

## Sample Interview Questions

Questions start the minute the interview does, and to show that you are an exceptional candidate, you need to be prepared to answer not only the typical questions, but also the unexpected. You can expect questions regarding your qualifications, your academic preparation, career interests, experience, and ones that assess your personality.

1. "Tell me about yourself." The most often asked question in interviews. You need to have a short statement prepared in your mind. Limit it to work-related items unless instructed otherwise. Talk about things you have done and jobs you have held that relate to the position you are interviewing for.
2. "Why did you leave your last job?" Stay positive regardless of the circumstances. Never refer to a major problem with management and never speak ill of supervisors, co-workers or the organization. If you do, you will be the one looking bad. Keep smiling and talk about leaving for a positive reason such as an opportunity, a chance to do something special or other forward-looking reasons.
3. "What experience do you have in this field?" Speak about specifics that relate to the position you are applying for. If you do not have specific experience, talk about your experiences that are closely related to the position.
4. "What have you done to improve your knowledge in the last year?" Try to include improvement activities that relate to the job. A wide variety of activities can be mentioned as positive self-improvement. Have some good ones handy to mention.
5. "Do you know anyone who works for us?" Be aware of the policy on relatives working for the organization. This can affect your answer even though they asked about friends not relatives. Be careful to mention a friend only if they are well thought of.

Prepare examples of how your experiences have allowed you to develop specific skills and how these could benefit the employer. STAR: Situation, Tasks, Action, Result

**S:** Situation – describe the situation

**T:** Task or problem – what dilemma or problem did you face?

**A:** Action – what action did you take?

**R:** Result – what was the result of your action?

### Types of other questions may include

1. What parts of your education do you see as relevant to this position? What prompted you to study.....?
2. Tell me about a time when you had to communicate information to a group of people.
3. Tell me about a significant achievement in your life.
4. Tell me about a time where you had to work towards a deadline.
5. Why do you want to work for us?
6. What do you know about our company/practice/business? What are your short term/long term goals
7. Where do you see yourself in five years time?
8. Describe a time where you set yourself a challenging goal.

### Will you fit in?

The interviewer wants to determine if you will be a good team player, someone who will be absorbed into the organization without disruption to the existing team dynamics. Types of questions could include:

- Describe a time where you had to work with a group of people to achieve a common goal? Can you give me an example of working as part of a team. What was your contribution to the team and what was the outcome of this exercise?

### Best fit between applicant and job

What makes you the best applicant for this position? Why should the employer take you over other applicants? Types of questions could include:

- Why do you think you are the best person for the job? What are your strengths and weaknesses?

- Can you give me five words that best describe you? What skills and qualities can you bring to this position?
- Is there anything you would like to add? This is an opportunity to bring particular skills or qualities to the attention of the interviewer. Have you stated your major selling points?

## Examples of Illegal Questions and Possible Legal Alternatives

### Example of Illegal Questions

- How old are you?
- When is your birthday?
- Are you married or do you have a permanent partner?
- With whom do you live?
- How many children do you have?
- Are you pregnant?
- Do you expect to become have a father/mother/sister/brother/etc.? When?
- How many children will you have?
- What are your child care arrangements?
- How tall are you?
- How much do you weigh?

### Possible Legal Alternatives:

- Are you over the age of 18?
- Is there anything that would interfere with regular attendance at work?
- Are you able to lift a 50-pound weight 100 yards, as that is part of the job?
- Do you have any responsibilities that would prevent you from meeting our work schedule?
- Do you anticipate any absences from work on a regular basis? If so, please explain.

### Arrest Record

There are laws that prohibits inquiries about past arrest records but permits consideration of a current arrest. If an applicant is under arrest for an offense that is substantially related to the job, an employer may suspend judgment until the case is resolved, advises the applicant to reapply when the charge is resolved, or refuse to employ the applicant. A current employee who is arrested may be suspended if the charge is substantially related to the job.

An employer may not refuse to employ or discharge a person with a conviction record unless the circumstances of the conviction substantially relate to the circumstances of the job. If an inquiry about convictions is made, the employer should add a clarifier, "A conviction will not necessarily disqualify you from employment. It will be considered only as it may relate to the job you are seeking". Anyone who evaluates conviction record information should be knowledgeable about how such data may be used.

The questions are legal if they're relevant to the job; e.g. embezzlement for a banking job.

### Race/Color/Religion

This question may discourage an applicant whose religion prohibits Saturday or Sunday work. If a question about weekend work is asked, the employer should indicate that a reasonable effort is made to accommodate religious beliefs or practices. An employer is not required to make an accommodation if doing so would create an undue hardship on the business.