

## Common Interview Questions

An employer will ask you a lot of different questions at an interview to find out about you and your skills.

- It is always best to prepare.
- We have provided a list of common questions with some suggested answers and tips.

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

Mention the following:

- the good reputation of the firm
- any other positive information you have about them - for example: their training record or their equal opportunities policy
- the job will give you the opportunity to do work that interests you

### 2. Why did you leave your last job?

- Be positive.
- If you left for health reasons, explain that you're now able to carry out all the duties for the job you are applying for.
- Don't use this as an opportunity to criticise your previous company.
- If you were dismissed, say that you take responsibility for your actions and have learnt from the experience.



### **3. Have you done this kind of work before?**

- If you have, tell them the skills and experience you have and how you can use them in this job.
- If you haven't, describe other work experience that is relevant to this job or which will help you learn this job quickly.
- Emphasise your interest and your enthusiasm to learn.

### **4. What did you do in your last job?**

Describe the following things:

- skills and duties relevant to the new job
- your responsibilities
- how you worked with others
- if you worked with customers - say how you worked with them
- how long you were there
- whether you were promoted
- responsibilities you volunteered to take on

### **5. What kinds of equipment can you use?**

This is an opportunity to show an employer how you can fit into their company, remember to:

- name the types of equipment you can use that are relevant to the new job
- mention any relevant qualifications or training you have had
- tell them the length of time you have used this equipment

### **6. How long have you been out of work and how do you spend your time?**

Describe the following:

- what you have done to look for a job
- any voluntary work you have done
- any further education, study or training you have taken part in

## 7. What makes you think you are the right person for this job?

### Tell the interviewer about the following:

- the skills and experience you have which are relevant to the job
- the personal qualities that you bring to the job

## 8. Why have you had so many jobs?

### You could say the following things:

- you wanted to widen your experience in different types of work or in different companies
- many of the jobs were temporary
- you would rather be in work than out of work

## 9. Why have you only had one job?

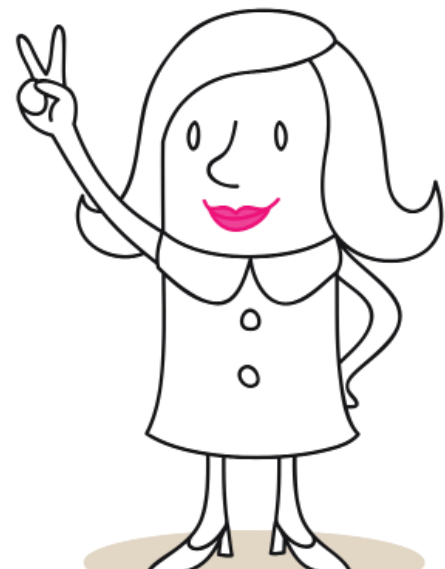
### You could say the following things:

- you had several jobs within your last company
- the job offered you the opportunity to develop
- you enjoyed the work

## 10. Why should the employer take you on?

### Be ready for this question and answer confidently and positively:

- describe your skills and experience and how relevant they are to this job
- tell them you are enthusiastic and willing to learn
- tell them you are hardworking, reliable and capable



## 11. Aren't you overqualified?

### Emphasise the following:

- you are looking for something different
- you can take as well as give instructions

## 12. How do you get on with people?

### Tell the interviewer:

- how you have worked as a team in the past
- how you get on with people at all levels - give examples
- how you have provided good customer service, if this is relevant - give examples

## 13. What makes a good team member?

### Describe the skills needed, for example:

- good communication skills
- flexibility
- the ability to adapt to change
- the ability to cooperate with other people
- having a good sense of humour

Give examples of how you showed these in previous work situations or leisure activities.

## 14. How do you cope with pressure?

- Describe pressures in previous jobs using a recent example - such as: how you coped with a deadline that had been brought forward or how you completed a rush order or dealt with staff shortages.

### **15. What are your strengths and weaknesses?**

It is a good idea to have one or two examples of each ready for this question. Employers value people who can admit their mistakes rather than blaming their failings on others.

- strengths: the employer should already know your strengths from your application but you may want to emphasise particular skills relevant to the job by giving examples
- weaknesses: start by describing parts of your last job which you found difficult and then explain how you overcame these difficulties or be brief but honest - for example: 'I can sometimes be a little too enthusiastic'

### **16. What would you like to be doing in five years' time?**

- Explain that you would ideally like to be working for the same company but to have developed within it.

### **17. What wage do you expect to earn?**

- If the wage level is negotiable, be prepared to negotiate.
- The difficult thing to decide is where to start.
- If you tell them a wage that is too high, you could price yourself out of the job.
- If you give an amount that is too low you could lose out.
- Before going to the interview, try to find out about wage levels in your area.
- You can look at similar jobs advertised with your Jobcentre, in newspapers or on the internet.
- You might be able to use this information in your negotiations.
- If you are really not sure, then say you would expect to receive the going rate for the job.

### **18. How often were you absent from your last job?**

- If you were hardly ever off work, say so.
- However, if sick leave has been a problem explain why and reassure the employer that you have sorted out the problem.
- If you have had time off because of a disability discuss this openly, including the possible solutions – be positive.

### **19. When would you be available to start?**

- As soon as possible. Do not put any barriers in the way.

### **20. Do you have any questions?**

You may like to prepare for this, as it is almost always asked at an interview. Asking some questions (but not too many) can show you are interested.

#### **One or two of these may be appropriate.**

- Do you offer ongoing training and development?
- What will my first job be?
- How soon will I hear the result of my application?
- Does the company carry out performance reviews and how often?

#### **Finally**

Try to get a good night's sleep.

