

Lesson:3

Job Interview Questions and Answers

Opening Questions

When you walk in the room the very first impression you make on the interviewer is key. It is important that you introduce yourself, shake hands, and be friendly. To begin the interview, it's common to engage in some small talk:

- How are you today?
- Did you have any trouble finding us?
- What do you think of the weather lately?

Take advantage of these questions to help you relax:

Human resources director: How are you today?

Interviewee: I'm fine. Thank you for asking me in today.

Human resources director: My pleasure. How's the weather outside?

Interviewee: It's raining, but I brought my umbrella.

Human resources director: Good thinking!

As this example dialog shows, it's important to keep your answers short and to the point. These type of questions are known as ice-breakers because they will help you relax.

Strengths and Weaknesses

You can expect to be asked about your strengths and weaknesses during a job interview. It's a good idea to use strong adjectives to make a good impression. Use these [adjectives to describe yourself](#) by talking about your strengths.

- accurate - I'm an accurate bookkeeper.
- active - I'm active in two volunteer groups.
- adaptable - I'm quite adaptable and happy to work in teams or on my own.

- adept - I'm adept at identifying customer service issues.
- broad-minded - I'm proud of my broad-minded approach to problems.
- competent - I'm a competent office suite user.
- conscientious - I'm efficient and conscientious about paying attention to detail.
- creative - I'm quite creative and have come up with a number of marketing campaigns.
- dependable - I'd describe myself as a dependable team player.
- determined - I'm a determined problem solver who won't rest until we've come up with a solution.
- diplomatic - I've been called in to mediate as I'm quite diplomatic.
- efficient - I always take the most efficient approach possible.
- enthusiastic - I'm an enthusiastic team player.
- experienced - I'm an experienced C++ programmer.
- fair - I have a fair understanding of programming languages.
- firm - I have a firm grasp on the complexities facing us.
- innovative - I've often been complimented on my innovative approach to shipping challenges.
- logical - I'm quite logical by nature.
- loyal - You'll find that I'm a loyal employee.
- mature - I have a mature understanding of the market.
- motivated - I'm motivated by people who love to get things done.
- objective - I've often been asked for my objective views.
- outgoing - People say I'm an outgoing person who's very personable.
- personable - My personable nature helps me get along with everyone.
- positive - I take a positive approach to problem-solving.
- practical - I always look for the most practical solution.
- productive - I pride myself on how productive I am.
- reliable - You'll find that I'm a reliable team player.
- resourceful - You might be surprised by how resourceful I can be.
- self-disciplined - I've often been complimented on how self-disciplined I remain in difficult situations.
- sensitive - I do my best to be sensitive to others' needs.
- trustworthy - I was so trustworthy that I was asked to deposit company funds.

Make sure to always have an example ready as an interviewer might like more details:

Human resources director: What do you consider your greatest strengths?

Interviewee: I'm a determined problem solver. In fact, you might call me a trouble-shooter.

Human resources director: Could you give me an example?

Interviewee: Certainly. A few years ago, we were experiencing difficulties with our customer database. Tech-support was having difficulties finding the problem, so I took it upon myself to dig into the problem. After two days of brushing up on some basic programming skills, I was able to identify the problem and resolve the issue.

When asked to describe your weaknesses, a good strategy is to select weaknesses that you can overcome by a specific action. Once you've described your weakness, state how you plan to overcome this weakness. This will demonstrate self-awareness and motivation.

Human resources director: Could you tell me about your weaknesses?

Interviewee: Well, I'm a little shy when first meeting people. Of course, as a salesperson, I've had to overcome this problem. At work, I make an effort to be the first person to greet new customers to the store despite my shyness.

Speaking About Experience, Responsibilities

Making a good impression when speaking about your past work experience is the most important part of any job interview. Use these verbs to specifically describe responsibilities at work. As with speaking about your greatest strengths, you'll need to have specific examples ready when asked for further details.

- act - I've acted in a number of roles in my current position.
- accomplish - It took only three months to accomplish all our goals.
- adapt - I can to adapt to any circumstance.
- administer - I've administered accounts for a wide range of clients.
- advise - I've advised management on a wide range of issues.
- allocate - I allocated resources across three branches.

- analyze - I spent three months analyzing our strengths and weaknesses.
- arbitrate - I've been asked to arbitrate between colleagues on a number of occasions.
- arrange - I've arranged shipments to four continents.
- assist - I've assisted management on a wide range of issues.
- attain - I attained the highest levels of certification.
- built - I built out two new branches for my company.
- carry out - I was responsible for carrying out management's decision.
- collaborate - I've collaborated with a wide range of clients.
- conceive - I helped conceive of a [new marketing approach](#).
- conduct - I conducted four marketing surveys.
- consult - I've consulted on a wide range of projects.
- contract - I've contracted with third parties for our company.
- cooperate - I'm a team player and love to cooperate.
- coordinate - As project manager, I've coordinated major projects.
- delegate - I delegated responsibilities as supervisor.
- develop - We developed more than twenty applications.
- direct - I directed our last marketing campaign.
- document - I documented workflow processes.
- edit - I edited the company newsletter.
- encourage - I encouraged coworkers to think outside the box.
- engineer - I helped engineer a wide range of products.
- evaluate - I evaluated sales operations throughout the country.
- facilitate - I facilitated communications between departments.
- finalize - I finalized quarterly sales reports.
- formulate - I helped formulate a new market approach.
- handle - I handled foreign accounts in three languages.
- head - I headed the R&D department for three years.
- identify - I identified production issues to streamline development.
- implement - I implemented a number of software rollouts.
- initiate - I initiated discussions with personnel to improve communications.
- inspect - I inspected new equipment as part of quality control measures.
- install - I've installed more than two hundred air conditioners.
- interpreted - I interpreted for our sales department when necessary.
- introduce - I introduced a number of innovations.

- lead - I led the regional sales team.
- manage - I managed a team of ten for the past two years.
- operate - I've operated heavy equipment for more than five years.
- organize - I helped organize events at four locations.
- presented - I [presented at four conferences](#).
- provide - I provided feedback to management on a regular basis.
- recommend - I recommended changes to help improve workflow.
- recruit - I recruited employees from local community colleges.
- redesign - I redesigned our company database.
- review - I reviewed company policies on a regular basis.
- revise - I revised and improved plans for company expansion.
- supervise - I've supervised project development teams on a number of occasions.
- train - I've trained new employees.

Human resources director: Let's talk about your work experience. Could you describe your current responsibilities?

Interviewee: I've taken on a number of roles in my current position. I collaborate with consultants on an ongoing basis, as well as evaluate the job performance of my team members. I also handle foreign correspondence in French and German.

Human resources director: Could you give me some more details about job evaluation?

Interviewee: Certainly. We focus on project-based assignments. At the end of each project, I use a rubric to evaluate individual team members on key metrics for the project. My evaluation is then used as reference for future assignments.

Your Turn to Ask Questions

Towards the end of the interview, it's common for the interviewer to ask you if you have any questions about the company. Make sure to do your homework and prepare for these questions. It's important to ask questions that show your understanding of the business rather than just simple facts about the company. Questions you might ask could include:

- Questions about business decisions such as why a company decided to expand into a specific market.
- Questions that show off your intimate understanding of the type of business.
- Questions about current projects, clients and products that go beyond information you might find on the company's website.

Make sure to avoid any question about workplace benefits. These questions should be asked only after a job offer has been made.

Choose Your Verb Tenses Well

Here are some tips on [verb tense usage](#) during the interview. Remember that your education took place in the past. When describing your education use the past simple tense:

- I attended the University of M'sila from 2017 to 2020. I graduated with a degree in management science.
- If you are currently a student, use the [present continuous tense](#):
- I am currently studying at the University of M'sila and will graduate with a degree in Public Relation in the summer of 2021.
 - I am studying journalism at M'sila College.

When talking about current employment be careful to use the [present perfect](#) or present perfect continuous. This signals that you are still performing these tasks at your current job:

- Hondna company has employed me for the last three years. I have been developing intuitive software solutions for more than ten years.
- When talking about past employers use [past tenses](#) to signal that you are no longer working for that company:
- I was employed by Jackson's from 2010 to 2015 as a clerk. I worked as a receptionist at the Hodna while I was living in M'sila.