

# Interview Questions

Take some time to review these questions, prepare and practice your responses until they come easily and naturally.

## Commonly Asked Questions

### Tell me about yourself

Develop a rehearsed response to the "tell me about yourself" question. The response should be made up of 4 parts. Each part can be properly stated in less than 1 minute. Note that this is only a guide and your responses may vary.

#### **Early years and Education** – about 10 to 20 seconds

Where did you attend high school and/or college?

What areas of study did you enjoy most? (Make sure they relate to the job you are applying for.)

Have you had experience in the military?

#### **Early Career** – about 10 to 20 seconds

What kinds of work did you do?

What size departments or employers did you work for?

What about your early career led you to know that the position you are applying for is right for you?

#### **Current Career** – about 30 to 45 seconds

What is your current position?

What are the main skills required in the position?

What are your key accomplishments in the position?

What training or experiences in your current position will help you in the job you are applying for?

#### **Current Status** – about 10 to 15 seconds

What is your current status?

What are you looking for?

### Why are you interested in this position?

Briefly discuss what you know about the position and how it would be a good match for your skills and for your growth and development. (use specific examples)

### What are your major strengths?

When discussing strengths, look at what is most transferable to the new position. Don't be arrogant, simply say it as you see it: "I'm great in a team setting". Then, tie the strength back to the current job opening. "I understand that you use work teams here. I've been a part of similar teams and I've had positive experiences with them such as.... "

**Describe your personality.**

Respond by describing only the positive traits as they might relate to the job opening.

**What are your greatest weaknesses or areas for improvement?**

A common strategy for answering this question is to describe a weakness that is really a strength, for example, "I'm practically obsessed with working hard and doing a good job". The only problem with answering in this way is that it is easy to see through.

Instead, answer the question as if it had been asked, "What are some things you do not like very much?" For example: "I don't much care for spending hours in meetings. I'd rather be on my feet doing actual work."

**Can you work overtime or on weekends?**

Be honest. If working overtime or on weekends is impossible for you or would only be possible when given prior notification of an extended schedule, it is better to communicate this now. After you respond, you may ask the interviewer "What is a typical work week here?"

**Can you travel?**

Be honest. If traveling is impossible for you, it is better to communicate this now. After you respond, you may ask the interviewer "How much travel is involved with the position?"

**Why are you leaving your current position?**

First tell the interviewer what you like about your current position. Then describe how you would like to make a greater contribution, expand your skill or take on greater responsibility.

**Define what you feel would be the ideal job/boss/department.**

Describe situations in which you would have the opportunity to bring into play your experience and strengths. Describe the kinds of opportunities, challenges, motivators and work that interest you most.

**Where do you want to be 5 years from now?**

The classic bad answer to this question is "I want your job!" It appears cocky and presumptuous.

Instead, talk of your desire to be committed to a company for the long term. You may discuss some of the skills or opportunities you would like to pursue, but don't sound too inflexible. Assure the interviewer that you believe, that by doing your best work, opportunities will present themselves.