

10 Tough Interview Questions with Answers

1. **Tell me about yourself.**

It seems like an easy interview question. Its open ended. What the hiring manager really wants is a quick, two- to three-minute snapshot of who you are and why you're the best candidate for this position. Talk about what you've done to prepare yourself to be the very best candidate for the position. Use an example or two to back it up. Tell me about yourself does not mean tell me everything. Just tell me what makes you the best.

2. **Why should I hire you?**

The easy answer is that you are the best person for the job. And don't be afraid to say so. But then back it up with what specifically differentiates you.. For example: You should hire me because I'm the best person for the job. I realize that there are likely other candidates who also have the ability to do this job. Yet I bring an additional quality that makes me the best person for the job--my passion for excellence. I am passionately committed to producing truly world class results. For example . . .

3. **What is your long-range objective?**

The key is to focus on your achievable objectives and what you are doing to reach those objectives. For example: Within five years, I would like to become the very best accountant your company has on staff. I want to work toward becoming the expert that others rely upon. And in doing so, I feel Ill be fully prepared to take on any greater responsibilities which might be presented in the long term. For example, here is what I'm presently doing to prepare myself . . .

4. **How has your education prepared you for your career?**

This is a broad question and you need to focus on the behavioral examples in your educational background which specifically align to the required competencies for the career. An example: My education has focused on not only the learning the fundamentals, but also on the practical application of the information learned within those classes. For example, I played a lead role in a class project where we gathered and analyzed best practice data from this industry. Let me tell you more about the results . . .

5. **Are you a team player?**

Almost everyone says yes to this question. But it is not just a yes/no question. You need to provide behavioral examples to back up your answer. A sample answer: Yes, I'm very much a team player. In fact, I've had opportunities in my work, school and athletics to develop my skills as a team player. For example, on a recent project . . . Emphasize teamwork behavioral examples and focus on your openness to diversity of backgrounds.

6. **Have you ever had a conflict with a boss ? How was it resolved?**

Note that if you say no, most interviewers will keep drilling deeper to find a conflict. The key is how you behaviorally reacted to conflict and what you did to resolve it. Yes, I have had conflicts in the past. Never major ones, but there have been disagreements that needed to be resolved. I've found that when conflict occurs, it helps to fully understand the other persons perspective, so I take time to listen to their point of view, then I seek to work out a collaborative solution.

7. What is your greatest weakness?

Most career books tell you to select a strength and present it as a weakness. Such as: I work too much. I just work and work and work. Wrong. First of all, using a strength and presenting it as a weakness is deceiving. Second, it misses the point of the question. You should select a weakness that you have been actively working to overcome. For example: I have had trouble in the past with planning and prioritization. However, I'm now taking steps to correct this. I just started using a pocket planner . . . then show them your planner and how you are using it. Talk about a true weakness and show what you are doing to overcome it.

8. If I were to ask your former employer to describe you, what would they say?

This is a threat of reference check question. Do not wait for the interview to know the answer. Ask any prior bosses or professors in advance. And if they're willing to provide a positive reference, ask them for a letter of recommendation. Then you can answer the question like this: I believe she would say I'm a very energetic person, that I'm results oriented and one of the best people she has ever worked with. Actually, I know she would say that, because those are her very words. May I show you her letter of recommendation? So be prepared in advance with your letters of recommendation.

9. What qualities do you feel a successful manager should have?

Focus on two words: leadership and vision. Here is a sample of how to respond: The key quality in a successful manager should be leadership--the ability to be the visionary for the people who are working under them. The person who can set the course and direction for subordinates. The highest calling of a true leader is inspiring others to reach the highest of their abilities. I'd like to tell you about a person whom I consider to be a true leader . . .

10. If you had to live your life over again, what one thing would you change?

Focus on a key turning point in your life or missed opportunity. Yet also tie it forward to what you are doing to still seek to make that change. For example: Although I'm overall very happy with where I'm at in my life, the one aspect I likely would have changed would be focusing earlier on my chosen career. I had a great internship this past year and look forward to more experience in the field. I simply wish I would have focused here earlier.