

COMMON INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Introductory/About the Interviewee

- Tell me about yourself.
- What are your major strengths/weaknesses?
- What would your former employers say about you?
- What qualities do you admire in others?
- What are some personality characteristics you find undesirable in people?
- Describe your ideal job.
- What five adjectives best describe you?
- What recent accomplishment are you most proud of?
- Describe your ability to listen and be responsive. Can you give me an example?
- Describe the last book you read.

Career Goals/Future Plans

- Why did you choose this career field?
- What are your career goals?
- Where do you see yourself in 5 years?
- What does success mean to you?
- What do you do to improve your knowledge and skills in the field?

Past Experience

- Tell me about your last job position and what you did.
- What was the last mistake you made and how did you correct it?
- Why were you unemployed for such a long period of time?
- Why did you quit your last job?
- What has made you stand out among your peers in your past work experience?
- How did you prioritize multiple projects in your last job?
- Tell me about a change that occurred in your last workplace. How did you handle it?
- How do you prioritize multiple projects?
- Do you prefer a structured or unstructured work environment?
- How do you work under pressure?

Related to the Position/Company

- What type of position are you most interested in and why?
- Why do you want to work for _____ company?
- How has your previous work experience prepared you for this position?
- What skills would you bring to our company?
- What important trends do you see in _____ industry?
- Why should we hire you for this position?

Behavioral

- Tell me about a time you were especially creative in solving a problem.
- Describe a situation when you had to convince your peers of your opinion. Tell me what you said to convince them.
- Tell me about a time you were frustrated with the performance of a group that you belong to. What did you do? What was the outcome?
- Tell me about a time you had to make an important decision quickly even though you did not have all the information you wanted.
- What motivates you? Provide an example of a time where motivation was an issue for you.
- Tell me about a time you utilized your leadership ability to gain support for an idea that initially had strong opposition.
- What kind of information have you been required to analyze? Tell me about the most difficult analysis you've ever engaged in.
- Tell me about a time when you were unable to sell your idea to a key person.
- How do you schedule your time and set priorities? Give me a specific example.
- Describe a situation where you demonstrated initiative. What was the outcome?
- Tell me about a time you were disappointed in your performance. What did you do?
- Give an example of how you have handled criticism in the past.
- Give me an example of a time when you asked someone to complete a task and they did it incorrectly. What did this experience teach you?

Ringers/Difficult questions

- Why are manhole covers round?
- If you were an animal, which one would you be and why?
- If you don't get a job in (this field), what will you do?
- Describe the top of your desk.
- Tell me about something you are proud of that you've never told anyone before.
- Imagine you could trade places with anyone for just a week. The person could be famous or not famous, living or from history, real or fictional. With whom would you trade places?
- What kinds of Internet sites do you most frequently visit?
- Why should we hire you instead of someone else?

Industry Specific Questions

Accounting

- What is your understanding of management accounting vs. financial accounting?
- Which accounting systems/software are you familiar with?
- What experience have you had in conducting audits?
- Tell me about your experience working with accounts payable/receivable.
- What experience have you had working with payroll?
- What is cost accounting? Accrual accounting?
- Walk me through the major line items of a Cash Flow Statement.
- Say you knew a company's net income. How would you figure out its cash flows?
- What is the difference between a balance sheet and an income statement?
- What are deferred taxes? How do they arise?
- What is working capital?

Marketing

- Brand X's market share has been declining lately. What are the key things you would look at to determine why?
- Does high market share indicate a "great" product? Why or why not?
- Give me an example of a recent product that was well-introduced into the marketplace and one that was poorly introduced.
- How would you market (competitor's product)?
- I am going to name four brands. I want you to tell me whether or not you like the brand names they have chosen and why – Snapple, Infiniti, Boston Chicken, and Banana Nut Crunch.
- If you could be the Brand Manager on any brand in the world, what brand would you choose and why?
- Sell me this (pen, stapler, paper clip, etc.,)
- Tell me about a company that you feel has been successful with a unique marketing strategy.
- What commercial do you think is a breakthrough commercial and why?
- What do you think are the two most unique brands in the U.S. and why?
- What is an effective/ineffective advertisement you've seen recently and why?
- What is your favorite/least favorite ad and why?
- You are a product. What would your slogan be?
- You are the brand manager for Oreos. You are considering the following line extensions: Oreos with chocolate in the middle and low fat Oreos. What are the pros and cons of each and which will you choose?

Communications

- What kinds of writing have you done? Describe some examples.
- Describe one of your most successful oral presentations and what made it successful.
- What have you done to increase your effectiveness in making presentations?
- Tell me about one of the most difficult presentations you have had to make. Why was it difficult? How did it turn out?
- Give me an example of the most serious communication problem you've had. What did you do about it?
- Sometimes it's important to disagree with others to keep a mistake from being made. Tell me about a time when you were willing to disagree with another person in order to build a positive outcome.
- Tell me about a major conflict you had with a peer or customer that you were unable to resolve successfully. Why were you unsuccessful? What did you learn?
- Would you rather write a report or give a verbal report? Why?
- How much time do you spend reading the newspaper or watching the news each week?
- If you could only use one form of communication for the rest of your life, what would you use?
- How has a degree in communications prepared you for this job?

Computer Science

- How would you explain the internet to a grandparent who has never used or seen it before?
- What should a professional software designer consider in the design and implementation of code?
- What kind of technical publications (print or online) have you recently read?
- If you could recommend one resource (book, web site, etc.) to a new software developer just out of school, what would it be?
- What was the most interesting project that you have worked on?
- What was the most challenging project that you have worked on?
- Describe a technical problem you encountered. How did you implement the solution?

Healthcare

- What prompted you to pursue a career in health care?
- What experience do you have in the field?
- What specific area are you targeting in your search?
- Pull courses from your curriculum that you think will be valuable in the job that you hope to pursue.
- What are the attributes of success in the healthcare industry?
- How do you function in a group? Give examples of teamwork.
- What are the most important issues emerging in healthcare?
- What functional skills will you bring to a hospital environment?
- How would you describe the ideal job for you following graduation?
- What classes have you taken that you feel will be the most beneficial to you?
- Describe your most rewarding college experience.
- What 2 or 3 things are most important to you in your job?
- What motivates you to put forth your greatest effort?
- What have you learned from your mistakes?
- Is there anything not on your resume that you would like to tell me?
- What professional organizations do you belong to? What professional journals do you read?

Human Services

- What kind of experience have you had with different populations (i.e. women, youth, people of color, elderly, etc.)?
- Describe your fieldwork experience?
- What is your knowledge of disabilities?
- What types of clients have you worked with?
- What is your background and philosophy of social work? Counseling? etc.
- What was the most difficult/interesting case you had?
- What techniques do you use in crisis intervention work?
- How do you describe your professional boundaries?
- How do you relate to clients that may be very different from you?
- What are your favorite and least favorite things about direct client contact?
- Describe a difficult client and how you dealt with the situation.

Education / Teaching

- Why did you choose to become a teacher?
- How do you evaluate your own teaching performance?
- State your approach...what is your educational philosophy and classroom management style?
- What three words would students use to describe your teaching strategies?
- When you think about your students, in what major ways do you most want to influence their lives?
- Why do you want to work for our district?
- What do you see as the advantages and disadvantages of working in a school of this type?
- How do you reinforce self-esteem in students?
- Describe how you accommodate the different learning styles of the students in your classes.
- What procedures do you use to evaluate student progress besides using tests?
- Who should be responsible for discipline in a school? Why?
- What do you feel is the most effective way to communicate with parents?
- How do you give your students recognition? Do you think a student can have too much recognition?
- What current trends in public education please you? Displease you?
- What would I expect to see in your classroom's physical environment?
- How have you integrated technology into a curriculum you have taught?