



**Take the time to prepare** how to answer interview questions to help you best showcase your strengths and interests during an interview. In addition to preparing your answers, consider asking a friend, family member, or someone else to do at least one mock interview. **Mock interviews are helpful** because they give you a low-pressure environment to practice your responses; they are not for memorizing a reply. As responses said aloud may not go as smoothly as desired, mock interviews allow you to work out the hiccups and phrasing in a safe setting.

## Types of Interview Questions

Interview questions can be categorized into several types, each designed to assess different aspects of a candidate. Interviewers typically use a combination of question types to comprehensively understand a candidate's qualifications, suitability for the role, and cultural fit within the organization.

The below summary explains the different types of interview questions.

Category	Description	Example
<b>Behavioral</b>	These questions ask candidates to provide specific s from their past experiences to demonstrate how they've handled various situations. They aim to assess a candidate's behavior, decision-making, and problem-solving skills.	Can you tell me about a time you had to resolve a conflict within your team?
<b>Situational</b>	Situational questions present hypothetical scenarios and ask candidates how they would respond or approach a given situation. These questions help assess a candidate's problem-solving abilities and ability to think independently.	What would you do if assigned a project with a tight deadline and limited resources?
<b>Competency-Based</b>	Competency-based questions focus on specific skills and qualities required for the job. They aim to evaluate whether candidates possess the necessary competencies for the role.	Describe your experience managing multiple projects/assignments and your ability to meet deadlines.
<b>Technical</b>	Technical questions assess a candidate's knowledge and expertise in a particular field or skill set. They are common in technical or specialized roles and involve problem-solving or technical assessments.	Can you explain how you would optimize a database query for faster performance?
<b>Hypothetical</b>	These questions pose hypothetical scenarios to gauge a candidate's critical and creative thinking ability. They may not have a direct connection to the job, but they help assess problem-solving and decision-making skills.	If you won the lottery, what would you do with the money?



Category	Description	Example
<b>Open-Ended</b>	Open-ended questions encourage candidates to provide detailed responses and elaborate on their experiences, skills, and motivations. They are often used to gain insights into a candidate's thought process.	Tell me about yourself and your career goals.
<b>Stress or Pressure</b>	These questions assess how candidates handle pressure, stress, or challenging situations. They may be designed to provoke a reaction or test a candidate's composure.	How many gas stations are there in America?
<b>Cultural Fit</b>	Cultural fit questions evaluate whether a candidate's values, work style, and personality align with the company culture.	Describe a work environment or team dynamic where you believe you thrive the most.
<b>Motivational</b>	These questions explore a candidate's motivations, career aspirations, and alignment with the company's mission and values.	What excites you about this role (college major), and why do you want to work for our organization (school)?
<b>Strengths &amp; Weaknesses</b>	These questions ask candidates to identify their strengths and weaknesses and may also inquire about how they are working to improve their weaknesses.	What is one of your strengths, and how does it contribute to your effectiveness in your current role?
<b>Salary and Benefit</b>	These questions pertain to compensation expectations, benefits, and other considerations related to the job offer.	What salary range are you looking for in this position?
<b>Behavioral Assessment</b>	These questions aim to understand a candidate's personality, work style, and interpersonal skills.	How do you typically approach team collaboration and communication?



## OPEN-ENDED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Many open-ended interview questions can be answered by using a “formula.”

- The answer to the question (the what)
- The reason for your answer (the why)

### Example

What type of job/career do you want to have?

I want to be a career coach because I love to teach others new skills they can use to succeed.

### General

- Tell me about yourself.
- What three adjectives best describe you?
- What is your greatest strength?
- What is your greatest weakness?
- How would friends describe you?
- What makes you unique?
- Do you prefer working by yourself or with a team?
- What motivates you?
- Where do you see yourself in five years? Ten years?
- What achievement are you most proud of?
- Whom do you most admire, and why?
- What activities do you do outside of work/school?
- What is your favorite book/ movie?
- How do you stay organized?
- What is your ideal working/learning environment?
- Do you prefer to work/learn in person or virtually?
- Is there anything else you want me to know about you?
- Do you have any questions for me?

### School Admission Interviews

- Why do you want to go to college/trade school?
- How did you first become interested in our school?
- What do you know about this school?
- What are you interested in studying?
- How do you plan on getting involved at this school?
- Are you applying to other schools?
- What qualities do you have that will contribute to your success at this school?
- If you could design and teach a course, what would it be about?

### Job Interviews

- Why do you want to work at (company name)?
- What do you know about the company?
- Why are you interested in this position?
- Are you considering jobs at other companies?
- What qualities do you have that will contribute to your success in this job?
- Describe your ideal job.



## BEHAVIORAL QUESTIONS

When answering behavioral or situational questions, it's helpful to use the STAR method (**S**ituation, **T**ask, **A**ction, and **R**esult) to provide a structured and comprehensive response. STARs are helpful to include on a résumé and, as noted above, use in response to behavioral interview questions. STARs may come from various experiences but are not limited to jobs, volunteer organizations, school activities (clubs, honor society, student council), school projects, and sports.

Example: Tell me about when you were assigned something but were not given any directions on completing it.

<b>Situation</b>	It was the first week of a new job where I had minimal training and no written instructions on completing assignments.
<b>Task</b>	I had five reports due by the end of the week and needed to submit the reports on time with correct data.
<b>Activity</b>	I reviewed my predecessor's files to determine the steps they followed. I used the system to validate the IT department's data's accuracy, aggregated it using Excel, and completed the submission templates.
<b>Result</b>	I submitted all five reports on or ahead of schedule.

### Examples of Behavioral Interview Questions

- Think back to a situation in which there was a conflict you had to resolve. Tell me how you resolved that conflict.
- Tell me about a time you made a mistake or failed at something. How did you deal with the situation?
- Tell me about a project or task you were assigned where you were unfamiliar with the topic. What approach did you take to do the project, and what was the result?
- Talk about a time when you had to work closely with someone whose personality differed significantly.
- Tell me about a time when you were under much pressure. What was going on, and how did you get through it?
- Tell me about when you had to work on a team project. How did you contribute to the team's success?
- Describe a situation where you had to take the lead on a project or initiative. How did you motivate and guide your team to achieve the goals?
- Give an example of when you had to manage multiple competing priorities. How did you stay organized and maintain the quality of your work?
- Give an example of a situation where you had to handle a crisis or unexpected problem. How did you react, and what steps did you take to resolve it?
- Give an example of when you had to persuade a group or individual to see things from your perspective. How did you approach the situation, and what was the result?
- Describe when you dealt with a difficult decision or ethical dilemma at school or work. How did you make your decision, and what were the consequences?



## EXAMPLES OF QUESTIONS TO ASK THE INTERVIEWER\*

Typically, the interviewer will ask if you have any questions for them. It is highly recommended that you go to an interview prepared to ask questions.

- To determine what to ask the interviewer, consider what information is not available on the school or company website you are interested in learning more about.
- Then, identify the questions to ask the interviewer and prioritize the top three to five questions. Prioritizing the top questions will help ensure that you focus on the areas of interest that are most important to you. Depending on the amount of time allotted for the interview, you may not have time to ask all of your questions.

### Benefits of Asking Questions

Asking questions demonstrates that you've invested time and effort into understanding what makes the organization unique and why it fits you well.

Also, knowing this information about the organization and the other information you gathered during the interview, you can decide when an acceptance letter or job offer is received.

## Asking Questions Tip #1

*Do your research on the school or company before the interview.*

Once you have identified the initial questions you may want to ask, review the school or company's website and social media accounts and perform a Google search to see if the information is publicly available. If there is only a mention of a topic on the website, you can use a lead-in phrase to show that you have done your "homework."

For example, if the website mentions the school helps students get internships, and you want to learn more about the school's involvement in assisting students to get internships, say, "I saw that the career center helps students find internships. Could you share more about the process and some examples where students completed internships?"

## Asking Questions Tip # 2

*Asking the question below as your last question allows you to address any doubts or gaps in information that the interviewer may have.*

Do you have any concerns about me being successful at [name of school or company]?

\* For more examples, Google "common interview questions" or "behavioral interview questions" for college or job interviews.



## Examples of Questions to Ask During a School Admissions Interview

### Graduate (Alum) Interviewer

- Why did you choose to go to this school?
- Could you share your firsthand experiences about [academics, student life, etc.] as a student here?
- What did you major in, and what did you find enjoyable?
- What could the school have done to improve your student experience?
- What unique aspects of your college do you cherish most?
- If you had the chance for a "do-over" as a student, what would you change?
- How did attending this school contribute to your achievements and where you are today?

### Questions for Any Interviewer (Alum or Not)

- How would you characterize the college's academic culture?
- What character traits define a student who would excel here?
- What types of opportunities exist for community involvement?
- What distinguishes the students at this school from students at other institutions?
- What aspect of working for this university brings you the most pride?
- If you were to offer advice to an incoming first-year student, what guidance would you provide?
- What is a common hurdle students face, and how do they overcome it?
- Could you provide information about the [major/program/department]?
- How does the school promote diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in admissions and on campus?
- What extracurricular activities are most popular on campus?
- Are there programs, such as internships or co-op opportunities, where students can gain practical industry experience?
- What support and resources does the college offer students preparing for graduate school and the application process?

After listening to the response from the interviewer, consider sharing how you meet the job's requirements, fit into the culture, etc.

*For more examples, Google "questions to ask during a school admissions interview."*



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## Examples of Questions to Ask During a Job Interview

- What is the onboarding process like for new employees in this role?
- What does a typical day look like for this position?
- What do you see as the most challenging part of this job?
- How does the company measure success and performance for this role?
- What is the typical career progression for someone in this role?
- Can you tell me more about the team I would be working with?
- What recent projects or initiatives has the team been working on?
- What challenges or opportunities is the team currently facing?
- How would you describe the company's culture?
- What do you like best about the company/department?
- If there was one thing you could change about the company/department, what would that be?
- How does this position contribute to the company achieving its short-term and long-term goals?
- How would you describe how the company's culture and values come into play in your day-to-day work?
- What is the company's approach to work-life balance and employee well-being?
- How has the company adapted to remote work or flexible work arrangements?
- What are the next steps in the interview process?
- What is the expected timeline for a decision?

After listening to the response from the interviewer, consider using a STAR to share how you meet the job's requirements, fit into the culture, etc.

*For more examples, Google "questions to ask during a job interview."*