

1. TELL ME ABOUT YOURSELF

This question is directed at finding out about you as a person, as well as about your job skills. The employer needs to know that you can do the job and also that you will be able to get along with other people working for the Company.

Check with your resume when preparing for this question. Try to include a balance of information, including information about your experience and skills as well as information that provides a picture about you as an individual.

Remember to relate any information back to the job you are applying for. Always link the two, pointing out how well you will be able to do the job.

Mention information such as the following:

- Your interests and experiences related to the job.
- Emphasize hobbies that may be job related, such as drawing, building gadgets, designing your own clothes, doing seasonal work as a tax preparer, fixing cars, etc. Also included non-job related interests such as membership of clubs or organisations, or special hobbies. You can mention these to show you get along well with people and that you are an interesting and informed person.
- Contact with, or knowledge about the employer. If you have seen or met the interviewer before, or have read or heard favorable comments about him/her, say so. If you know someone in common, or know someone working for the company, say so.
- Your past work experience.
- Your training or education.
- Your strong interest in working for the company and working in the type of occupation you are applying for.

2. HAVE YOU EVER DONE THIS KIND OF WORK BEFORE?

Never say "No" to this type of question, as no two jobs are exactly alike and you probably would not have applied for the position if you hadn't had some experience or some reason for thinking you would be able to handle the job. Tell him/her about:

- Your past experience related to the job.
- Your education and training related to the job.
- Non-paid experience related to the job.
- You are a quick learner (give examples of this).

As an example, the interviewer might ask you whether you have worked as a bookkeeper and you haven't, but you could mention facts such as you kept some books as part of your previous job as a secretary, you maintain an exact book or records of your family expenses, you have completed a bookkeeping course in high school, you're good with figures, and you're sure you could learn the necessary details quickly.

3. WHY DO YOU WANT TO WORK HERE?

In other words will you be satisfied with your job? Will you want to stay? Reassure the interviewer with positive comments about the company such as:

- The good reputation the company has.
- The company has the kind of job you're looking for.
- You like this kind of work and feel you can do a good job.

This is also your opportunity to show you have done your "homework" and that you know something about the company.

4. WHY SHOULD WE HIRE YOU INSTEAD OF SOMEONE ELSE?

Quickly list the skills and attributes you have that will make you a valuable employee. You may have mentioned some of them before but this is like a summary for the interviewer who doesn't want to think for him/herself, e.g. "I'm efficient"; "I do not have to be supervised"; "I am not a clock watcher"; "I am dependable and do not take time off"; "I am fast and accurate".

5. HOW OFTEN WERE YOU ABSENT FROM WORK IN YOUR LAST JOB?

An employer wants to be able to depend on his/her employees being present, and this question is designed to determine whether he/she could depend on you. If you were absent a great deal because of a reason, tell the interviewer what the reason was and why you feel that it will no longer be a problem, "I am in great health and do not expect to be taking any days off". In answering this question, stress what your past reliability has been and give assurance of your future reliability.

6. WHAT ARE YOUR GREATEST STRENGTHS?

This question is similar to "Why should you get the job instead of someone else?" Mention your skills, reliability, experience, enthusiasm, efficiency, ability to get along with others, etc. If asked "What is your single greatest strength" mention your personal reliability but also add that you have several major strengths and go on to mention them.

7. WHAT YOUR GREATEST WEAKNESSES?

Do not describe any possible weaknesses when asked this question. If some weaknesses exist, such as lack of experience you surely intend to overcome them, so there is no reason to draw attention to factors that will probably not occur. Mention nothing negative. Instead, respond by telling him/her that you have no weaknesses that will prevent you from being an excellent employee. You might also state once again briefly your strongest points at this time.

8. WHAT FIVE WORDS WOULD YOU SAY DESCRIBE YOU BEST?

Of course select your five best attributes (e.g. reliable, conscientious, friendly, honest, co-operative, hard-working, energetic, skilled, experienced, responsible, respected, enthusiastic, dedicated, likeable).

9. WHAT ARE YOUR LONG TERM GOALS?

A similar question is “What kind of job do you hope to have in ten years?” Or “What are your future plans?” The employer is really asking “Are you going to be satisfied working with the company?” Or “Do you just see this job as a temporary stopover?” So you should try to assure the interviewer to stay with the company, which, of course you will, if the job proves to be satisfactory to you.

Stress that you like the company and that you hope to become a valuable employee and that you have no plans to leave the area or the type of work you'll be doing.

10. WHAT KIND OF MACHINES OR EQUIPMENT HAVE YOU WORKED WITH? WHAT KIND OF EQUIPMENT CAN YOU OPERATE?

Be very specific in mentioning the exact names of the machines you have operated. If you can recall them e.g. “the Acme Model 85 Arc Welder”. Then go on to mention all the different types of machines or equipment you have used, e.g. “I can operate word processors and complicated copying machines, and I can operate a switchboard”. If asked about a machine you have not used before, describe similar machines you have used and how you had no difficulty learning to operate them.

11. ARE YOU THINKING OF GOING BACK TO SCHOOL, UNIVERSITY OR TO COLLEGE?

An interviewer will usually ask this question only of a younger applicant, as he/she is concerned that the person will not stay in the job for long. You should reassure the interviewer by mentioning considerations such as your desire to work for a few years or that work is very important to you, or that you have no desire to continue schooling and what you want is to build a future for yourself, or that you will take courses only at night.

12. ARE THERE ANY QUESTIONS THAT YOU HAVE?

This is often the final question that an interviewer will ask and is often merely as a gesture of courtesy. Do not attempt to obtain complete information about the job at this point, since you may unintentionally give the impression that you are not sure you really want the job. Wait until you have definitely been offered the job before asking questions about retirement benefits, chances for advancements, public transportation facilities, salary and so on. This information may be critical for you making your decision, but wait until you have been offered the job to ask about them.

13. QUESTIONS YOU CAN ASK AT THE JOB INTERVIEW

- Could you tell me about the company?
- Would I be working with other people or by myself?
- Why is the position vacant?
- What are the dress requirements?
- Is a uniform provided?
- How soon can I start?
- Could you tell me about the training program?