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## **Question: “What is your most significant achievement?”**

### **What are they really asking you?**

They want to know more about you as a person -- What makes you tick and what motivates you – and whether there’s more to you than just academic qualifications.

### **How should you answer the question?**

- Situation: give the interviewer a context – describe the situation and why the achievement was significant. Why was it difficult to achieve?
- Task: what goal did you aim to achieve?
- Action: explain what your specific actions to achieve your goal were.
- Result: make sure it’s a clear and specific event.

### **Example**

[create your own example here]

*Note: Aim to use the STAR technique. Play the memory in your head and tell your story.*

## Question: “What has been your biggest failure?”

### What are they really asking you?

Interviewers are sometimes just as interested in what has gone wrong in your life as what has gone right. This is because they want to see how you dealt with adversity and obstacles. They want to see whether you can learn from mistakes and how resilient you are. There are different variations of this question such as ‘Tell us about a mistake you’ve made?’ ‘How do you deal with setbacks?’, but its all the same.

### How should you answer the question?

- Spend more time explaining what you have learned about yourself than the experience.
- Don’t play the blame game.
- Use it as a springboard to talk about success.

### Example

[create your own example here]

*Note: Tell a story and emphasise it.*

## **Question: “How do you deal with conflict?”**

### **What are they really asking you?**

You don't want to come across as someone who will avoid conflict at work at all costs; nor would you want to be the person who instigates it. Navigating the sensible middle ground when dealing with workplace conflict takes experience, and you might not have much of that, but you can still explain an approach you would take.

There is a whole range of other questions wrapped up in 'How do you deal with conflict?' such as:

- 'Do you see competition as part of a learning process or personal threat?'
- 'Can you tolerate unavoidable conflict? Do you see conflict as good, always bad or neither?'

### **How should you answer the question?**

- Demonstrate a grasp of some common-sense principles for reducing the risk of conflict, handling when it happens, and then taking the steps to ensure it doesn't break out again.
- Demonstrate you have the skill to anticipate conflict and nip it in the bud by taking steps to deal with issues before tempers are lost.

### **Example**

[create your own example here]

## **Question: “What is your biggest weakness?”**

### **What are they really asking you?**

This question is designed to test analytical abilities and self-awareness, so having a confident answer to this will impress. Avoid taking a self-deprecating approach to win the interviewer over.

### **How should you answer the question?**

- You could show that, although you may have had a problem in the past, you’ve taken the steps to combat it.

### **Example**

[create your own example here]

## **Question: “Where do you expect to be in five years’ time?”**

### **What are they really asking you?**

The question ‘where do you expect to be in five years’ time is aimed to show that you are committed to your chosen career and the company, that you understand the professional career paths that will be open to you if you get the job, and that you are driven and willing to work hard.

How committed are you to this career and this company? How much do you understand about the career path ahead of you? How driven are you?

### **How should you answer the question?**

- Research into the company’s culture will be helpful, as it will clarify your understanding of the personal qualities the organisation is looking for.
- You can use this question to show you understand the key competences needed to be effective in the role you’re applying for and to progress in the organisation.
- If you are likely to need to undertake a professional qualification to progress, show that you understand the work that will be involved, and how long it will take.

### **Example**

[create your own example here]

## **Question: “What Motivates you?”**

### **What are they really asking you?**

The best answers to interview questions about your motivation are honest, but they should also connect to the job you are going for by suggesting that you would be suited to the work.

### **How should you answer the question?**

- Meeting deadlines, targets, or goals
- Learning new things
- Work well as part of a team
- Coming up with creative ideas to improve something or make something new.
- Finding a way to solve a problem or overcome a challenge.

### **Example**

[create your own example here]

## **Question: “What can you bring to the company?”**

### **What are they really asking you?**

This question requires you to sell yourself and to research the employer before the interview. But the company question requires you to look beyond your first job and think about how you can benefit the organisation in the longer term.

They are also asking:

- Are you a good match for the business?
- Would you be a good long-term hire for the business?

### **How should you answer the question?**

The simple answer to this question is you; you bring all your skills, qualities, values, interests, academic knowledge, and life experience to the company. But you cannot just answer ‘me’.

The most impressive answers include examples of your achievements and facts about the company.

To answer questions like this successfully, you can’t skip on your employer’s research! Use what you know about the company to show why you would be a good match. Think about:

- Your personal qualities, such as your drive and willingness to learn new things.
- The skills the employer seeks and how you have demonstrated them in the past – your answer should show why you would be competent in the job.
- You could use the STAR method to first analyse the situation, defining the tasks to be done, task completion process and the outcome of the situation, whilst applying it specifically to the role you’re applying for.

### **Example**

[create your own example here]



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