



The 8 Types of Interview Questions

Interviewing is a form of human communication designed to see if there is an employer-employee match. There are basically 8 types of questions you may face during an interview:

1. **Credential verification questions** These type of question includes “What was your certification in?” and “How long were you at...” or “What was your positions title’s.” It’s purpose is to place objective measurements on features of your background.
2. **Experience verification questions** This type of question includes “What did you learn in that role?” and “What were your responsibilities in that position?” Its purpose is to verify experiential features of your background.
3. **Opinion questions** This type of question includes “What would you do in this situation?” and “What are your strengths and weaknesses?” Its purpose is to subjectively analyze how you would respond to a scenario.
4. **Abstract questions** This type of question includes “What type of animal would you like to be?” Its purpose is to get past your pre-programmed answers to assess your creative thought potential. There is not necessarily a right or wrong answer, since it is used primarily as a test of your ability to think on your feet.
5. **Math questions** This type of question includes “What is 1000 divided by 73?” to “How many ping pong balls could you fit in a Volkswagen?” Its purpose is to evaluate not only your mental math calculation skills, but also your creative ability in formulating the mathematical formula for providing an answer (or estimate, as can often be the case).
6. **Case/scenario questions** This type of question includes problem-solving questions ranging from: “What is your estimate of the U.S. online retail market for books?” Its purpose is to evaluate your problem-solving abilities and how you would analyze and work through potential case situations.
7. **Competency Questions** This type of question includes “Can you give me a specific example of your leadership skills?” or “Explain a way in which you sought a creative solution to a problem.” Its purpose is to align your past behaviors with specific competencies which are required for the positions.
8. **Behavioral questions** This type of question includes questions like: “Can you give me a specific example of how you did that” or “What were the steps you followed to accomplish that task?” Its purpose is to anticipate predictable future behaviors based upon past responses.

The STAR Method

During a behavioral interview, always listen carefully to the question, ask for clarification if necessary, and make sure you answer the question completely. Your interview preparation should include identifying examples of situations from your experiences on your resume where you have demonstrated the behaviors a given company seeks. During the interview, your responses need to be specific and detailed. Tell them about a particular situation that relates to the question, not a general one. Briefly tell them about the situation, what you did specifically, and the positive result or outcome. Your answer should contain these four steps (Situation, Task, Action, Result or "STAR") for optimum success.

STAR Method

- **Situation:** give an example of a situation you were involved in that resulted in a positive outcome
- **Task:** describe the tasks involved in that situation
- **Action:** talk about the various actions involved in the situation's task
- **Results:** what results directly followed because of your actions

Before the interview process, identify two or three of your top selling points and determine how you will convey these points (with demonstrated STAR stories) during the interview.

It is helpful to frame your answer as a story that you can tell.

Whenever you can, quantify your results just as you should on your resume. Numbers illustrate your level of responsibility. For example: "I was a shift supervisor." could be "As Shift Supervisor, I trained and evaluated 4 employees." Be prepared to provide examples of when results didn't turn out as you planned. What did you do then? What did you learn? Your resume will serve as a good guide when answering these questions. Refresh your memory regarding your achievements in the past couple of years. Demonstration of the desired behaviors may be proven in many ways. Use examples from past employment, team involvements, community service and work experience.

Example of a STAR Answer

- **Situation:** During my internship last summer, I was responsible for managing various events.
- **Task:** I noticed that attendance at these events had dropped by 30% over the past 3 years and wanted to do something to improve these numbers.
- **Action:** I designed a new promotional packet to go out to the local community businesses. I also included a rating sheet to collect feedback on our events and organized internal round table discussions to raise awareness of the issue with our employees.
- **Result:** We utilized some of the wonderful ideas we received from the community, made our internal systems more efficient and visible and raised attendance by 18% the first year.

Common Interview Questions

1. Tell me about yourself and why you're interested in this position.
2. What do you consider to be your greatest strengths?
3. What are areas of growth for you?
4. Have you ever had any failures? What did you learn from them?
5. Of which three accomplishments are you most proud?
6. Who are your role models? Why?
7. Tell us what motivates you most in a job.
8. Can you tell us about a time you had to present for a group of people. What went well and what would you do over?
9. Why should we hire you rather than another candidate?
10. Where do you want to be in five years? Ten years?
11. How do you stay up-to-date on current trends and topic within this career field?
12. Have you had difficulty getting along with a former professor/supervisor/co-worker and how did you handle it?
13. Which classes in your major did you like best? Least? Why?
14. How does your college education or work experience relate to this job?
15. What did you enjoy most about your last employment? Least?
16. What do you know about our organization (products or services)?
17. Give an example of a situation in which you provided a solution to an employer.
18. Give an example of a time in which you worked under deadline pressure.
19. How do you think a former supervisor would describe your work?
20. Do you prefer to work under supervision or on your own?
21. Would you be successful working with a team?
22. Tell us about time you managed competing priorities.

Top Ten Critical Success Factors

With all the different competencies being referenced, you may wonder what exactly the employer is seeking. Comb through a desired job description and identify if you see these themes and prepare for one to two questions on the critical success factors you find. Following is the list of the top ten critical success factors/themes that nearly every employer is seeking:

1. Positive attitude toward work
2. Proficiency in field of study
3. Communication skills (oral and written)
4. Interpersonal skills
5. Confidence
6. Critical thinking and problem-solving skills
7. Organization & Flexibility
8. Self-motivation

9. Leadership
10. Teamwork

Show your competencies in as many of these critical success factors as possible, make sure you are **consistent** in your story telling, and you will rise above the competition.

Questions to ask Employer

Avoid asking questions you can find the answer to online or in a brochure. Asking an employer questions is an opportunity for you to get to know your future supervisor, the team, or the work culture. Be strategy when determining what questions to ask

1. What qualities are you looking for in the candidate who fills this position?
2. What do you like best about your job/company?
3. What challenges are facing the department?
4. What do you anticipate the challenges of this position will be?
5. What are some areas you hope an incoming staff member can help fill?
6. How have you fostered and established collaboration on the team?
7. How do you fostered and established diversity and inclusion in the workplace?
8. What internal or external professional development opportunities current exist for the this position?

Tips for Online Interviews

Lighting

- Place lighting in front of you as opposed to behind you
- Use natural lighting if possible
- Try to avoid using multiple light sources which may cause an overexposure effect or shadows
- Use a light dimmer (if available) to adjust lighting
- Adjust your computer screen brightness and light sources to lessen the effects of computer fatigue

Sound

- Use a quality headset or earpiece if you have one for good audio
- Make sure you are in a quiet area free from unnecessary distractions (as much as possible in your current circumstances)

Background / Environment

- Create a simple, non-cluttered background.
- A blank wall is preferable to complicated, busy background.

Before the Meeting

- Close competing applications / programs / tabs unless you are facilitating a presentation and are sharing your screen.
- Test all technology (including camera/video, Wi-Fi, and screen sharing) before the meeting
- Come prepared. If there is an agenda, read it and be ready to share information or ask questions.
- Turn your camera toward your face (try not to use a profile view) and center your video on your face as much as you can.
- Have a bottled water or glass readily available in case your voice dries up and you need to hydrate
- Ensure that everything you need is within reach.

During the Meeting

- Enter the meeting with your sound muted (this will avoid picking up unwanted sounds as everyone settles in).
- If you are concerned about background noise in your environment turn sound on and off before and after you speak.
- Remain stationary: avoid moving around the room during the meeting
- Head nodding to indicate you are listening or agreeing is great
- Be cautious of "talking with your hands" as this may be distracting and/or Zoom may not fully capture all the gestures to communicate what you intend.
- Avoid staring at your phone while other people are presenting or talking.
- Avoid reading from a script or screen.
- Avoid interrupting other people when they're speaking (or attempt to speak over them).
- Refrain from working on other tasks (like checking email) during the virtual meeting.
- Turn off all notifications and make sure your cell phone is on silent.
- Avoid routinely turning your camera on and off as this can change your location in the video queue on some platforms and create added distractions. Use this function sparingly and only when absolutely necessary.
- Watch yourself during the meeting to evaluate whether or not you are demonstrating distracting behaviors.
- If you need to pause and think before responding, ask for a few seconds to think.

After the Meeting

- Make adjustments to your meeting space and your meeting performance as necessary.
- Practice using your online meeting platform in non-work related interactions to gain confidence and skill in using the platform.