need to know is that there are different styles of job interviews, which makes it tough to know exactly the types of interview questions to prepare for. However, as a general rule, job interviews can fall under three categories: traditional, behavior-based and a mix of both.

**Traditional Interview Format**

* This style of interview has a free-flowing question and answer format. Here an interviewer will ask you a series of questions related to job requirements. The goal is to have you expand on what you provided in your resume and cover letter.

**Behavior-Based Interview Format**

* This is a very popular interview style because it provides companies deeper insight into how you behave and apply certain skills in different situations. Typical interview questions are very open-ended, get you to describe past experiences and can lead to a variety of responses.

**Mixed Interview Format**

* Mixed Interview Format: As you might have guessed, this type of interview mixes both traditional and behavior-based formats.

Your best bet for preparing for an interview is to develop and rehearse answers to interview questions following a mixed interview format. That way you are ready for whatever gets thrown at you.

**Common Interview Questions**

You’ll never be able to predict exactly the questions you will be asked in an interview. But you can expect the interview to follow a line of questioning related to the job requirements listed in job posting. For example, if the job description states that the role demands strong written communication skills, you will probably be asked a question related to this skill.

Instead of asking specific questions related to each job requirement, interviewers might also ask more general questions. These can be more simple, with the goal of having you summarize your motivations and qualifications.

Here are some of the top interview questions that recruiters ask in both traditional and behavior-based interviews.



**Traditional Interview Questions**

* Why would you like to work here? (See sample answer below)
* [Why should we choose you?](https://novoresume.com/career-blog/why-should-we-choose-you)
* Tell me about yourself.
* [Why should we hire you?](https://novoresume.com/career-blog/why-should-we-hire-you-best-answers)
* Where do you see yourself in five years?
* What are your strengths?
* What are your weaknesses? (See sample answer below)
* How do you handle stress?

**Behavioral Interview Questions**

* Describe an example of a time when you had competing deadlines and how you resolved the situation.
* Have you ever had a conflict with a co-worker, and how did you resolve it?
* Give me an example of how you overcame ambiguity on a particular project.
* Describe a situation where you made a mistake and how you went about correcting it. (see sample answer below)
* Provide an example of a time when you went above and beyond what was expected of you for a particular project.

**How to Answer Interview Questions**

The sample interview questions above do not have definitive right answers. You will have to relate your personal experiences to each question. The best interview answers are ones that address the questions directly and provide sufficient detail to support your answer without becoming unfocused.

For behavioral interview answers, you should follow a specific response format called **STAR**, which stands for Situation, Task, Action, Result. Remember that the questions are meant to tease out certain behavioral qualities from you, so you want to do this in a coherent way that allows the interviewer to get a complete picture of the example to which you refer.

* Situation: Describe the situation or context (project, company, your role, etc.).
* Task: What were you asked to do or how were you involved in the situation?
* Action: Describe the action you took to complete the task or solve the problem.
* Results: Explain the outcome of your actions. If the task was completed or a problem was solved, how did this benefit the company or work relationships? Be as specific as possible.

**Sample Interview Questions and Answers**

**Question: Describe a situation where you made a mistake and how you went about correcting it. (Behavioral interview)**

**Answer:** *In my last job working as an event organizer, I was involved in the planning of a large full-day conference for two hundred people at the hotel.*

*My specific task was to coordinate the food and beverage offering for attendees, which included breakfast and lunch services. This meant selecting the food to be provided based on the hotel’s catering options while accommodating any dietary requirements of attendees.*

*Unfortunately, I miscommunicated the number of vegetarian options that were required when placing the order with the hotel. So, when our guests sat down for their lunch, there were a handful of people who did not receive a plate.*

*Upon being alerted by a hotel staff member of the problem, I immediately realized my error. So the first thing I did was speak to the kitchen staff about whether they could develop more vegetarian meals even if they weren’t part of the original catering menu. Luckily, the kitchen staff was very accommodating and managed to put together some plates of food.*

*After working on a solution with the kitchen, I informed my manager that I had made a mistake but that I had already taken action to correct it. She was supportive of my action, and I then went to the five guests who were affected by the mishap to confirm that they wouldn’t mind eating something that was not on the original menu. They were all fine with the change, so despite a short delay in getting them their food, they were all satisfied with the result.*

*The lesson I took from this is that with every event involving food I now have a spreadsheet for dietary requirements that I use to confirm meals multiple times before an event.*

**Explanation:** This example demonstrates the STAR method in action. The respondent outlines the situation and task related to a particular conference, and the problem that arose out of it. Specific actions are then outlined to provide insight into how the interviewee acknowledges and manages a mistake. Finally, the result of the action is described to demonstrate that the action resolved the problem and that a lesson has been learned from the experience.

**Question: Why would you like to work here? (traditional interview)**

**Good answer:** *The reason I would like to work here is that I know it is a place where I can bring valuable skills and knowledge in digital marketing to the existing team, while also challenging myself and learning from those around me. I am particularly interested in the collaborative work environment and the opportunity to work with a variety of people with different specialties.*

**Bad answer:***I want to work here because the company has a reputation for being one of the best in the industry, and I am ready to work for one the big players.*

**Explanation:** The first answer is good because it does not only focus on what the interviewee stands to gain from working at the company. Instead, it stresses that the individual has something to offer the company (digital marketing expertise) while also expressing interest in how the company culture can help support the individual’s professional development.

Meanwhile, the second answer is solely focused on what the respondent has to gain, and it does not even provide specific detail about the types of skills or knowledge the individual seeks to obtain.

**Question: What are your weaknesses? (traditional interview)**

**Good answer:** *One of the areas that I am really trying to improve upon is public speaking. It is something that I never did much of during university and the first couple years of my career as an accountant. However, as I have advanced into more senior roles, I have realized how important it is to speak to larger audiences both inside and outside of my company. To help make me feel more comfortable in these situations, I took a seminar in presentation skills.*

**Bad answers:** *I tend to procrastinate/I work too much/I have a hard time letting going of projects.*

**Explanation:** This is one of those hard interview questions. It should be answered strategically.

The first thing to avoid is highlighting an area of weakness that you know a core requirement of the job. For example, if the job description says that you need to be able to juggle multiple priorities and deadlines at once, you want to avoid stating that one of your weaknesses is procrastination. You also want to avoid being vague since this allows the interviewer to develop his/her own conceptions.

The best way to answer this question is to turn a negative into a positive. As you can see in the first example, the respondent acknowledges room for improvement in a particular area (ideally not critical to the job function) and demonstrates the steps he/she is taking to improve.

**Recap for Answering Interview Questions**

**DOs**

* DO take time to reflect on the questions being asked before answering – ask for clarification if needed.
* DO provide specifics – use examples to back up your claims relating to your skills.
* DO use the STAR (situation, task, action, result) for behavioral questions.

**DON'Ts**

* DON’T highlight weaknesses in areas that might be considered essential to the job.
* DON’T be negative towards others when speaking about conflicts or dislikes in past jobs.
* DON’T focus only on yourself – instead connect your skills and experiences to the company’s projects and workplace culture.

**Additional Interview Preparation Tips**

There are several addition activities that can help with your interview prep. Some will help you develop answers to specific questions, while others will simply [reinforce a good first impression](https://novoresume.com/career-blog/job-interviews-and-dating-similarities).

**Review your cover letter and resume** – It’s important for you to keep in mind what the company already knows about you. That way you can reference the contents of your application to support your interview answers. Bringing copies of both your resume and cover letter to the actual interview is also advised.

[Update My Resume Now](https://novoresume.com/resume-templates)

**Consider doing a mock interview** – If you are new to the process or uncomfortable with interviewing, answering mock interview questions is a good way of overcoming your nervousness and getting you trained. Many universities and career centers have programs where people can sign up to have real recruiters conduct a mock interview so that people can practice.

**Have your own questions to ask at an interview** – The job interview is also an opportunity for you to learn more about the company and the role you are considering. You also want to convey a strong interest in the position to the recruiter. Knowing what [questions to ask in an interview](https://novoresume.com/career-blog/how-to-master-your-next-job-interview-questions) can help you accomplish both.

**Summing up** The best interview answers start with the right interview preparation. You will never be able to predict exactly what you will be asked, but knowing the types of questions to expect and knowing how to articulate your answers in a structured fashion will give you a great chance of success.

**Get yourself ready, then relax. You’ll do great!**