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Free Download – Questions to think about

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.

Examples below.

1. Why do you want to work here?

2. You should include:

- 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.

3. What did you do in your last job?

4. 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
- your hobbies and leisure activities – if appropriate

Try to link what you did to the skills and experience the employer is looking for.

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
- completed a rush order
- 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 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.

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