

Most interviews will have a common core of questions that will be asked, especially during the early stages. Preparing for these questions will build your confidence. As the interview progresses and you are faced with more advanced questions, you will have a solid foundation. Some employers even use these questions to see if you are prepared for the interview.

## TELL ME ABOUT YOURSELF

This is your 60-second commercial and opportunity to portray yourself in the best light. The interviewer is listening for your job qualifications, fit with company culture and information about your professional work interests and passions. Share your professional and educational experiences and how you would be a perfect fit for this role, but don't recite your resume. This would be a good place to share about your current role and an achievement or successful project.

“*Example: “I've been working for the past six years as a business analyst. During that time, I have been trained on a number of software platforms including AWS and Tableau. I describe myself as a systems and process person that is detail-oriented and highly analytical. I'm now looking to take my career to the next level with a company where I can be a part of a team and utilize my leadership skills.”*”

## WHAT IS YOUR GREATEST WEAKNESS?

Have three weaknesses prepared to share, and what you are doing to overcome them. Employers are looking to see if you are self-aware and honest. Think about what areas of growth or challenges you need to overcome, but make sure it is not something that is essential to the position. Explain how you are addressing these weaknesses (e.g., additional training, practice, etc.). A lack of response may be perceived as being cocky or unprepared.

“*Example: “I am at an intermediate stage with Excel, and I want to become an advanced user. I am taking a LinkedIn Learning course to bridge the gap. I've recently mastered VLOOKUP, pivot tables and data simulations.”*”

## WHAT IS YOUR GREATEST STRENGTH?

Identify three of your strengths that apply to the position. This is a great area to highlight your technical skills and what expertise you will bring to the position.

“*Example: “I've always been a natural leader. I was president of the Professional Business Women's Society my senior year of college, captain of the UTSA women's soccer team my junior and senior year and regularly selected as project leader on group projects. We always completed projects on time. I'm proud of my ability to bring different individuals together to complete a task.”*”

## WHERE DO YOU WANT TO BE IN 5 YEARS? 10 YEARS?

Answer within their company, but in a position of higher responsibility. You don't want to mention other companies or other industries in which you desire to work. Employers want to know that you are committed to their company if they hire you, and if the position aligns with your goals and growth.

“*Example: “I want to be working here and hopefully moving up to a position of more responsibility with a bigger impact. I appreciate that the mission of your company is to be sustainable and environmentally conscious. This is a principle that is close to my heart. My immediate goal is to study for and pass my CPA exam.”*”

## WHY DID YOU LEAVE YOUR LAST JOB?

Be direct and focus your answer on future opportunities that are a better fit for you. Your response should sound positive and clear about your circumstances. NEVER speak badly about a former employer or company.

“**Example:** “I left to pursue my education and dedicate time to my studies.” Or, “My department brought in a new manager, and I felt it was the right time to leave.”

If you were let go during a layoff, be simple and forthright. Make eye contact and have positive body language.

“**Example:** “The company (was acquired/downsized/merged/restructured) and my (position/department) was eliminated.”

## UNUSUAL QUESTIONS

These are designed to see how you think on your feet and respond under pressure. Don't panic. Be calm and take a moment to answer thoughtfully. Employers are looking to see your thought process. Do you understand what is being asked of you? Can you solve this logically? Explain your process and support the answer you choose.

“**Examples:** “If you were a cartoon character, who would you be and why? Why are manhole covers round? If you were an animal what would you be?”

## WHY SHOULD I HIRE YOU?

Offer one or two examples to explain how you will fit with the company culture and deliver great results. It is your last opportunity to emphasize your key skills, your qualifications, professional achievements and anything that is relevant to the job that you have not shared during the interview. Do not restate your resume.

“**Example:** “From our conversation and my research, it sounds like you need a project manager who is capable of working between departments. In my last internship at [company], I was in the Leadership Development program where I spent a month with five different teams to learn how each department functions in the company. Now, with my supervisory experience, I've increased sales by 22%.”

## DO YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS FOR ME?

Prepare at least five questions. Some of your questions may be answered during the course of the interview. The questions should show you are interested in and understand the position. The questions you ask will leave a final impression with the interviewer, so be positive and professional. Never ask questions about salary, benefits or vacation. It may be perceived negatively by the interviewer.

## QUESTIONS FOR THE INTERVIEWER

- How are company values executed in this department?
- What was this department's role in [project name]?
- What skills are you looking for in a successful candidate?
- What are your expectations for this position?
- What does a typical day look like in this position?
- What is your management style?
- What do you like about working here?
- What are the most important things you would like to see someone accomplish in the first 30, 60, 90 days?
- What metrics or goals would my performance be evaluated against?
- Are there any other questions I can answer for you?

**Before you leave the interview, make sure you have all the information regarding the search process.**

- What are the next steps in the interview process?
- What is your targeted start date for this position?
- If in-person, ask for a business card so that you can send a thank you note or email.