Typical Interview Questions

Suggested responses to the 25 most common interview questions. Preparation can be the difference between landing your dream job and coming up short, and practicing your answers to the questions interviewers ask most often will help you communicate your strengths and qualifications clearly and confidently.

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

Q1 – Q6

1. Tell me about yourself. What is your background and work experience?
Keep it to a brief outline of your work history and relevant accomplishments - not your personal life.

2. How would you describe yourself?
Prepare five to ten adjectives that describe you, focusing on qualities that are valuable in the workplace, and be ready to back each one up with an example.

3. What are your short- and long-term goals? Where do you see yourself in five years?
Make sure the goals you express line up with what the job can offer. Telling the manager of a small company that you want to be a manager is unwise.

4. What would be the ideal job for you? Describe the kind of position you are seeking.
Keep your answer compatible with the requirements of this job. If you are not sure what the company wants, answer broadly: "I am open to work similar to what I have done, but I would also be delighted to take on new challenges."

5. What do you do best? What are your strengths? At what are you most successful?
Choose the strengths that matter most for this specific position, and support each one with a concrete example.

6. What are your weaknesses? Tell me about one of your biggest mistakes on a job.
Pick a weakness that is not critical to doing this job well, or one you have worked on and successfully improved. Explain what you learned from it.

Pro tip: practice out loud

Rehearse your answers with a friend, with your Murray Resources recruiter, or by recording yourself. Aim for answers of 30 to 90 seconds, and use the STAR structure - situation, task, action, result - for any question that calls for an example.

© 2026 Murray Resources. All Rights Reserved.

PAST ROLES AND MANAGERS

Q7 – Q10

7. What did you like least about your last job? What would you try to avoid in your next job?
Avoid overly negative responses that make you look inflexible. Pick something minor: "Filing wasn't my favorite, but every job has some less exciting duties."

8. What was your favorite job and why? Which position was the most rewarding?
Stick with the content of the work rather than personalities, environment, location, or benefits.

9. Who was your favorite boss and why? What qualities would an ideal boss have?
Many candidates simply describe their boss's personality (nice, flexible). Use this as an opportunity to shine: "I loved the way my last manager gave me real responsibility and trusted me to make decisions. She appreciated the improvements I made to our systems and the cost savings I was able to implement."

10. What was your least favorite boss like? Who was your worst boss and why?
This is a trap question, so do not elaborate. Negative remarks can be read as disrespect for authority or an inability to handle a difficult manager. Be diplomatic: "Every manager has their own style. My manager at my previous company was the most demanding, but I feel I performed well for him even when others struggled to relate to him."

HOW YOU WORK

Q11 – Q14

11. Would you rather work by yourself or with others?
Answer both positively: "I am a team player, and I am also productive working on my own."

12. What three accomplishments are you most proud of? What are your job successes?
This is a key question. Think of ways you contributed to the company's success in measurable terms - money saved, processes made more efficient, sales increased. Mention academic achievements only if they are relevant and recent.

13. Do you work well under pressure? Can you juggle several tasks and lots of deadlines?
Give examples of demanding projects or people and how you handled them well. Set up the problem you faced, the action you took, and the results you achieved.

14. How could you contribute to our company? What attributes do you have that we could use?
Avoid generic remarks like "I'm a hard worker and a fast learner." Try instead: "If you asked my previous manager, I think she would say I take initiative, bring enthusiasm to my work, and am not afraid to put in extra effort. I do my work accurately and quickly, and I take an interest in the reasons behind each task." If you have identified specific areas where you could contribute, mention them - it shows you have done your research - but be careful not to be critical of the company.

© 2026 Murray Resources. All Rights Reserved.

YOUR TRACK RECORD

Q15 – Q17

15. What problems have you experienced on the job? How did you deal with them?
This is another way of asking about your weaknesses, personality conflicts, and how you handle frustration. Be careful: focus on how you resolved the situation and what you learned.

16. What types of promotions or job changes have you experienced in the past?
A great opportunity to shine. Even if you have not received a formal promotion, you have likely been given greater responsibility - talk about it.

17. Tell me about a typical day in your last job. What were your responsibilities?
Do not ramble. Be concise and specific, and mention five or six meaningful highlights of the role.

EDUCATION, GOALS AND INTERESTS

Q18 – Q22

18. Do you plan to continue your education? What are your educational goals?
Be careful if your goals are not compatible with the job - evening courses may conflict with overtime, for example. Continuing education is usually respected, so keep it safe: "I like to take courses that help me contribute more to my job and company, as time permits."

19. Which courses in school did you like best? The least?
Choose courses that relate to the job. "Writing was one of my favorites because I am strong at composition. Advanced accounting was challenging, but I worked hard to become one of the top students in the class."

20. Is salary more important to you than satisfaction with the type of work you do?
This tests whether your salary is negotiable and how committed you are to your career. "Salary is important, but it is secondary to my satisfaction with the work itself."

21. What do you like to do in your free time? What are your hobbies and interests?
Have something productive to say - self-improvement wins points. "I enjoy workshops and courses that apply to my work, and I also like to play tennis and go to sporting events."

22. Do you need to be kept busy? Do you get bored easily if a job isn't challenging?
This can be a trap. If the job has peaks and valleys and you say you need to stay busy, you may be dropped from consideration. If you say you get bored easily, you may seem to lack drive. "I prefer to stay busy, but during slow times I like to help others with priorities that are key to the business. I am too productive to get bored."

© 2026 Murray Resources. All Rights Reserved.

FIT AND MOTIVATION

Q23 – Q25

23. What would past employers say about you? Who are your references?
Be prepared with specific examples from several employers, and have business references with current contact information ready to share.

24. What kind of work atmosphere are you most comfortable in?
The interviewer wants to know whether you will fit in - formal or relaxed, private offices or an open floor plan, a strict dress code or a casual one. "I can fit in with almost any environment. I tend to reflect my manager's style and adapt to the situation."

25. Why do you want this job? Why do you want to work for this company?
Avoid focusing on benefits, financial stability, location, or pay. Talk about your interest in the industry and the company's success, how the content of the job would be satisfying and challenging, how much you have liked the people you have met, and how your knowledge, skills, and training could contribute.

Structure your answers with STAR

Whenever a question calls for an example, walk the interviewer through these four steps.

S Situation

Set the scene briefly: where you were, what was happening, and why it mattered.

T Task

Explain what you were responsible for and what success looked like.

A Action

Describe the specific steps you took. Focus on what you did, not what the team did.

R Result

Share the outcome, with numbers where possible, and what you learned from it.

Ready for the real thing?

Your Murray Resources recruiter can share insight into the interviewers, the company, and the role before you walk in the door. Ask them to run a practice interview with you.

QUESTIONS? ASK YOUR RECRUITER

P 713.935.0009
W murrayresources.com

© 2026 Murray Resources. All Rights Reserved.