

100 Typical Interview Questions (by Ron Fry)

The “Killer Question”

1. So, tell me a little about yourself.

To answer the “killer question”, prepare a 20-second outline of your skills and experience RELATED to the job. This means do not start with, “I was born...”

What have you done with your life?

2. Why are you thinking about leaving your current job?
3. Are you still employed at the last firm listed on your resume?
4. After being with the same organization for so long, don't you think you might have a tough time getting accustomed to another?
5. You've changed jobs quite frequently. How do we know you'll stick around if we hire you?
6. You've been with your current employer for only a short amount of time. Is this an indication that you'll be moving around a lot throughout your career?
7. Have you managed people in any of the positions you've held?
8. Have you been in charge of budgeting, approving expenses and monitoring departmental progress against financial goals? Are you very qualified in this area?
9. How long have you been looking for a job?
10. Why haven't you received any offers so far?
11. Who made you an offer? For what type of position?

Work - and the real you

12. What are your strengths as an employee?
13. Why should I consider you a strong applicant for this position?
14. Name a weakness as an employee and what do you plan to do to correct it?
15. What are the biggest failures you've had during your career? What have you done to make sure they won't occur again?
16. What are the skills you most need to develop to advance your career?
17. What do your supervisors tend to criticize most about your performance?
18. How did you do on your last performance appraisal? What were the key strengths and weaknesses mentioned by your supervisor?
19. Tell me about the best/worst boss you've ever had.
20. Looking back on the experience now, do you think there was anything you could have done to improve your relationship with that one boss?
21. Are you an organized person?
22. Do you manage your time well?
23. How do you handle change?
24. How do you go about making important decisions?
25. Do you work well under pressure?
26. Do you anticipate problems well or merely react to them?
27. Would you describe yourself as a risk-taker or someone who plays it safe?
28. If you could start your career all over again, what would you do differently?
29. What is the biggest mistake you've ever made in choosing a job? Why?
30. Do you prefer to work with others, or by yourself?

Practice your interviewing skills during the VIDEO PRACTICE INTERVIEWS or during a CAREER COACHING APPOINTMENT.

31. How do you get along with supervisors?
32. How do you get along with co-workers?
33. How do you get along with people you've supervised?

Why are you here?

34. What were your most memorable accomplishments in your last job? Of your career?
35. Was there anything your company (or department) could have done to be more successful?
36. Did you inaugurate any new procedures (or systems or policies) in any of the positions you've held?
37. Describe the way your department is organized? Also, what is the title of the person you report to, and what are his or her responsibilities?
38. If you don't leave your current job, what do you think will happen to you in your career? How far do you expect to advance with your current company?
39. If you're so happy at your current firm, why are you looking for another job? Will they be surprised that you're leaving?
40. If you have these complaints about your present company, and they think so highly of you, why haven't you brought your concerns to their attention?

Okay, off with your defences

41. What interests you most about this position? This company?
42. What have you heard about our company that you *don't* like?
43. This is a much larger (or smaller) company than you've ever worked for. How do you feel about that?
44. What are you looking for in your next job?
45. What aspect of the job I've described appeals to you the least?
46. Based on what you know about our industry right now, how does your ideal job stack up against the description of the job you're applying for?
47. What do you feel an employer owes an employee?
48. What types of people do you find it most difficult to get along with?
49. Are there any people who have trouble getting along with you?
50. Have you hired anyone? Why did you choose him or her (or them)?
51. Have you ever fired anyone? Why?
52. What does the word "success" mean to you?
53. What does the word "failure" mean to you?
54. What do you want to be doing five years from now? What are your most important long term goals?
55. Have you recently established any new objectives or goals?
56. How would you describe your management philosophy?

Let's get personal

57. What do you do to maintain balance in your life?
58. Do you have any physical problems that may limit your ability to perform this job?
59. What do you like to do when you're not at work?
60. How would your co-workers describe you?
61. How do you generally handle conflict?
62. How do you behave when you're having a problem with a co-worker?



63. If you could change one thing about your personality with the snap of your fingers, what would it be? Why?
64. Describe your best friend and what he or she does for a living. In what ways are you similar or dissimilar to your best friend?

What if everyone called in sick, and...?

65. Say your supervisor left an assessment in your "in" box, and then left town for a week. You can't reach him and you don't fully understand the assignment. What would you do?
66. The successful candidate for this position will be working with some highly trained individuals who have been with the company for a long time. How will you fit in with them?
67. Your supervisor tells you to do something in a way you know is dead wrong. What would you do?
68. If your supervisor unfairly criticized you, what would you do?
69. Would you like to have your boss' job? Why or why not?
70. How will you handle the least interesting or least pleasant tasks of this job?
71. You've had little experience with budgeting (or sales or marketing or whatever). How do you intend to learn what you need to know to perform well in this job?
72. What extracurricular activities were you involved in? What made you choose those? Which of them did you most enjoy, and why?

Getting into the school of hard knocks

73. What led you to select your major? Your minor?
74. Which of your courses did you like most/least?
75. If you were to start college over again tomorrow, what are the courses you would take? Why?
76. What did you learn from internships listed on your resume?
77. In what courses did you get your worst grades? Why? How do you think that will affect your performance on the job?
78. Why are you applying for a job in a field (or working in a field) other than the one in which you have your degree?

There are no innocent questions

79. How are you today?
80. Did you have any trouble finding us?
81. Do you know much about our company?
82. What is the last book you read?
83. What is the last movie you saw?

Are there any wrong questions?

It is illegal for Canadian employers to ask the following question even though some will anyway

84. Is that an Irish (or Italian or Vietnamese or whatever) name? Is it a Christian (or Jewish or Muslim or whatever) name?
85. Are you a family man (or woman)?
86. What is your birth date?
87. Do you belong to any organizations?



88. Do you have any physical disabilities?
89. What is your economic status?
90. Have you ever served in the military?
91. Have you ever been arrested?
92. What is your marital status?
93. Do you have any kids and/or have plans to?

If you are asked an illegal question you have the right to NOT answer even though some mainstream employers expect an answer and may screen you out if you do not. Therefore, each individual must decide based on their own values what questions they are comfortable answering, and to what extent they will go to secure employment. If necessary, you can choose to politely deflect the question with a question, “*Can you tell me how that might impact the job?*”

Wrapping things up

94. Do you have any questions?
95. Are you willing to travel?
96. Are you willing to relocate?
97. May I contact your current employer?
98. May I contact your references?
99. Is there anything else that I should know about you?

Always give a salary range to leave room for negotiations.

Money talks

100. What sort of salary range are you expecting?
101. The salary you're asking for is near the top of the range for this job. Why should we pay you this much?
102. When can you start?

And here are a few more to consider:

- Why did you choose to do your MBA at the Sauder School of Business?
- Do you prefer numbers or words?
- What are the things that bore you?
- How do you respond when your ideas are rejected?
- Silence.
- Which of your achievements gave you the greatest sense of accomplishment?
- I now have 3 candidates, including you. What criteria should I use to select the one to fill the job?
- Have you had any other firm job offers?
- Would you be willing to undergo psychological testing?
- Why did you quit your last job?
- How would you describe your ideal work conditions?

