

# 50 Popular Interview Questions

## 1. What are your strengths?

The consensus is to go for quality, not quantity here. Candidates should give a short list of strengths, and back each one up with examples that illustrate the strength.

Also, they should explain how these strengths will be useful in the job they're applying for, and use this question to say something interesting about themselves. Whilst this is one of the most common interview questions it is also one of the best interview questions to ask early in the interview process.

**Red flags:** The candidate is unprepared for the question or only gives generic answers.

This is the most common job interview question - everybody should be expecting it. If they don't seem prepared or give a fairly stock answer, it's probably a bad sign.

## 2. What are your weaknesses?

Candidates should talk about a real weakness they've been working on improving. For instance, they're not good at public speaking, but they've been taking a course to help them improve.

Or maybe they feel that they're easily distracted when working online but have installed software that helps them stay on task. Answers like these show a desire for improvement, self-awareness, and discipline.

**Red flags:** Again, everyone should expect it, so it's a bad sign if someone seems totally unprepared, or gives a stock answer like, "I'm a perfectionist."

Also, of course, candidates brash enough to blurt out a truly bad personality trait should go in the red flagged pile.

For more tips and examples, see [How to Answer: What Are Your Strengths and Weaknesses?](#)



### 3. What grades did you get in college?

If they got excellent grades, this will be easy to answer. If not, look for a legitimate reason. Maybe it took them a little while to find the right major, or maybe they were doing excellent work at a job, internship, or extracurricular activity while going to school.

**Red Flags** The candidate has average to low grades and no good reason for it.

### 4. What were your responsibilities when you worked at job x?

A good candidate is able to talk in detail about their responsibilities. These should match up to what is expected for the job and even exceed it. The responsibilities should also match what they'll need to perform the job they're applying for.

**Red flags:** Candidates who are vague about what their responsibilities were, who didn't have the responsibilities that normally come with the job, or didn't have ones relevant to the job they're applying for.

### 5. Why do you want to work here?

Look for an answer that shows they've done research on the company, and are truly excited about specific things they can do on the job. This not only shows enthusiasm for the work and basic preparation skills but gives you clues about the cultural fit.

**Red flags:** The candidate doesn't have a good reason, or provides a generic answer, such as, "I think it represents a great opportunity."

### 6. How many people were on your team at your last job?

This is a good interview question for screening people with management positions on their resume. The number of people on their team should match what you would expect for the position.



**Reg flags:** If they were in a management position and didn't oversee the number of people you'd expect, this could be a red flag and could indicate an inflated title. For example, a Vice President of Sales who didn't oversee any salespeople could be a bad sign.

## 7. Where do you see yourself in five years?

Candidates should show that they've thought about this question, have plans, and that those plans align with the job and a career path that is possible at the company. You want to see that this candidate is a good long term investment.

General interview questions like this are still valuable and should always be included in your interview sheet.

**Red flags:** A generic or uninspired answer. Also, answers that show that this career/company is just a temporary stop for them.

## 8. What will your previous manager/supervisor say when I ask where you needed to improve?

A good answer goes in-depth and reflects positively on both their manager and the work they did, and lines up with other information you've been able to gather. This is one of the top 10 interview questions we recommend for all hiring managers. Candidates will often reveal information here they would not reveal if you asked them "What do you need to improve."

**Red flags:** Candidates that speak badly of their previous manager, provide vague answers or seem unprepared for this common question.

## 9. Why do you want to leave your current company?

This is in most hiring managers' top ten interview questions and is also one of the standard interview questions in any solid interview process.



The candidate should focus on the positives about why the job they're applying for offers them better learning or career opportunities, chances for advancement, aligns more closely with their long term goals, or is a better fit for them.

**Red flags:** Complaining about or blaming their former job, boss or colleagues. Also, having no good reason.

### **10. What was your starting salary and final salary at job x?**

This is a top interview question for checking credentials. The pay should match their seniority level. You should also see that it has risen at least by what you'd expect during their time at the company.

**Red flags:** Salary hasn't risen at the normal rate for a long time. Salary does not match position, for example, they had a senior-level job title, but were paid an entry-level salary.

### **11. What can you offer us that someone else can not?**

A solid candidate can name specific skills, abilities or understandings they have that apply directly to the job that other candidates are unlikely to have, or that are in short supply.

**Red flags:** Going negative - if the candidate starts trash talking other candidates, it's a sure sign of a bad attitude. Also, if they can't provide a solid answer, it may show that they lack thorough knowledge of the skills the job requires and an understanding of where they fit in.

Being unprepared for basic interview questions like this is also a bad sign all around.

### **12. What were your first title and last title at job x?**

This one of the typical interview questions used to find out how much a former employer really valued the candidate.



Ideally, the candidate rose in rank at the company at the expected pace, or they have a satisfactory explanation for why their title didn't change as expected.

**Red flags:** Similar to the beginning and ending salary question - if they were not able to rise in rank at the pace you would expect, it could be a red flag.

### 13. What do you know about our company?

Look for an answer that shows they've really done their homework and know what the company does, and they're aware of any important current events that involve the company, and the work culture.

**Red flags:** They don't know much about the company. If a candidate is serious and enthusiastic, they should have done some basic research.

### 14. What is your desired salary?

This is one of the best job interview questions for screening. Look for a number or range that falls within the market rate and matches their level of mastery of skills required to do the job. *Be aware that in some cities and states it is illegal to ask this question.*

**Red flags:** A candidate who is unable to answer the question, or gives an answer that is far above market. This shows they have not done research on the market rate, or have unreasonable expectations.

It's good to use this for screening early on. If you're far apart on salary, it's a hard gap to overcome.

### 15. Tell me about yourself.

Look for an answer that gives the interviewer a glimpse of the candidate's personality, without veering away from providing information that relates to the job. Answers should be positive, and not generic.



**Red flags:** A candidate who rambles on without regard for information that will actually help the interviewer make a decision or a candidate who actually provides information showing they are unfit for the job.

### **16. What is your greatest achievement outside of work?**

This question reveals a lot about the candidate's personality and drive. Look for candidates that have achieved something that requires plenty of time, hard work, and sacrifice. This type of work ethic will be beneficial for long-term projects.

**Red flags:** The candidate is unable to describe any noteworthy achievements outside of their professional career.

### **17. When did you leave company x?**

This is another of the top interview questions for checking credentials. Check to see the candidate's answer matches what their resume says, without any large, unexplained employment gaps.

**Red flags:** There is a discrepancy between the dates they give and the dates on their resume, or their roles lasted for very short times.

### **18. How many street lights are there in New York City?**

The answer to this common [brain teaser question](#) isn't so much about getting the exact number as coming up with a solution for solving it that seems reasonable and would yield a ballpark answer.

**Red flags:** The candidate is unable to come up with a way to solve this question.

### **19. If you started a company today, what would its top values be?**



This question is meant to test a candidate's [emotional intelligence](#). A good answer articulates values, and the values are a good fit for their role and for the company's mission.

**Red flags:** They have a hard time nailing down any values, values are negative or completely opposed to the company's mission.

## **20. Tell me about a time you faced a conflict while working as part of a team.**

A good candidate answers this [behavioral interview question](#) by naming a specific conflict and can talk constructively about how it was resolved without getting overly negative.

**Red flags:** Focuses on blaming others for the conflict, or conflict doesn't seem to have been resolved.

## **21. What's the most difficult problem you have had to solve?**

Look for answers that name a real problem, talk about specific steps taken to resolve it, and any processes developed to ensure that it would be solved more quickly next time, or would not arise again.

**Red flags:** The candidate is unable to name a problem, or names something that is a routine part of the job and should have been simple to solve.

## **22. What steps would you take to make an important decision on the job?**

Candidate answers this common [situational interview question](#) with a coherent, step-by-step strategy that makes sense for the position.

**Red flags:** The candidate is unable to come up with a coherent strategy for making decisions.

## **23. What would you do if you were assigned to work with a difficult client?**

These [50 popular interview questions](#) were prepared by [Betterteam](#).



A good answer should talk about a specific strategy for handling a tough client without becoming negative.

**Red flags:** No strategy for dealing with difficult clients or the question triggers negative talk about past clients.

#### **24. Tell me about a time you had to relay bad news to a client or colleague.**

A good answer includes the strategy they developed for delivering the bad news and shows the candidate can assess the results and has ideas for improvements in the future.

**Red flags:** The candidate doesn't have an answer or didn't have a reasonable strategy for delivering the bad news.

#### **25. How many other jobs are you applying for?**

This is one of the standard interview questions used in [stress interviews](#). The candidate should be able to stay calm, not get irritated that they're being put on the spot, and answer the question honestly.

**Red flags:** Being overly flustered by this question is probably a bad sign.

#### **26. What would you like to achieve within your first month on the job?**

If a candidate has researched the company and the position, he or she will have some idea of what is expected of them and what they aim to achieve when they arrive. Top candidates will set realistic goals that will benefit the company and showcase their skills.

**Red flags:** The candidate does not have an answer or says they will know more once they have undergone orientation.

#### **27. What do you like to do for fun?**





This question is designed to reveal more about the candidate's character. There is no wrong answer here, but the answers are revealing in that you will be able to understand their personality and cultural choices which will help you determine if they will be a good fit for your company.

**Red flags:** Since there are no wrong answers, use this question to learn more about the candidate's personality and if they will fit in with your corporate culture.

### **28. What is your preferred style of management?**

This question reveals whether the candidate would be a suitable fit for your company and the style of management you have in place. If their answer conflicts with your corporate setup, ask them how they plan to adjust to a different type of management.

**Red flags:** The candidate does not know, would prefer not to be managed, or their answer conflicts with your management style.

### **29. What steps have you taken to improve your skills?**

Look for candidates who have attended voluntary skills training or external courses, especially those with industry-related certifications. This will indicate a desire for growth and a willingness to take on additional challenges.

**Red flags:** The candidate has only attended work-mandated skills courses or none at all.

### **30. Do you have any questions for me?**

This is one of the most common interview questions, and also one of the most revealing. If the candidate has prepared for the interview, they should have a [set of questions](#) to ask including questions about the corporate culture, the management style, the company's expectations, major projects, and next steps in the hiring process.



**Red flags.** The candidate does not have any questions to ask, or the only question is salary-related.

### **31. What would be your ideal work environment?**

This question reveals honesty and whether the candidate would be a good fit for your company. If the candidate describes a work environment that is completely different from your office environment, ask them how they plan to adjust to a different type of work environment.

**Red flags.** The candidate provides a generic answer or describes a type of work environment that is completely different from your own.

### **32. What do you know about this industry?**

This is a popular question for candidates applying for junior positions or those who are changing careers. Top candidates will have a good idea of what the industry is about, the most common issues facing companies, and the type of working environment they will be coming into.

**Red flags.** The candidate doesn't know much about the industry or how the company works.

### **33. What is your strategy for working with people who annoy you?**

This question reveals a lot about the candidate's character and how they maintain professional relationships. Not everyone in the office is going to get along. Strong candidates use proactive measures to create a positive office environment while remaining assertive.

**Red flags.** The candidate has never been in such a situation or uses inappropriate techniques to deal with annoying colleagues.



### 34. What techniques do you use to manage stress?

Stress can affect an employee's productivity and affect their health. Avoiding stress is not always an option in a busy work environment so it is important that candidates have a safe and reliable way to manage it.

**Red flags.** The candidate claims they don't get stressed, or they don't have any techniques to mitigate the effects of stress.

### 35. What are three positive things your former boss will say about you?

This is another way of asking "what are your strengths?" Except, in this case, the candidate can name anything that they feel will be advantageous to the company including soft skills, hard skills, personality traits, or work experience.

**Red flags.** The candidate doesn't think their former boss would say anything nice about them. Or the candidate simply names skills listed on the job description.

### 36. Would your former boss have anything negative to say about you?

This question reveals honesty and is similar to "what are your weaknesses?" The candidate is given an opportunity to provide context to the answer and give a reason why this would not be an issue going forward.

**Red flags.** The candidate claims they have no flaws.

### 37. What was the last book you read?

This is a great [personality interview question](#) that will help you understand the candidate's character and interests. It will also let you know if the candidate takes the time to improve their knowledge by reading industry-related content.

**Red flags.** The candidate doesn't read, or they cannot remember the last book they read.



### **38. Can you tell me about a time you went above and beyond what was expected of you at work?**

This question invites candidates to tell a story about their former position and the role they played. Every candidate should be able to give an account of how they performed additional duties that were not expected of them. Depending on their answer, you can gauge how far they will be willing to go to get results.

**Red flags.** The candidate cannot think of anything or their answer is uninspiring.

### **39. How would you rate me as an interviewer?**

This is another stress question that is designed to put the candidate on the spot. Obviously, the candidate will not want to insult the interviewer, but the question demands an answer. Ideally, the candidate should provide an answer with a reason for their decision. Even a negative answer could provide good results and highlight things you may not have thought of.

**Red flags.** The candidate does not provide a reason for their decision.

### **40. How long do you think it will take for you to make a significant contribution to this company?**

This is a difficult question to answer and should be asked towards the end of the interview process. If the candidate has researched the company and the position, they should have a good idea of what they can bring to the table with their experience and skills. Based on this, they should be able to give you a well-thought-out response using deductive logic.

**Red flags.** The candidate answers too quickly or doesn't know.

### **41. What will you miss the most about your current/former job?**



This is a personality question in disguise. Even in a difficult work environment, top employees will develop relationships or techniques to deal with the stress. Candidates should be able to provide an answer that will give you some insight into their coping mechanisms.

**Red flags.** The candidate hated their former job, or they don't have an answer.

#### **42. What would you do if you won the lottery?**

The lottery question reveals a lot about a person. Firstly, you will get an insight into the candidate's personality, interests, and spending habits. The question will also help you understand whether the candidate's passion aligns with their chosen career.

**Red flags.** The candidate cannot come up with an answer.

#### **43. What is the most difficult decision you have made in the last three years?**

This question is especially useful for candidates applying for management, marketing, or sales positions where important decisions are made on a daily basis. Their answer will give you an idea of the candidate's life experience and decision making skills.

**Red flags.** There are no wrong answers, a red flag would be if the if the candidate could not answer the question.

#### **44. What personality types do you work well with? Why?**

This question is not designed for office matching. Rather, it provides insight into the candidate's awareness of personality traits. If a candidate knows their own personality and the type of people they like to work with, they can contribute to a stable work environment.

**Red flags.** The candidate does not know.

#### **45. How do you organize and plan your workload for the day?**

These [50 popular interview questions](#) were prepared by [Betterteam](#).



This is a simple question designed to reveal the candidate's organizational skills. Look for candidates who have a system in place that allows them to complete all their daily tasks without getting distracted by emails or office chatter. It will also give you an idea of how they prioritize tasks.

**Red flags.** The candidate is unable to provide an answer, or they have never used a system to organize their work.

#### **46. Can you tell me 10 different uses for a pencil other than for writing?**

This is a great question to test out-of-the-box thinking and to put the candidate on the spot. Top candidates will come up with ingenious ideas in a relatively short time. Candidates that struggle to come with useful ideas or spend too long thinking may not be a good fit for creative positions.

**Red flags.** The candidate takes too long to answer or struggles to come up with useful ideas.

#### **47. What do you think are the traits of a good leader?**

This question is similar to "what is your preferred style of management?" The candidate's answer will give you an idea of how they view authority, and the type of manager they will respond to. The question is also useful for candidate's applying for a managerial position. In this case, their answer will provide you with insight into their management style.

**Red flags.** The candidate doesn't know or poses suggestions that conflict with your idea of leadership.

#### **48. What was the most difficult period in your life, and how did you deal with it?**

Everyone has gone through difficulties at some point in their life. This question provides insight into the candidate's personality, experience with stress, and coping mechanisms.



There are no wrong answers, but the question does invite the candidate to tell a story and reveal how they overcame adversity.

**Red flags.** The candidate cannot answer the question or provides a single sentence answer.

**49. If I could provide you with additional training or exposure, what would you suggest?**

If the candidate is focused on improving their career, they will have an idea of the skills or industry exposure they would need to advance their position. Candidates may also be looking for exposure or training outside of their field of interest but in a similar industry.

If the candidate feels that they don't need any additional training or exposure, they should have a good explanation of why?

**Red flags.** The candidate cannot provide any suggestions.

**50. How would you deal with working under someone who is younger or less experienced than you?**

It may be difficult for some candidates to work under a manager who is younger or less experienced than them. In today's corporate environment, this is a very real possibility and candidates should be able to respect and work hard for their managers no matter who they are.

**Red flags.** The candidate doesn't know.

