



COMMON INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Congrats! You've landed the interview. Now it's time to land the job. Your preparation should include scripting answers to common interview questions.

Preparation is essential to being relaxed, being yourself and doing well in a job interview. Part of that preparation: scripting answers to questions you'll likely hear. There's no need to memorize—just going through the process of scripting will help you feel confident and well prepared going into the interview.

Tell me about a time when...

Qualification Questions

Qualifications-focused questions give you the opportunity to summarize the specific skills and other attributes you bring to the role. Your answers should be clear and succinct, putting a spotlight on your brand and distinctiveness as a candidate, with examples.

“TELL ME ABOUT YOURSELF.”

This is often the first question you'll get, designed to help the interviewer break the ice and get a general sense of who you are. Resist the temptation to tell your life story. Your answer should present your qualifications for the position you're pursuing.

“I'm a junior at DePaul, studying Art History. I have experience in researching provenance, organizing digital collections and providing event support. I recently completed an internship at the Art Institute of Chicago, where I led tours for elementary school students and created interactive lesson plans for some of the most visited art objects at the museum.”

“ WHY ARE YOU INTERESTED IN THIS POSITION?

This question is an opportunity to demonstrate a clear understanding of the role, your enthusiasm for the company—and how perfect you are for the job! Frame your answer in terms of your strengths and how you'd benefit the company:

“I'm excited about this position because its requirements fit so well with my strengths. For example, it seems like the job requires excellent customer service skills. In my last internship position, this was an area where I excelled. The accounts I worked on consistently had the highest customer satisfaction scores. I think I can contribute to those kinds of results at this company.”

“ WHAT ARE YOUR GREATEST STRENGTHS?

This question offers an opportunity to talk about the technical and soft skills that relate most directly to the position.

“I'm a problem solver. In every job I've had, I've shown the ability to quickly analyze the issue, contributing factors and desired outcomes, get my teammates involved, and develop a solution. In my previous internship position, we were consistently getting negative reviews from customers on delivery times. I brainstormed with my co-workers to come up with ways to improve the order fulfillment process. Many of the changes we suggested were implemented and our reviews improved dramatically.”

“ WHAT ARE YOUR GREATEST WEAKNESSES?

This common interview question offers the chance to demonstrate confidence, self-awareness and a desire to constantly improve—all traits attractive to employers. State a shortcoming and, most important, what you've done to address it. End on a positive note!

“Sometimes I'm too eager to say yes. During my internship last summer, my enthusiasm and desire to please sometimes led me to commit to every request I received from my boss and coworkers. This often resulted in me feeling overwhelmed and working nights and weekends. I still say 'yes,' but over time, I've learned to do a better job managing expectations—and I've become more efficient at handling multiple tasks.”

“ WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN FIVE YEARS?

Employers want to know how you envision your career path and your personal career goals to see if they align with the role. Your answer should generally outline how your broader goals fit with the opportunity.

“In five years, I'd like to be using my graphic design skills to tell a product's story. I am very interested in pursuing a career in food marketing, and this role is an ideal starting point for this pathway.”

Behavioral Questions

Behavioral questions typically focus on your experience in a specific work situation to evaluate soft skills such as problem solving, conflict resolution and leadership. Be positive and to-the-point in your answers, tell it like a story, and be sure to give examples!

“ HOW DO YOU HANDLE CONFLICT IN THE WORK ENVIRONMENT? ”

With this question, your interviewer is trying to assess your emotional maturity, interpersonal skills and leadership qualities. company:

“When I've had to deal with conflict with a co-worker, I've found that it's most important to remain calm. I ask questions to understand the person's perspective and get their thoughts on how to resolve the conflict. When I was a project manager in my last job, there was a team member who was consistently late in finishing tasks. When I asked her about it, she became defensive and upset. I calmly acknowledged that the schedule was brutal and asked what I could do to help. With her input, we developed a few minor changes in our work processes and her performance improved.”

“ TELL ME ABOUT A TIME WHEN YOU HAD MULTIPLE RESPONSIBILITIES. HOW DID YOU MANAGE? ”

The ability to multi-task and handle workload pressure are valuable qualities in a job candidate. Keep your story short, positive and be sure to include an outcome!

“My co-worker had a family emergency right in the middle of a major project and it fell to me to cover his role in addition to my own. I took a few deep breaths, then put together a master task list that combined his to-do list with mine, along with timing. This allowed me to prioritize the different things that needed to be done and gave me a way to keep track of the details. I had to put in some late nights, but we completed the project successfully and on time.”

“ TELL ME ABOUT A TIME YOU FAILED. ”

Identify a real failure and share what you learned from that experience.

“In my first year as a marketing specialist, I led a team of juniors on a social media campaign, and I learned very quickly that setting aggressive deadlines really de-motivated the team and their work suffered. I learned to balance my expectations more realistically.”



See the DePaul Career Center's "Interview Basics" at go.depaul.edu/careerlibrary for more tips on preparing for questions you might get in a job interview.