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# COMMON INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

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You can significantly enhance your performance in an interview by being prepared to answer the questions they might ask. Review each of the questions below and think about how you would reply. You may find it helpful to jot down some key points. Once you are comfortable with how you would answer the questions, practice your answers so they sound natural and confident!

These questions are general in nature in that they could be asked of candidates for any occupation. **Therefore, you should also develop a list of questions that relate specifically to the field or type of position you are pursuing.** For example, candidates interviewing for an elementary education teacher position will likely be asked about their classroom management strategies, knowledge of learning assessments, and experience with team teaching. (To access possible interview questions specific to your field, Google “sample interview questions” and the type of position you are pursuing.)

You are also likely to be asked questions that relate directly to the job posting. Make sure you have a thorough understanding of what they are looking for. If the job requirements state they are looking for candidates with “strong organizational skills,” be ready to give examples for how you have demonstrated your organizational skills. Or, if they ask you what your strengths are, it would be advisable to state your strong organizational skills (if that is indeed true!) **Remember, from the employers’ perspective, the purpose of the interview is to help them determine whether you are a fit for the position and the company. Therefore, all your answers should show them why you are a good fit (even better, the best candidate) for this position and company.**

## Personal

- Tell me about yourself?
- What are your greatest strengths?

*(This is one of the most frequently asked questions. To help you develop an answer for this question, we recommend that you use the “Identifying Your Strengths Worksheet” in this guide.)*

- What are your weaknesses or areas of improvement?
- What accomplishments are you most proud of?
- What motivates you in a job?
- How did you choose this career?
- In what kind of work environment are you most comfortable?
- How have previous supervisors obtained your best performance?
- Where do you see yourself in 5 years? 10 years?
- What are your career goals?
- What do you do for your professional development?

## Education

- Why did you choose this major?
- Looking back, would you have chosen a different major?
- What were your favorite classes? Which were the most challenging for you? Why?
- What was your GPA? Do your grades accurately reflect your ability?
- Were you financially responsible for any part of your education?
- In which campus activities did you participate?
- Tell us about any leadership experience on campus.
- How has your college education prepared you for this position?

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## Work Experience

- Describe your job-related skills and experience and how they relate to this position.
- What have you enjoyed most about previous jobs? Enjoyed least?
- What did you learn in previous jobs that will help you in this job?
- What were your responsibilities in your previous positions?
- How would previous supervisors describe you?
- Why did you leave your last job (or why are you leaving your present job?)
- Tell me about a work situation that really challenged you. How did you meet the challenge?
- Can you explain this gap in your work experience? (If applicable.)

## The Job, the Employer, and the Industry

- What do you know about our company?  
*(This is one of the most common questions asked, and one where many candidates fail. Use the "Employer Research Worksheet" to prepare for this one.)*
- Why do you want to work for us?
- Why are you the best candidate?
- Why should I hire you?
- What do you know about this industry?
- How do you keep current on trends in this industry?

## Behavioral Based Interview Questions

"Behavioral based" questions are those that require you to describe a specific situation that occurred in the past and how you handled it. They are some of the most common questions interviewers ask, and some companies interview candidates using *only* behavioral based questions. Therefore, it is critical that you know how to answer these types of questions using the **STAR** strategy. Refer to the section in the guide titled "Answering Behavioral Based Questions," Here are some sample questions:

- Tell me about a work situation that really challenged you. How did you meet the challenge?
- Describe a time you had to deal with conflict in a group situation?
- Give me an example of your ability to manage or supervise others.
- Describe a situation in which you had to handle an upset customer or co-worker.
- Give me an example of a time you showed initiative.
- Tell me about a difficult decision you had to make at work.
- Give us an example of a time in which you worked under deadline pressure.
- Describe a time when you disagreed with your supervisor. How did you handle it?

## Questions about Salary

- What salary are you looking for?
- It is inappropriate for you to bring up the salary issue, especially if you have not been offered the job yet. If you are asked about salary needs during the interview, it is best to either inquire as to whether you are offered the job (at which case you are entering the *salary negotiation* stage of the interview) or ask if they have a salary range in mind for this position. Refer to the "Salary Negotiation" section of the guide.

*If you are unsure of how to answer any of the questions above, we encourage you to meet with a Career Services staff member. You can even schedule a "mock" interview so you can practice your answers.*