



Types of Interview Questions

Resume-based

Purpose: To assess whether you can back up your resume.

- Tell me about yourself.
- What are your strengths? What are your weaknesses?
- Why should we hire you?
- What has been your most significant accomplishment to date?
- Where do you see yourself in 5 years?

Behavioral

Purpose: To examine your past behavior in order to predict your future behavior in the workplace.

- Give me an example of a time when you motivated others.
- Tell me about a time when you delegated a project effectively.
- Give me an example of a time when you used your fact-finding skills to solve a problem.
- How do you handle conflict?

Case

Purpose: To assess your problem solving and analytical skills. The case is often a business situation or a business case that the interviewer has worked on in real life.

- Your client is a ski resort. Global warming has made it such that natural snowfall has been reduced by 50%. They client is concerned. What should they do and why?
- The Star Trek transporter has just been invented. Spell out some of the effects on the transportation industry.

Technical

Purpose: To assess your critical thinking and skills related to the technical aspects of the company and the position. Typical questions may involve brain teasers, assessing your understanding of the technical work required to be completed as part of the job, or require candidates to solve technical problems that they may face on the job.

- What is the degree angle between the hour and minute hand of a clock at 3:15pm?
- Compare and contrast REST and SOAP web services.
- Why are manhole covers round?
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Industry Guides

Academia

Prepare: Reflect on yourself, your research and your teaching. Don't underestimate the value of understanding what a department is looking for and communicating how you can contribute to their needs.

- Please explain your research.



- What is your philosophy of teaching?
- How does your research influence your teaching?
- How would you mentor graduate students?
- Additional academia interviewing questions:
http://www.columbia.edu/cu/tat/pdfs/sample_interview_questions.pdf

Consulting and Business

Prepare: When answering interview questions, explain your thought process to allow the interviewer to understand how you came up with the answer. The right answer is not as important as demonstrating your problem-solving abilities.

- How would you define commercial awareness?
- Tell me about a project that you persevered through after wanting to initially abandon it.
- Estimate how many tires are sold in the U.S. each year?
- What is the optimal gas station layout to arrange goods within the convenience store?
- Additional consulting interview questions: http://www.glassdoor.com/Interview/consultant-interview-questions-SRCH_KO0,10.htm

Engineering and Technology

Prepare: First, make sure you understand the question. Be prepared to white board your answers and explain your thought process. Work through examples to come up with the simplest solution and detail a few ways you may refine your answer.

- Suppose that there is a database table, and four processes read the table at the same time. But, only one process is allowed to read the same row of the table at the same time. How do you enforce the exclusive-read on a row?
- Given a pattern and a string, check whether the string matches the pattern. For example: pattern "aba" and the string is "redblackred" then it matches because "a" is translated to red and "b" is translated to "black". Note that for each character in the pattern, the translation is not empty and unique.
- Additional discipline specific technical questions:
<http://www.careereducation.columbia.edu/resources/tipsheets/finding-a-job-interview-questions-engineers>

Non Profit and Government

Prepare: Hiring managers value true commitment; candidates need prove their individual connection to the organizational mission with specificity and demonstrated action. Describing volunteer work or student group affiliations can be a great way of illustrating your commitment to a mission.

- How do your experiences translate to the nonprofit sector?
- How does our mission tie to your passions?
- What are your expectations about working in the nonprofit sector?
- Tell me about a time when you have worked in an environment that makes decisions in a consensus-driven way.
- Additional Non profit and Government Interview Resources:
<http://idealistcareers.org/category/job-search/interviews-job-search/>



Questions to Ask the Employer

- Can you please explain the training program for this position?
- What are the immediate challenges and objectives facing the individual in this position?
- What is the typical career path of someone in this position?
- Can you please tell me the next steps in the hiring process?

Illegal Interviewing Questions

These questions are illegal for any employer to ask you. If you are asked one of these questions, you do not have to answer. However, you're encouraged to consider how you might respond to an illegal question in advance.

Sometimes an employer may not realize they are asking an illegal question and may just be trying to make small talk. Often, the best response is to politely and professionally redirect the question without responding directly to it. If an employer persists, politely remind them that the question they've asked is not legal.

- Are you married, single, gay, straight?
- How old are you?
- What religion do you practice?
- Do you have any disabilities?
- Have you ever been arrested?
- Where were you born? Where were your parents born?
- Do you have any outstanding debt?
- Are you a US Citizen?
- What is your home language?
- How many children do you have?
- What religion do you practice?
- Do you plan to start a family soon?
- Have you had any recent illnesses?
- When did you last have a physical examination?
- Do you drink socially?
- Do you own your house?



CARR Method for Effectively Answering Interview Questions

For all industries it is important to research the organization thoroughly. Be able to communicate your technical and transferable skills as well as your organizational fit. Target your answers to each job and give examples to demonstrate your skills and qualifications.

Use the CARR Method as a framework for your answers. This method allows you to think about the various aspects of each experience to help you write an accomplishment statement to help you describe your experiences and accomplishments.

Context: Workplace Environment, Employees, etc.

- What was the goal you were trying to accomplish?
- What is your purpose within the project?

Action: Explain your actions, framed in the context of the situation.

- What work did you actually do?
- What were your responsibilities?

Result: Explain the result and its benefit. If possible, quantify your results with numbers to demonstrate your impact on the organization or the field.

Example: "Implemented new data analytics method to streamline the process of solar cell creation, resulting in 65% reduction in cost to the consumer."

Relate: Connect your experience with the desired qualifications of the job.

- What skills from your previous experience will you be able to use in this job?