

Interview Questions & Answers

Know what to expect
in your next interview
and how to answer



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Job interview questions are constantly changing and this year is no exception.

The recruitment process is becoming even more competitive, interview questions are becoming tougher and your interview answers will need to be top notch to get that elusive offer.

While face to face interviewing will of course dominate, we have seen how remote interviewing using video has become increasingly common and is here to stay. Whether in the form of zoom, skype or other video based or by pre-recorded interviews popularly used to sift applicants.

We specialise in job interview coaching and in this PDF download, we reveal the most common interview questions that you may be asked in any job interview.

We list the different types of interview questions you may come across. We also give you answer guides plus a refresher of the top interview techniques you must be aware of so as to pass and win jobs.



The Most Common Interview Question Types

Questions at interview can take one of several forms.

There may be open questions that really just invite you to talk so that the interviewer can gain an insight into your attitudes, thought processes, and communication skills.

Competency and behavioural questions are now becoming the norm however many interviewers still favour the standard and traditional job interview questions such as "Tell me about yourself" and "Why should we hire you?" etc.

Here are the most common categories of interview questions in use today.

1. Competency Based Questions, Behavioural or Situational Interview Questions

Very commonly used by interviewers these questions are very specifically targeted at discovering if you have the skills (competencies) required to undertake the role.

They are phrased in such a way so that you must give an example of a situation where you used that particular skill successfully.

For this reason, they are often called **situational interview questions** and they can be phrased as 'Tell me about a time when...' or 'Describe a situation...'

How to Answer:

Give evidence through examples: You may well be asked to give an example of a situation that you have handled successfully, or where you have demonstrated clear abilities, so it is essential to be prepared for this. Try to think about recent cases which could show you in a good light, or challenges that you have overcome, and be prepared to talk about them.

To learn how to answer competency and behaviour questions read more here: [55 Competency Based Interview Questions Answers and Examples](#)

2. Traditional Interview Questions

These questions are the question you have probably come across most often such as 'What are your strengths?', "What are your weaknesses?" "What will you bring to the role?". They are still very commonly used and you are well advised to spend time creating answers in advance.

How to Answer:

Don't be afraid to boast: Be positive about your answers and not self-deprecating or modest in any way. If asked about your skills, don't qualify your answer with words or phrases that show doubt, such as "I think I am good at planning and organisation." You should be confident with strong, convincing answers such as "I am an excellent planner and organiser."

3. Technical Interview Questions

This type of question will be very direct in its phrasing. It's aim will be to discover just how proficient you are and can be related to a qualification, system, process or knowledge. While these skills are often tested outside of the interview room, many managers may ask questions to see how fresh your knowledge is, for example:

- What is your understanding of GAAP Reporting? (Finance or Accounting Role)
- Can you give me a summary of the main points of the Equalities Act? (HR or Manager Post)
- What are the advantages of using SQL over MS Access in database development? (Software IT)
- What steps would you take to improve our Health and Safety procedures? (Facilities Management)
- What does the concept of Clinical Governance mean to you? (Medical)
- What are the six 'C's, and how do they impact your daily care? (Nursing)

How to Answer:

As you can see, they are very job specific and your answer will need to show an exact and accurate understanding of the subject matter being explored.

With technical questions most often, you will either know the answer or not.

We find that answering technical interview questions requires a combination of knowledge, problem-solving skills, and effective communication. Here are some tips to help you answer technical interview questions successfully:

Listen Carefully: This might seem obvious however we have seen so many candidates who firstly don't listen and then give an unrelated response. This is a waste of everybody's time. Make sure you listen carefully to the whole question first, before starting to formulate an answer in your mind. Jumping too soon may mean missing the real point of a question.

Double-check the Question: If you are not sure about the question you should ask for it to be repeated or to be clarified. Remain focused on answering the question as accurately as possible without wandering off topic. It is important to be clear and concise, and above all, give relevant answers.

Take Your Time: Don't rush into answering. Take a moment to gather your thoughts and plan your response. It's okay to ask for a few seconds to think before answering.

Break Down the Problem: For technical problem-solving questions, break down the problem into smaller components or steps. This will help you approach the question methodically.

Be Methodical: Explain your thought process and the steps you are taking to arrive at the solution. Interviewers are often interested in your problem-solving approach, even if you don't immediately arrive at the correct answer.

4. Strengths Based Interview Questions

A technique we are now seeing increasingly used especially in the arena of government and graduate recruitment where relevant experience is not as important as assessing a candidate's talents, flaws and personality. They are designed to find out what you are inherently good at, what you enjoy doing and what really motivates you. The theory is that if you enjoy a task you will be more productive and efficient and employers will provide you with roles which fit your strengths better.

Read more: [Read About Civil Service Strengths Based Interview Questions.](#)

How to Answer:

When answering these types of strength based questions, it is best to be honest. Focus on telling them what are you bringing rather than taking:

Remember that interviewers are looking for skills and abilities that will be useful to them, so you need to bring to their attention the benefits for them by employing you.

For example, if asked about why you want the job it is better to say, "I believe it will give me a better chance to use my skills", rather than, "It seems like a good offer with a higher salary than I have at present."

5. Hypothetical or Scenario Based Questions

These questions test your ability to think on the spot and to formulate an answer under pressure and with speed. You will be presented with a hypothetical scenario often one which crops up often in the workplace to which you are applying. To answer successfully you will need to put yourself into the role and talk through the steps you would take to deal with the situation successfully.

For example, here are some hypothetical interview questions for you to answer.

- Imagine you were managing an employee who continuously arrived late to work. How would you deal with the situation?
- One of your team is underperforming, is disruptive and causing others to become demotivated. What would you do?
- A colleague tells you they are being bullied by a member of the senior leadership team. What steps would you take?
- A customer complains about the level of service they have received from your department. How would you deal with this satisfactorily?

How to Answer:

When answering hypothetical or scenario based interview questions, you will be required to say what you would do in a given situation. They are different to competency or behavioural questions which ask about a real situation you were in.

These questions are a test of your ability to think on your feet. In addition, they can be a good way to find out just how true your experience is and how you would approach difficult work situations that may occur in your day-to-day role.

[We suggest the use of the TAAP Formula as a really effective way to structure your answer and you can learn about it in the InterviewGold training program.](#)

Demonstrate your flexibility and versatility: If, for example, you are asked to describe what you would do in a situation which required good interpersonal skills, it would be more impressive if you were able to include additional skills. For example, talk about a case that shows you as a decision maker and leader, as well a planner and organiser.

Read more: [Get detailed interview answers for your exact job and much more – 92% success rate.](#)

6. Value Based Interview Questions

Just as strength based interviews play to the abilities of candidates and work in favour of employers, so too the impact of modern value based techniques can benefit both sides at once, and in fairly similar ways.

- What is most important to you in life or work?
- How would you say your personal values aligns with the work we do here at our organisation?
- Tell us about a time when your values were compromised.
- Can you share a specific example of a time when you faced an ethical dilemma at work?
- Tell me about a project or task that didn't go as planned. How did you take ownership of any mistakes or setbacks, and what steps did you take to rectify the situation?
- Describe a situation where you had to collaborate with a diverse group of colleagues with different opinions and work styles. How did you contribute to fostering a cohesive and supportive team dynamic?

How to Answer:

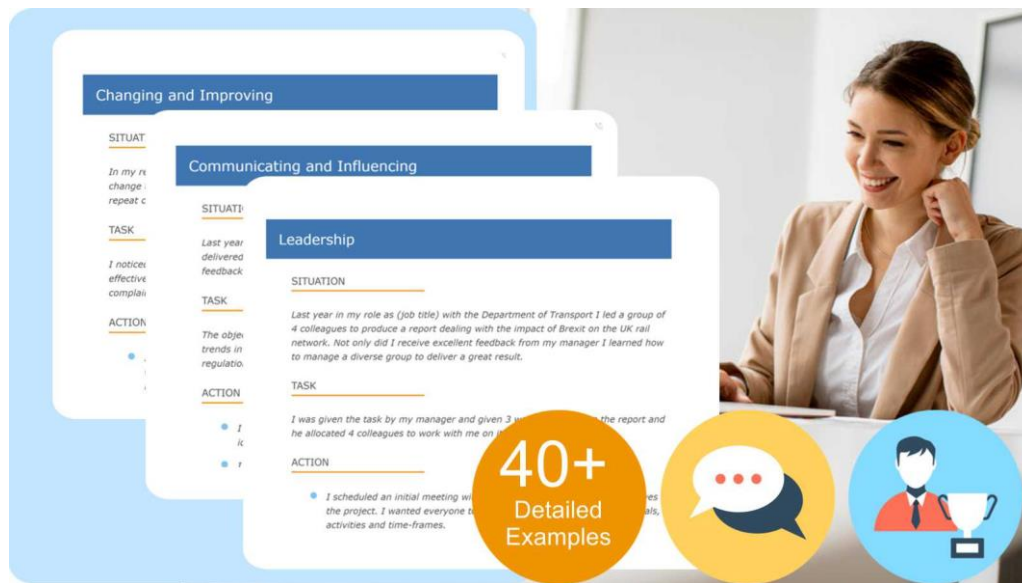
As the name suggests, this approach intends to work out whether the values of a candidate align with those of an organisation, often via more direct interview tactics than might be encountered elsewhere. As a result, such interviews are usually deployed in industries where qualities like compassion and an ability to collaborate effectively with others are essential, such as healthcare and the charity sector.

When answering value based questions, we suggest that honesty is the best policy.

Questions about how specific scenarios were handled in the past [will require use of the STAR formula](#). Answers should show how you interact with other people, what outcomes you expect from these interactions and how they fit with your personal values.

Role play can also be used as part of value based interviews, requiring a proactive demonstration of skills and a tangible backing up of claims made about views, beliefs and prior experiences.

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Thank you for reading and I wish you all the best for your interview.

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