**15 Common Interview Questions**

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. Where do you see yourself in 5 years?
3. What is your greatest strength?
4. What is your greatest weakness?
5. Why do you want to work for our company?
6. How do you meet deadlines?
7. Describe a time when you worked on a group project and there was a conflict.
8. What did you like or dislike about your previous job?
9. How do you handle stress and pressure?
10. Describe your greatest accomplishment.
11. How do you evaluate success?
12. Why should we hire you?
13. How will this internship aid in reaching your future goals?
14. What are you passionate about?
15. Do you have any questions for me?

**Helpful Tips & Responses**

1. **Tell me about yourself.**
	* Personal qualities, skills, and areas of expertise
	* Hobby you are passionate about
	* Interests in healthy lifestyle (i.e. yoga, marathons, gym, etc.)
	* Volunteer work
	* Always transition by talking about your personal interests that lead into your professional qualifications. I.e. "In addition to those interests and passions, my professional life is a huge part of who I am, so I'd like to talk a bit about some of the [strengths](https://www.thebalancecareers.com/resume-strengths-list-2063804) which I would bring to this job."

*Sample Response:* When I’m not working, I like to spend time exploring with my dogs. I take them hiking, visiting historical sites, or even just walking around town. A surprising number of people are drawn to dogs, and I always enjoy talking with who I meet. I feel that communication is one of the most important aspects of my professional life as well. When talking with people, being able to guide the conversation in a particular direction is one of the ways I’ve been successful in different situations at the office.

1. **Where do you see yourself in 5 years?**
	* Connect yourself with company goals and/or opportunities
	* Discuss educational or professional growth that will benefit the company

*Sample Response:* My long-term goals involve growing with a company where I can continue to learn, take on additional responsibilities, and contribute as much value as possible to the team. I love that your company emphasizes professional development opportunities. I would take full advantage of the educational resources available.

*Sample Response:* Once I gain additional experience, I would like to have the opportunity to move on from a technical position to management. I know this has been a common path for many people in this position, and I think in time this would be a logical move forward for me. However, for now, I am excited about focusing on and applying my technical skills in this job.

1. **What is your greatest strength?**
	* Discuss attributes that fit the job you are applying for
	* Describe skills and experiences you have
	* Include education, training, soft skills, hard skills, past work experiences
		+ Soft skills are the skills that apply to every job. These are your people skills - interpersonal skills, communication skills, and other qualities that enable you to be successful in the workplace.
		+ Hard skills are the qualifications required to do the job. For example, computer skills, administrative skills, or customer service skills.
	* Incorporate power words in your responses (i.e. passion, energized, enthusiastic, motivated, priority, interested, advancing, etc.)

*Sample Response:* I have an extremely strong work ethic. When I'm working on a project, I don't just want to meet deadlines. Rather, I prefer to complete the project well ahead of schedule. Last year, I even earned a bonus for completing my three most recent reports one week ahead of time.

*Sample Response:* I have extremely strong writing skills. Having worked as a copy editor for five years, I have strong attention to detail when it comes to my writing. I have also written for a variety of publications, so I know how to shape my writing style to fit the task and audience. As a marketing assistant, I will be able to effectively write and edit press releases and update web content with accuracy and ease.

1. **What is your greatest weakness?**
	* Turn a negative into a positive
	* Discuss skills not related to the job
	* Mentioned skills you’ve improved
		+ Talk about where you started, steps you took to improve, and where you are now

*Sample Response:* One skill set I improved in the past was my salesmanship skills. As a product manager who works with internal teams and does not interface with clients or sales prospects, I don’t do much, if any, ‘selling’ in my role. However, since I do communicate quite frequently with the sales team, I felt it might benefit me to have a greater understanding of their strategies and tactics. I took a sales skills course online and it not only improved how I work with sales teams. Now, when I join sales meetings, I have a much better idea of what’s going on, and I feel more effective in communicating with the sales team. This course also helped me build upon the skills I use to ‘sell’ my vision for the product internally.

*Sample Response:* When I'm working on a project, I don't want just to meet deadlines. Rather, I prefer to complete the project well ahead of when it is due. While this means I never miss a deadline, it also means that sometimes I can find myself rushed when I’m working. I’ve since learned to slow down, be more patient, and give each project the careful attention it deserves.

1. **Why do you want to work for our company?**
	* Highlight what you find most interesting about the company and/or role
	* Talk about the company’s values and how you connect with them
	* Opportunities for professional development
	* Emphasize what you can contribute

*Sample Response:* I want this job because it emphasizes sales and marketing, two of my greatest skill sets. In my previous job, I increased sales by 15 percent in what was at the time considered a flat industry. I know I could bring my ten years of sales and marketing experience to this company, and help you continue your years of growth.

*Sample Response:* I have admired this company’s successful strategies and mission for years. Your emphasis on creating a relationship between your company and the surrounding community have brought you success everywhere you have opened an office. There are values I greatly admire.

1. **How do you meet deadlines?**
	* Discuss your organizational skills
	* How do you prioritize your responsibilities

*Sample Response:* I always like to plan ahead and make a list of priority and secondary deadlines. I also use my calendar and add deadlines to ensure I give myself reminders and do not forget any key tasks. Typically, I will put the deadline in my calendar a day before it is actually due to ensure I have plenty of time to complete the project and review before submission. I also make daily checklists of key tasks that need to be done that day. Before leaving the office, I also like to make a note for myself on any important items that I need to address first-thing the next day, however, I typically stay in the office until my tasks are fully complete.

*Sample Response:* I like to check-in with my supervisor on a routine basis to discuss the status of current projects. I find that is a great time for us to connect on upcoming projects or areas where I can be of assistance within the department. We

1. **Describe a time when you worked on a group project and there was a conflict.**
	* Focus on a challenger that became a success
	* Illustrate your problem-solving skills
	* Explain how you addressed the conflict and be specific
	* Emphasize the outcome and what you learned

*Sample Response:* When the software development of our new product stalled, I coordinated the team which managed to get the schedule back on track. We were able to successfully troubleshoot the issues and solve the problems, within a very short period of time, and without completely burning out our team. I was able to do this by motivating the senior engineering team to brainstorm a technologically innovative solution that would solve the customer’s issues with fewer development hours on our end.

*Sample Response:* Our company newsletter was frequently sent late — and worse, sometimes had errors or typos. It was a bad look for the marketing department. I reviewed this newsletter workflow with the team, which revealed several issues: There was no deadline for newsletter submissions and no one person had ownership of the project. Our marketing coordinator had recently requested more responsibility, so I asked her to oversee the process. Together, we created a schedule, a form for submissions, and a review process. Since instituting these changes, the newsletter has gone out precisely on time and error-free — plus, clicks and opens have increased.

1. **What did you like or dislike about your previous job?**
	* This is a question of character- focus on the positive
	* Avoid venting or speaking negatively about your previous job
	* Highlight how your experiences have helped you grow professionally

*Sample Response:* One of the reasons I’m leaving is that I felt I was not challenged enough at the job. As a new employee in the working world, the company offered me a great opportunity for a good entry level position—one that I’ll always be grateful for. However, after being there for so many years, I felt I wasn’t able to reach my full potential because of a real lack of challenge. There was no room for advancement in the company. While I did enjoy working there and appreciate the skills I developed while with the company, I feel my skill set can be better utilized elsewhere, where my capabilities are more recognized, and there is the opportunity for growth.

*Sample Response:* Through my experience at ABC Company, I learned a lot about different management styles and strategies for maintaining cooperation in a large group project setting. I feel that as valuable as that experience has been, I am anxious to work on more specialized projects where I will have the opportunity to be more of a leader than was going to be possible there.

1. **How do you handle stress and pressure?**
	* Use an example of how you successfully handled a stressful situation
	* Avoid focusing on the emotion and instead highlight how you managed the stress
	* When possible, highlight how stress has helped motivate or make you more productive

*Sample Response:* Pressure is very important to me. Good pressure, such as having a lot of assignments to work on, or an upcoming deadline, helps me to stay motivated and productive. Of course, there are times when too much pressure can lead to stress; however, I am very skilled at balancing multiple projects and meeting deadlines, which prevents me from feeling stressed often. For example, I once had three large projects due in the same week, which was a lot of pressure. However, because I created a schedule that detailed how I would break down each project into small assignments, I completed all three projects ahead of time and avoided unnecessary stress.

*Sample Response:* I try to react to situations, rather than to stress. That way, the situation is handled and doesn't become stressful. For example, when I deal with an unsatisfied customer, rather than focusing on feeling stressed, I focus on the task at hand. I believe my ability to communicate effectively with customers during these moments helps reduce my own stress in these situations and also reduces any stress the customer may feel.

1. **Describe your greatest accomplishment.**
	* Make a connection to something that may be relevant to the company or role you are applying for
	* Give specific examples from previous work or projects
	* Highlight how you have added value

*Sample Response:* Last year, I made revisions to my school’s sixth-grade curriculum, particularly to the literacy curriculum. At the end of the year, we saw a 20-percent improvement in students’ literacy test scores. My ability to achieve success among students is part of why I love curriculum development.

*Sample Response:* One of my greatest accomplishments at my current job has been leading the installation and implementation of a new software program in the office. As office manager, I quickly learned the software program before it was installed, and then led a seminar to instruct all employees how to use it. Within five days, everyone felt comfortable and confident using it. My employers said this was the smoothest technological transition we have ever had at work. I know I can bring this technological knowledge and leadership ability to your office as well.

1. **How do you evaluate success?**
	* Know the mission of the company and what they determine to be success (i.e. profits v. community impact)
	* Give examples of your successes

*Sample Response:* I define success in different ways. At work, it is meeting the goals set by my supervisors and my fellow workers. It is my understanding, from talking to other employees, that the GGR company is recognized for not only rewarding success but giving employees opportunity to grow as well. After work, I enjoy playing softball, so success on the field is catching the winning pop-up.

*Sample Response:* I evaluate success based on not only my work, but the work of my team. In order for me to be considered successful, the team needs to achieve both our individual and our team goals.

1. **Why should we hire you?**
	* Match your qualifications with requirements of the job
	* Highlight your strengths (communication skills, organizational skills, experience with X, etc.)

*Sample Response:* Based on what you’ve said and from the research I’ve done, your company is looking for an administrative assistant who is both strong in interpersonal skills and in tech skills. I believe my experience aligns well with that and makes me a great fit. I'm an effective communicator who is skilled in giving oral presentations, speaking on the phone, and communicating via email. I'm also fluent in a number of relevant software programs, including content management systems and spreadsheet suites. I’d really love to bring my diverse skill set to your company.

1. **How will this internship aid in reaching your future goals?**
	* Connect company objectives with your career goals
	* Discuss your short- and long-term goals
	* Stay away from personal goals (i.e. starting a family) or salary (i.e. what is the max pay)

*Sample Response:* I see myself as a top-performing employee in a well-established organization like this one. I plan on enhancing my skills and continuing my involvement in related professional associations.

*Sample Response:* My long-term goals involve growing with a company where I can continue to learn, take on additional responsibilities, and contribute as much value as possible to the team. I love that your company emphasizes professional development opportunities. I would take full advantage of the educational resources available.

1. **What are you passionate about?**
	* Highlight what you love doing or aspire to do
	* Pick a passion you know about and prepare for follow-up questions
	* Demonstrate how you fit in with the company culture

*Sample Response:* I lost my father to pancreatic cancer and ever since then, I have spent time volunteering to help raise awareness and funds for cancer research. I volunteer for PanCan, an advocacy group, and I'm part of their volunteer network. One of the things I'm passionate about is assisting in finding a cure, however I can. I also love getting to know patients and survivors on a personal level.

*Sample Response:* My passion is working with students who are struggling academically. I tutor a group of first-graders once a week in reading and writing. I love helping students make connections in subjects they struggle with.

1. **Do you have any questions for me?**
	* Plan ahead and make a list of questions
	* When possible, ask questions that highlight your skills and abilities
	* Demonstrate that you’ve researched the company and are interested in working there

*Sample Response:* If selected for the role, what would you like me to achieve in the first two weeks?

*Sample Response:* I’m interested in learning more about your company’s culture. I’ve done some research on your website but was hoping you could expand upon that.

*Sample Response:* Are there opportunities for professional development within the company?

*Sample Response:* What type of background or skills do you feel would be best suited for success in this position?