

Job Interview Basics

How to Answer Common Interview Questions with Confidence:

<https://www.capella.edu/blogs/cublog/how-to-answer-common-job-interview-questions-with-confidence/>:

presents some common interview questions that you can prepare and plan for:

QUESTION: Why Are You Interested in This Position/Company?

There is no “right answer” to this question, but it’s one of the hardest ones to answer. These “why” types of question are meant to reveal something about yourself, about your values, and you should take some time to consider your answer in advance.

QUESTION: What Are Your Strengths?

Be as specific as you can be with strengths. To simply say, “My greatest strength is adaptability,” is too general of a statement. Give a specific example of how you demonstrated that strength. If you work in a job that requires customer service, and your co-workers seek your advice on how to handle difficult situations, that’s your strength.

If you’re still not sure what your strengths are, you might want to pay a small fee to take an assessment such as the *Strengths Finder* or *the Birkman Method*. These are great exercises that will give you the language you need to talk about yourself throughout your career, not just during the interview process.

QUESTION: What Are Your Weaknesses?

Your interviewers know that nobody is perfect. They want to know that you are self-aware and able to work on areas that are challenging to you. As long as you are able to demonstrate how you cope with your challenges, is the perfect way to handle this tough question.

QUESTION: Tell Me About a Time When...

Even if they don’t phrase it exactly that way, most other interview questions fall into this category. Potential employers are looking for you tell them about a specific example of a situation that may come up at work.

Example questions include:

Tell me about a time when you demonstrated leadership.

Tell me about a time when you solved a problem on a tight deadline.

Whatever the question is, give a STAR answer. **STAR stands for:**

- **Situation:** Set the context of the story.
- **Task:** Describe what your responsibility was for the situation.
- **Activity:** Tell them what you actually did to solve the problem.
- **Result:** What was the end result?

The best way to plan ahead is to look carefully at the job description. Make a list of the key responsibilities and skills they are looking for, then come up with a STAR story that demonstrates your ability to meet each one. You can use the same story to demonstrate multiple skills. Take some time to write these out and practice delivering them.

Consider **how or why you developed a particular strength** or achieved an accomplishment. Tell how you converted a weakness into something positive, for example,

Current strength: Microsoft Office Expertise

Previous Weakness: Limited Microsoft Office Experience

If possible, find an irrelevant weakness that shows you are a good choice for the job.

Irrelevant Weakness: Addiction to Knitting and Crocheting

Strength: Creativity

Choosing Your Best Weakness

Regardless of what strategy you use, your ultimate goal is to present an answer that doesn’t damage your potential for the position. There are a lot of reasons why jobseekers are not picked for an interview. Alison Doyle has identified more than 20 reasons (25 Reasons Why You Didn’t Get Picked for an Interview.

<https://www.thebalance.com/why-not-picked-interview-2061109>), including the following:

- You were screened out by an automated system because the language in your resume didn’t match the stated job requirements.
- Your knowledge and skills don’t match the capabilities required to excel in the job, or you have not clearly indicated how you have applied the desired skills.
- Your CV and cover letter don’t reveal your accomplishments.
- You haven’t made it clear how the job fits into your career plan.
- Your online image has damaged your candidacy.