



---

## Job Interview Questions Dos & Don'ts

---

### Sample Job Interview Questions

#### INTRODUCTORY QUESTIONS

What five adjectives describe you best?  
How would you describe your character?  
Why should I consider you for this position?  
If you could change one thing about your personality, what would it be?  
Tell me about a work achievement in which you take pride.  
Tell me about a bad decision you made on the job.  
You've changed jobs frequently. How do we know you'll stick around?  
What personal qualities do you think are necessary to be successful in this job?  
How would you describe your ideal job?  
What are your top three strengths?  
What are your top three weaknesses?

#### NEW GRADUATE QUESTIONS

What extracurricular activities were you involved in?  
What activities did you enjoy the most?  
What classes did you enjoy the most? The least?  
Why did you choose your major?  
If you could start again, what major would you choose?  
Why are you applying for a job in a field other than your major?  
What did you learn from your summer jobs?  
In what courses did you get the worst grades? Why?  
Are your grades a good measure of your ability?  
Give me an example of a problem you've had at school and how you solved it.  
Tell me about an educational achievement in which you take pride.

#### GENERAL PAST JOB PERFORMANCE

Tell me about your last position. What you did; people you worked for; etc.  
Tell me about the last time you made a mistake.  
Tell me about the last time you made a good decision.  
Did you inaugurate new procedures in your previous positions? Tell me about them.  
If you don't leave your current job, what will happen there? How far can you advance?  
Of all the work you have done, where have you been most successful?  
What would you say are the major qualities this job demands?  
Give me an example of when you've demonstrated your customer service skills.  
Tell me about a time that you had a difficult situation with a coworker.

#### TECHNICAL QUESTIONS

Tell me about the types of word processing you did on your last job.  
What would you say are the major technical skills needed for this position?  
What was more important on your job, written or oral communication?

How do you merge a file in Microsoft Word?  
What kind of on-the-job training did you receive at your last job?  
What certifications/classes have you completed this last year?  
Describe the types of documents you deal with on a daily basis.  
What software programs do you use most often in your current position?  
Describe in detail your experience with computer software programs.  
Give an example of a project or report that you have completed using Microsoft Access.

### **GOALS**

What do you want to be doing five years from now?  
Tell me what "success" means to you.  
What does "failure" mean to you?  
What was your favorite job? Why?  
Who do you think are our institution's major competitors?  
You've stayed with the same organization for years. Why have you decided to leave?  
What do you do when you're having trouble with your job?  
What do you know about our company/organization?  
What interests you most about this position?  
What was the last job related book or article you read?  
What would you change about your current job?  
What do you like best about this job? Like least?  
Do you consider yourself successful?  
What do you consider your greatest strength?  
How do you set goals for yourself?  
You have a lot of experience. Why would you want this job?  
What motivates you?

### **SUPERVISORY QUESTIONS**

Tell me about the people you have supervised in the past.  
How do you motivate people?  
Have you ever fired anyone? Why?  
Have you ever hired anyone? Why did you choose them?  
What do you do when you're having trouble with your employee?  
Have you ever had to make unpopular decisions? How did you communicate it to your workers?  
What type of supervisory training have you completed?  
Tell me about a difficult situation that you have had with an employee. How did you handle it?

### **PERFORMANCE QUESTIONS**

What were your most memorable accomplishments at your last job?  
What is the biggest failure you've had in your career?  
How do you go about making important decisions?  
Give me an example of a time you found a unique solution to a problem  
Tell me about the last time you found a cost-effective solution to a problem.  
What aspects of your job do you like the least? The best?  
What kind of things bothers you most about your job?  
What were your three most important responsibilities in your last job?  
What was the most important project you worked on in your last job?

Tell me about a time you worked on a difficult project.

### **FLEXIBILITY**

Tell me about the last change which occurred in your office. How did you handle it?  
I'm interested in hearing about the last time you took a work related risk. Was it the right decision?

How important was communication and interaction with others on your job? How many departments did you deal with? What problems occurred?

What level of management are you most comfortable with?

Tell me about a time when an emergency caused you to reschedule your work/projects.

When did you go above and beyond the call of duty to get your job done?

### **STRESS**

Tell me about a deadline you had to meet. How did you plan for it?

Tell me about the last time pressure led you to a poor decision or mistake on the job.

How do you generally handle conflict?

What do you do when you're burned out?

You have worked in a fast paced environment. How do you handle the stress?

You work in a "customer is always right" environment. How do you handle the stress?

What kinds of decisions are most difficult for you?

What is the most difficult work situation you have faced? What stress did you feel?

What do you do when you have a great deal of work to accomplish in a short period of time?

What is the most frustrating thing about your current position?

### **ORGANIZATION/TIME MANAGEMENT**

Describe the top of your desk.

Paint me a mental picture of your current office.

Tell me about the last time you failed to complete a project on time.

What do you do when you're having trouble solving a problem?

What do you do when things are slow?

What do you do when things are hectic?

What do you do when you have multiple priorities?

Tell me about your typical day. How much time do you spend on the phone? In meetings? Etc.

Your supervisor left you an assignment, then left for a week. You can't reach him and you don't fully understand the assignment. What would you do?

What aspects of your job would you consider the most critical?

How do you organize and plan for major projects?

How many projects do you like handling at one time?

Describe a project that required a high amount of energy over an extended period of time.

How do you organize yourself for day-to-day activities?

Tell me about a task you started but just couldn't seem to get finished.

### **COOPERATION WITH CO-WORKERS**

Tell me about the types of people you have trouble getting along with.

What types of people have trouble getting along with you?

Do you prefer to work by yourself or with others?

Tell me about the last time you had a conflict with a co-worker.

How would your co-workers describe you?

The successful candidate for this position will be working with individuals who have been with the company for a long time. How will you mesh with them?

What is your role as a group member?

What kind of people did you have contact with on your previous jobs?

What kind of person do you get along with the best?

What difficulties have you had to tolerate on your previous jobs?

Define cooperation.

Tell me about an occasion when, in difficult circumstances, you pulled a team together.

What do you find most challenging in working with co-workers?

### **MANAGEABILITY**

Tell me about your best and worst bosses.

What do you do when you're having trouble with a boss?

What do supervisors tend to criticize most about your performance?

If your boss knew you were interviewing, what would he say?

What do you feel an employer owes an employee?

Your supervisor tells you do to something in a way you know is dead wrong. What do you do?

If your supervisor unfairly criticized you, what would you do?

Would you like to have your boss's job? Why or why not?

How does your boss get the best out of you?

Tell me about a time when your manager was in a rush and didn't give you enough attention.

What are some of the things about which you and your boss disagreed?

What are some of the things your boss did that you dislike?

In what areas could your boss have done a better job?

I would be interested to hear about an occasion when your work or an idea was criticized.

How well do you feel your boss rated your performance?

How does a boss get the best of you?

Describe the best manager you ever had. The worst.

## **NEVER Ask These Questions in a Job Interview!**

### **QUESTIONS ON AGE**

How old are you?

When did you graduate from high school? College?

### **QUESTIONS ON SEX**

Are you married?

Do you intend to get married?

Do you have children?

Are you a single parent?

Do you practice birth control?

Do you live by yourself?

How many people live in your household?

Do you have someone who can take care of a sick child?

What's your sexual orientation?

Are you straight?

Do you have a maiden name?

Where does your spouse work?

### **QUESTIONS ON ETHNIC ORIGIN/RACE**

What's your nationality?

Where are your parent's from?

What languages do your parents speak?

Are you bilingual? (unless job related)

What language do you speak at home?

What's the origin of your name?

### **QUESTIONS ON RELIGION/POLITICAL BELIEFS**

What church are you a member of?

Can you work Sundays? Saturdays?

Are you a member of a religious group?

With what political party are you affiliated?

### **QUESTIONS ON DISABILITIES**

What health problems do you have?

Can you read small print? (unless job related)

Do you have any back problems?

When were you in the hospital last?

If you have any questions about this information, please contact:

**Cheryl L. McDonald**

Manager, Recruitment and Workforce Planning

[cheryl.mcdonald@tamu.edu](mailto:cheryl.mcdonald@tamu.edu)

Tel. 979.862.1015