



SIGN IN



Q Search jobs or companies

[ADVICE](#) / [JOB SEARCH](#) / [INTERVIEWING](#)

# Your 2023 Guide to the Most Common Interview Questions and Answers

by *The Muse Editors*

Updated 1/4/2023



*Bailey Zelena; courtneyk/Getty Images*

Wouldn't it be great if you knew exactly what questions a hiring manager would be asking you in your next job interview?

We can't read minds, unfortunately, but we'll give you the next best thing: a list of 50 of the most commonly asked interview questions, along with advice for answering them all.

While we don't recommend having a canned response for every interview question (in fact, please don't), we *do* recommend spending some time getting comfortable with what you might

be asked, what hiring managers are really looking for in your responses, and what it takes to show that you're the right person for the job.

Consider this list your interview question and answer study guide. (And don't miss our bonus list at the end, with links out to resources on specific types of interview questions—about emotional intelligence or diversity and inclusion, for example—and interview questions by role, from accountant to project manager to teacher.)

## 50+ most common job interview questions

- Tell me about yourself.
- Walk me through your resume.
- How did you hear about this position?
- Why do you want to work at this company?
- Why do you want this job?
- Why should we hire you?
- What can you bring to the company?
- What are your greatest strengths?
- What do you consider to be your weaknesses?
- What is your greatest professional achievement?
- Tell me about a challenge or conflict you've faced at work, and how you dealt with it.
- Tell me about a time you demonstrated leadership skills.
- What's a time you disagreed with a decision that was made at work?
- Tell me about a time you made a mistake.
- Tell me about a time you failed.
- Why are you leaving your current job?

- Why were you fired?
- Why was there a gap in your employment?
- Can you explain why you changed career paths?
- What's your current salary?
- What do you like least about your job?
- What are you looking for in a new position?
- What type of work environment do you prefer?
- What's your work style?
- What's your management style?
- How would your boss and coworkers describe you?
- How do you deal with pressure or stressful situations?
- What do you like to do outside of work?
- Are you planning on having children?
- How do you stay organized?
- How do you prioritize your work?
- What are you passionate about?
- What motivates you?
- What are your pet peeves?
- How do you like to be managed?
- Do you consider yourself successful?
- Where do you see yourself in five years?
- How do you plan to achieve your career goals?
- What are your career aspirations?

- What's your dream job?
- What other companies are you interviewing with?
- What makes you unique?
- What should I know that's not on your resume?
- What would your first few months look like in this role?
- What are your salary expectations?
- What do you think we could do better or differently?
- When can you start?
- Are you willing to relocate?
- How many tennis balls can you fit into a limousine?
- If you were an animal, which one would you want to be?
- Sell me this pen.
- Is there anything else you'd like us to know?
- Do you have any questions for us?

## 1. Tell me about yourself.

This question seems simple, so many people fail to prepare for it, but it's crucial. Here's the deal: Don't give your complete employment (or personal) history. Instead, give a pitch—one that's concise and compelling and that shows exactly why you're the right fit for the job. Muse writer and MIT career counselor Lily Zhang recommends using a present, past, future formula. Talk a little bit about your current role (including the scope and perhaps one big accomplishment), then give some background as to how you got there and experience you have that's relevant. Finally, segue into why you want—and would be perfect for—this role.

### Possible answer to "Tell me about yourself."



*“Well, I’m currently an account executive at Smith, where I handle our top-performing client. Before that, I worked at an agency where I was on three different major national healthcare brands. And while I really enjoyed the work that I did, I’d love the chance to dig in much deeper with one specific healthcare company, which is why I’m so excited about this opportunity with Metro Health Center.”*

**Read More:** [A Complete Guide to Answering “Tell Me About Yourself” in an Interview \(Plus Examples!\)](#)

## 2. Walk me through your resume.

Like “Tell me about yourself,” this question is a common interview opener. But instead of framing your answer around what qualities and skills make you best for the position, your answer should group your qualifications by your past jobs and tell your career story. You might choose to tell this story chronologically, especially if there’s a great anecdote about what set you on this path. Or, as with “Tell me about yourself,” you can begin with your present job then talk about what brought you here and where you’re going next. But regardless, when you speak about your “past” and “present,” highlight your most relevant experiences and accomplishments for *this* job and wrap up by talking about the future, i.e. connect your past and present together to show why this job should be the next one you add to your resume.

### Possible answer to “Walk me through your resume.”

*“Well, as you can see from my resume, I took a bit of a winding road to get to where I am today. In college, I double majored in chemistry and communications. I found early on that working in a lab all day wasn’t for me and at some point I realized I looked forward to the lab class I TA’ed the most.*

*“So when I graduated, I found a job in sales for a consumer healthcare products company, where I drew on my teaching experience and learned even more about tailoring your message and explaining complex health concepts to people without a science background. Then, I moved into a sales training role at a massive company where I was responsible for teaching recent graduates the basics of selling. My trainees on average had more deals closed in their first quarter than any of the other trainers’ cohorts. Plus, I got so much satisfaction from finding the right way to train each new hire and watching them progress*

*and succeed. It reminded me of my time as a TA in college. That's when I started taking night classes to earn my chemistry teaching certificate.*

*"I left my full-time job last year to complete my student teaching at P.S. 118 in Manhattan, and over the summer, I worked for a science camp, teaching kids from the ages of 10 to 12 about basic chemistry concepts and best practices for safe experiments. Now, I'm excited to find my first full-time teaching job, and your district is my top choice. The low student-to-teacher ratio will let me take the time to teach each student in the best way for them—which is my favorite part of the job."*

**Read More:** [How to Respond to "Walk Me Through Your Resume"—and Get Your Interview Started on the Right Note](#)

### 3. How did you hear about this position?

Another seemingly innocuous interview question, this is actually a perfect opportunity to stand out and show your passion for and connection to the company. For example, if you found out about the gig through a friend or professional contact, name-drop that person, then share why you were so excited about the job. If you discovered the company through an event or article, share that. Even if you found the listing through a random job board, share what, specifically, caught your eye about the role.

#### Possible answer to "How did you hear about this position?"

*"I heard about an opening on the product team through a friend of a friend, Akiko, and since I'm a big fan of your work and have been following you for a while I decided it would be a great role for me to apply for."*

**Read More:** [3 Ways People Mess Up the \(Simple\) Answer to "How Did You Come Across This Job Opportunity?"](#)

### 4. Why do you want to work at this company?

Beware of generic answers! If what you say can apply to a whole slew of other companies, or if your response makes you sound like every other candidate, you're missing an opportunity to

stand out. Zhang recommends one of four strategies: Do your research and point to something that makes the company unique that really appeals to you; talk about how you've watched the company grow and change since you first heard of it; focus on the organization's opportunities for future growth and how you can contribute to it; or share what's gotten you excited from your interactions with employees so far. Whichever route you choose, make sure to be specific. And if you can't figure out why you'd want to work at the company you're interviewing with by the time you're well into the hiring process? It might be a red flag telling you that this position is not the right fit.

## Possible answer to "Why do you want to work at this company?"

*"I saw on The Muse that you were also hiring for new positions on the West Coast to support your new operations there. I did some more reading about the new data center you're building there and that excites me as I know this means there'll be opportunities to train new teammates. I also learned through a Wall Street Journal article that you're expanding in Mexico as well. I speak Spanish fluently and would be eager to step up and help liaise whenever necessary."*

**Read More:** [4 Better Ways to Answer "Why Do You Want to Work at This Company?"](#)

## 5. Why do you want this job?

Again, companies want to hire people who are passionate about the job, so you should have a great answer about why you want the position. (And if you don't? You probably should apply elsewhere.) First, identify a couple of key factors that make the role a great fit for you (e.g., "I love customer support because I love the constant human interaction and the satisfaction that comes from helping someone solve a problem"), then share why you love the company (e.g., "I've always been passionate about education, and I think you're doing great things, so I want to be a part of it").

## Possible answer to "Why do you want this job?"

*"I've always been a fan of X Co's products and I've spent countless hours playing your games. I know that your focus on unique stories is what drew me and other fans into your games initially and keeps us coming back for more. I've followed X Co on social media for a*

*while, and I've always loved how you have people in different departments interact with users. So I was psyched when I came across this posting for a social media manager with TikTok experience. At my last job, I was responsible for launching our TikTok account and growing it to 10,000 followers in six months. Between that experience, my love of gaming, and my deep knowledge of your games and fanbase, I know I could make this TikTok account something special and exciting."*

**Read More:** [3 Steps for Answering "Why Do You Want This Job?"](#)

## 6. Why should we hire you?

This interview question seems forward (not to mention intimidating!), but if you're asked it, you're in luck: There's no better setup for you to sell yourself and your skills to the hiring manager. Your job here is to craft an answer that covers three things: that you can not only do the work, but also deliver great results; that you'll really fit in with the team and culture; and that you'd be a better hire than any of the other candidates.

### Possible answer to "Why should we hire you?"

*"I know it's been an exciting time for General Tech—growing so much and acquiring several startups—but I also know from experience that it can be challenging for the sales team to understand how new products fit in with the existing ones. It's always easier to sell the product you know, so the newer stuff can get shortchanged, which can have company-wide ramifications. I have over a decade of experience as a sales trainer, but more importantly, most of those years were working with sales teams that were in the exact same boat Gen Tech is in now. Growth is wonderful, but only if the rest of the company can keep up. I'm confident I can make sure your sales team is confident and enthusiastic about selling new products by implementing an ongoing sales training curriculum that emphasizes where they sit in a product lineup."*

**Read More:** [3 Better Ways to Answer "Why Should We Hire You?"](#)

## 7. What can you bring to the company?

When interviewers ask this question, they don't just want to hear about your background. They want to see that you understand what problems and challenges they're facing as a company or department as well as how you'll fit into the existing organization. Read the job description closely, do your research on the company, and make sure you pay attention in your early round interviews to understand any issues you're being hired to solve. Then, the key is to connect your skills and experiences to what the company needs and share an example that shows how you've done similar or transferable work in the past.

## Possible answer to "What can you bring to the company?"

*"As Jocelyn talked about in our interview earlier, PopCo is looking to expand its market to small business owners with less than 25 employees, so I'd bring my expertise in this area and my experience in guiding a sales team that's selling to these customers for the first time. In most of my past roles, this segment has been my focus and in my current role, I also played a big part in creating our sales strategies when the business began selling to these customers. I worked with my managers to develop the sales script. I also listened in on a number of sales calls with other account execs who were selling to these customers for the first time and gave them pointers and other feedback. In the first quarter, our 10-person sales team closed 50 new bookings in this segment, and I personally closed 10 of those deals. I helped guide my last company through the expansion into small businesses, and I'm eager to do that again at PopCo. Plus, I noticed you have a monthly karaoke night—so I'm eager to bring my rendition of 'Call Me Maybe' to the team as well."*

**Read More:** [What Interviewers Really Want to Hear When They Ask "What Can You Bring to the Company?"](#)

## 8. What are your greatest strengths?

Here's an opening to talk about something that makes you great—and a great fit for this role. When you're answering this question, think quality, not quantity. In other words, don't rattle off a list of adjectives. Instead, pick one or a few (depending on the question) specific qualities that are relevant to this position and illustrate them with examples. Stories are always more memorable than generalizations. And if there's something you were hoping to mention because it makes you a great candidate, but you haven't had a chance yet, this would be the perfect time.



## Possible answer to “What are your greatest strengths?”

*“I’d say one of my greatest strengths is bringing organization to hectic environments and implementing processes to make everyone’s lives easier. In my current role as an executive assistant to a CEO, I created new processes for pretty much everything, from scheduling meetings to planning monthly all hands agendas to preparing for event appearances. Everyone in the company knew how things worked and how long they would take, and the structures helped alleviate stress and set expectations on all sides. I’d be excited to bring that same approach to an operations manager role at a startup, where everything is new and constantly growing and could use just the right amount of structure to keep things running smoothly.”*

**Read More:** [3 Smart Strategies for Answering “What’s Your Greatest Strength?”](#)

## 9. What do you consider to be your weaknesses?

What your interviewer is really trying to do with this question—beyond identifying any major red flags—is to gauge your self-awareness and honesty. So, “I can’t meet a deadline to save my life” is not an option—but neither is “Nothing! I’m perfect!” Strike a balance by thinking of something that you struggle with but that you’re working to improve. For example, maybe you’ve never been strong at public speaking, but you’ve recently volunteered to run meetings to help you get more comfortable when addressing a crowd.

## Possible answer to “What do you consider to be your weaknesses?”

*“It can be difficult for me to gauge when the people I’m working with are overwhelmed or dissatisfied with their workloads. To ensure that I’m not asking too much or too little from my team, we have weekly check-ins. I like to ask if they feel like they’re on top of their workload, how I could better support them, whether there’s anything they’d like to take on or get rid of, and if they’re engaged by what they’re doing. Even if the answer is ‘all good,’ these meetings really lay the groundwork for a good and trusting relationship.”*

**Read More:** [4 Ways to Answer “What Is Your Greatest Weakness?” That Actually Sound Believable](#)

## 10. What is your greatest professional achievement?

Nothing says “hire me” better than a track record of achieving amazing results in past jobs, so don’t be shy when answering this interview question! A great way to do so is by using the STAR method: situation, task, action, results. Set up the situation and the task that you were required to complete to provide the interviewer with background context (e.g., “In my last job as a junior analyst, it was my role to manage the invoicing process”), then describe what you did (the action) and what you achieved (the result): “In one month, I streamlined the process, which saved my group 10 person-hours each month and reduced errors on invoices by 25%.”

### Possible answer to “What is your greatest professional achievement?”

*“My greatest accomplishment was when I helped the street lighting company I worked for convince the small town of Bend, Oregon to convert antiquated street lighting to energy-efficient LED bulbs. My role was created to promote and sell the energy-efficient bulbs, while touting the long-term advantage of reduced energy costs. I had to develop a way to educate city light officials on the value of our energy-efficient bulbs—which was a challenge since our products had an expensive up-front cost compared to less efficient lighting options. I created an information packet and held local community events aimed at city officials and the tax-paying public. There, I was able to demo the company product, answer questions, and evangelize the value of LED bulbs for the long term. It was crucial to have the public on board and I was able to reach a wide variety of community members with these events. I not only reached my first-year sales goal of \$100,000, but I was also able to help us land another contract in a neighboring city. Plus, the community-focused strategy garnered attention from the national media. And I’m proud to say I got a promotion within one year to senior sales representative.”*

**Read More:** [The Perfect Formula for Answering “What Is Your Greatest Accomplishment” in an Interview](#)

## 11. Tell me about a challenge or conflict you’ve faced at work, and how you dealt with it.



You're probably not eager to talk about conflicts you've had at work during a job interview. But if you're asked directly, don't pretend you've never had one. Be honest about a difficult situation you've faced (but without going into the kind of detail you'd share venting to a friend). "Most people who ask are only looking for evidence that you're willing to face these kinds of issues head-on and make a sincere attempt at coming to a resolution," former recruiter Richard Moy says. Stay calm and professional as you tell the story (and answer any follow-up questions), spend more time talking about the resolution than the conflict, and mention what you'd do differently next time to show "you're open to learning from tough experiences."

## **Possible answer to "Tell me about a challenge or conflict you've faced at work, and how you dealt with it."**

*"Funnily enough, last year I was part of a committee that put together a training on conflict intervention in the workplace and the amount of pushback we got for requiring attendance really put our training to the test. There was one senior staff member in particular who seemed adamant. It took some careful listening to understand he felt like it wasn't the best use of his time given the workload he was juggling. I made sure to acknowledge his concern. And then I focused on his direct objection and explained how the training was meant to improve not just the culture of the company, but also the efficiency at which we operated—and that the goal was for the training to make everyone's workload feel lighter. He did eventually attend and was there when I talked to the whole staff about identifying the root issue of a conflict and addressing that directly without bringing in other issues, which is how I aim to handle any disagreement in the workplace."*

**[Read More: 3 Ways You're Messing Up the Answer to "Tell Me About a Conflict You've Faced at Work"](#)**

## **12. Tell me about a time you demonstrated leadership skills.**

You don't have to have a fancy title to act like a leader or demonstrate leadership skills. Think about a time when you headed up a project, took the initiative to propose an alternate process, or helped motivate your team to get something done. Then use the STAR method to tell your

interviewer a story, giving enough detail to paint a picture (but not so much that you start rambling) and making sure you spell out the result. In other words, be clear about why you're telling this particular story and connect all the dots for the interviewer.

## **Possible answer to "Tell me about a time you demonstrated leadership skills."**

*"I think that a good leader is someone who can make decisions while also listening to others and being willing to admit when you're wrong and course correct. In my last role, my team and I were responsible for giving a big presentation to a prospective client. I quickly assigned different tasks to members of my team, but the project never really got moving. I gave everyone an opportunity to share their input and concerns, and it turned out that they were struggling in the roles I'd given them. I ended up switching a few people around. Meanwhile, the employee I'd assigned to give the presentation was nervous, but still wanted to give it a try. I worked with them to make sure they were ready and even held a practice session so that they could rehearse in a more comfortable environment. When the time came for the real thing, they nailed it! We landed the client and the company still has the account to this day. And that employee became a go-to person for important client presentations. I'm really glad I took the time to listen to everyone's concerns so that I could re-evaluate my approach and help my team be the best it could be."*

**Read More:** [The Best Way to Answer "Tell Me About a Time You Demonstrated Leadership Skills" in a Job Interview](#)

## **13. What's a time you disagreed with a decision that was made at work?**

The ideal anecdote here is one where you handled a disagreement professionally and learned something from the experience. [Zhang recommends](#) paying particular attention to how you start and end your response. To open, make a short statement to frame the rest of your answer, one that nods at the ultimate takeaway or the reason you're telling this story. For example: "I learned early on in my professional career that it's fine to disagree if you can back up your hunches with data." And to close strong, you can either give a one-sentence summary

of your answer (“In short...”) or talk briefly about how what you learned or gained from this experience would help you in the role you’re interviewing for.

## **Possible answer to “What’s a time you disagreed with a decision that was made at work?”**

*“In my job as a finance assistant, I was in charge of putting together reports for potential company investments. It was important to get the details and numbers right so that leaders had the best information to make a decision. One time, my boss asked me to generate a new report on a Wednesday morning and wanted it done by Thursday at 5 PM. Because I’m committed to high-quality work and I wasn’t sure my boss fully understood what goes into each report, I knew I needed to speak up. At her next available opening, I sat down with my boss and explained my concerns. She was firm that the report would be completed by Thursday at 5 PM. So I decided to ask if there was anyone who could help out. After thinking about it, my boss found another assistant who could put in a few hours. While it was a tight timeline, we got the report done, and the committee was really pleased to review it at the meeting. My boss appreciated my extra efforts to make it happen and I felt good that I hadn’t let the quality of the report slip. It was a good experience of being a team player but also knowing when and how to ask for help. And once I explained how much time and work goes into each report, my boss was careful to assign them further in advance.”*

**Read More:** [Here’s the Secret to Answering “Tell Me About a Time You Had a Conflict With Your Boss” in an Interview](#)

## **14. Tell me about a time you made a mistake.**

You’re probably not too eager to dig into past blunders when you’re trying to impress an interviewer and land a job. But talking about a mistake and winning someone over aren’t mutually exclusive, Moy says. In fact, if you do it right, it can *help* you. The key is to be honest without placing blame on other people, then explain what you learned from your mistake and what actions you took to ensure it didn’t happen again. At the end of the day, employers are looking for folks who are self-aware, can take feedback, and care about doing better.

## **Possible answer to “Tell me about a time you made a mistake.”**

*“Early in my career, I missed a deadline that ended up costing us a really big account. There were a lot of factors that contributed to this, but ultimately, I was the one who dropped the ball. From that experience, I went back and thought really hard about what I could’ve controlled and what I would’ve changed. It turns out that I was not nearly as organized as I thought I was. I sat down with my boss, asked for suggestions on how to improve my organizational skills, and a few months later I was able to score an even bigger account for the department.”*

**Read More:** [3 Rules That Guarantee You’ll Nail the Answer to “Tell Me About a Time You Made a Mistake”](#)

## 15. Tell me about a time you failed.

This question is very similar to the one about making a mistake, and you should approach your answer in much the same way. Make sure you pick a real, actual failure you can speak honestly about. Start by making it clear to the interviewer how you define failure. For instance: “As a manager, I consider it a failure whenever I’m caught by surprise. I strive to know what’s going on with my team and their work.” Then situate your story in relation to that definition and explain what happened. Finally, don’t forget to share what you learned. It’s OK to fail—everyone does sometimes—but it’s important to show that you took something from the experience.

### **Possible answer to “Tell me about a time you failed.”**

*“As a team manager, I consider it a failure if I don’t know what’s going on with my staff and their work—basically if a problem catches me by surprise then I’ve failed somewhere along the way. Even if the outcome is ultimately fine, it means I’ve left a team member unsupported at some point. A somewhat recent example would be this training we do every year for new project managers. Because it’s an event that my team has run so many times, I didn’t think to check in and had no idea a scheduling conflict was brewing into a full-on turf war with another team. The resolution actually ended up being a quick and easy conversation at the leadership team meeting, but had I just asked about it sooner it would never have been a problem to begin with. I definitely learned my lesson about setting reminders to check in about major projects or events even if they’ve been done dozens of times before.”*

**Read More:** [4 Steps for Answering “Tell Me About a Time When You Failed”](#)

## 16. Why are you leaving your current job?

This is a toughie, but one you can be sure you'll be asked. Definitely keep things positive—you have nothing to gain by being negative about your current employer. Instead, frame things in a way that shows that you're eager to take on new opportunities and that the role you're interviewing for is a better fit for you. For example, “I'd really love to be part of product development from beginning to end, and I know I'd have that opportunity here.” And if you were let go from your most recent job? Keep it simple: “Unfortunately, I was let go,” is a totally acceptable answer.

### Possible answer to “Why are you leaving your current job?”

*“I'm ready for the next challenge in my career. I loved the people I worked with and the projects I worked on, but at some point I realized I wasn't being challenged the way I used to be. Rather than let myself get too comfortable, I decided to pursue a position where I can continue to grow.”*

**Read More:** [4 Better Ways to Answer “Why Are You Leaving Your Job?”](#)

## 17. Why were you fired?

Of course, they may ask the follow-up question: *Why* were you let go? If you lost your job due to layoffs, you can simply say, “The company [reorganized/merged/was acquired] and unfortunately my [position/department] was eliminated.” But what if you were fired for performance reasons? Your best bet is to be honest (the job-seeking world is small, after all). But it doesn't have to be a deal breaker. Frame it as a learning experience: Share how you've grown and how you approach your job and life now as a result. And if you can portray your growth as an advantage for this next job, even better.

### Possible answer to “Why were you fired?”

*“After working for XYZ Inc. for four years, there were some changes made to the amount of client calls we were expected to process per hour. I used the techniques we were taught after*



*the change took effect, but didn't want our customer service to slip. Unfortunately, I wasn't consistently completing the required number of calls, and, as a result, I was let go. I felt really bad about this and in retrospect I could have done better sticking to the process that would have let me meet the per hour quota. But you've told me about the customer service standards and the volume expectations here, and I believe it won't be a problem."*

**Read More:** [Stop Cringing! How to Tell an Interviewer You've Been Fired](#)

## 18. Why was there a gap in your employment?

Maybe you were taking care of children or aging parents, dealing with health issues, or traveling the world. Maybe it just took you a long time to land the right job. Whatever the reason, you should be prepared to discuss the gap (or gaps) on your resume. Seriously, practice saying your answer out loud. The key is to be honest, though that doesn't mean you have to share more details than you're comfortable with. If there are skills or qualities you honed or gained in your time away from the workforce—whether through volunteer work, running a home, or responding to a personal crisis—you can also talk about how those would help you excel in this role.

### Possible answer to "Why was there a gap in your employment?"

*"I spent a number of years working at a company in a very demanding job, in which—as you'll see from my references—I was very successful. But I'd reached a stage in my career where I wanted to focus on my personal growth. The time I spent traveling taught me a lot about how to get along with people of all ages and cultures. Now I feel more than ready to jump back into my career with renewed energy and focus and I feel this role is the ideal way to do that."*

**Read More:** [How to Explain the Gap in Your Resume With Ease](#)

## 19. Can you explain why you changed career paths?

Don't be thrown off by this question—just take a deep breath and explain to the hiring manager why you've made the career decisions you have. More importantly, give a few examples of how your past experience is transferable to the new role. This doesn't have to be a

direct connection; in fact, it's often more impressive when a candidate can show how seemingly irrelevant experience is very relevant to the role.

## Possible answer to "Can you explain why you changed career paths?"

*"Ever since my brother was diagnosed with a heart condition, I've been training and running with him in your annual Heart Run to raise money for your organization and help support patients with expenses not covered by insurance. Each time, I've been struck by how truly dedicated and happy to be there your employees have been. So when I saw this posting for a fundraising role, it felt like it was meant to be. For the last 10 years of my career I've been an account executive for various SaaS companies, and I've really honed my skills when it comes to convincing organizations to make regular payments for something over the long-term. But I've been looking for a position in fundraising where I can use these skills to really help people and I'm highly motivated to do that with your organization."*

**Read More:** [How to Explain Your Winding Career Path to a Hiring Manager](#)

## 20. What's your current salary?

It's now illegal for some or all employers to ask you about your salary history in several cities and states, including New York City; Louisville, North Carolina; California; and Massachusetts. But no matter where you live, it can be stressful to hear this question. Don't panic—there are several possible strategies you can turn to. For example, you can deflect the question, Muse career coach Emily Liou says, with a response like: "Before discussing any salary, I'd really like to learn more about what this role entails. I've done a lot of research on [Company] and I am certain if it's the right fit, we'll be able to agree on a number that's fair and competitive to both parties." You can also reframe the question around your salary expectations or requirements (see question 38) or choose to share the number if you think it will work in your favor.

## Possible answer to "What's your current salary?"

*"Before discussing any salary, I'd really like to learn more about what this role entails. I've done a lot of research on [Company] and I am certain if it's the right fit, we'll be able to agree on a number that's fair and competitive to both parties."*



**Read More:** [Here's How You Answer the Illegal "What's Your Current Salary" Question](#)

## 21. What do you like least about your job?

Tread carefully here! The last thing you want to do is let your answer devolve into a rant about how terrible your current company is or how much you hate your boss or that one coworker. The easiest way to handle this question with poise is to focus on an opportunity the role you're interviewing for offers that your current job doesn't. You can keep the conversation positive and emphasize why you're so excited about the job.

### Possible answer to "What do you like least about your job?"

*"In my current role, I'm responsible for drafting media lists to pitch. While I've developed a knack for this and can do it when it is necessary, I'm looking forward to a job that allows me to have a more hands-on role in working with media partners. That's one of the things that most excited me about your account supervisor position."*

**Read More:** [What Interviewers Really Want When They Ask, "What Do You Like Least About Your Job?"](#)

## 22. What are you looking for in a new position?

Hint: Ideally the same things that this position has to offer. Be specific.

### Possible answer to "What are you looking for in a new position?"

*"I've been honing my data analysis skills for a few years now and, first and foremost, I'm looking for a position where I can continue to exercise those skills. Another thing that's important to me is the chance to present my findings and suggestions directly to clients. I'm always very motivated by being able to see the impact of my work on other people. And I'm definitely looking for a position where I can grow since I hope to take on managerial responsibilities in the future. To sum it up, I'd love a position where I can use my skills to make an impact that I can see with my own eyes. Of course, the position is only part of the equation. Being at a company where I can grow and work toward something I care about*

matters, too. DNF's goal of being at the intersection between data and education inspires me, and I'm really excited about this opportunity."

**Read More:** [4 Steps for Answering "What Are You Looking for in a New Position?"](#)

## 23. What type of work environment do you prefer?

Hint: Ideally one that's similar to the environment of the company you're applying to. Be specific.

### Possible answer to "What type of work environment do you prefer?"

*"I really like the environment in my current position. My manager is a great resource and always willing to help out when I run into an issue, but they trust me to get my work done so I have a lot of freedom in how I schedule and prioritize, which is very important to me. Everyone has their own cubicle, so it's often pretty quiet to get our work done, but we all get lunch together and our team has a lot of check-in meetings and communicates frequently via Slack so we still get a lot of opportunities to bounce ideas off each other. So I like both individual and more collaborative work. How would you describe the mix here?"*

**Read More:** [3 Steps to Answering "What Type of Work Environment Do You Prefer?"](#)

## 24. What's your work style?

When an interviewer asks you about your work style, they're probably trying to imagine you in the role. How will you approach your work? What will it be like to work with you? Will you mesh well with the existing team? You can help them along by choosing to focus on something that's important to you *and* aligns with everything you've learned about the role, team, and company so far. The question is broad, which means you have a lot of flexibility in how you answer: You might talk about how you communicate and collaborate on cross-functional projects, what kind of remote work setup allows you to be most productive, or how you approach leading a team and managing direct reports. Just try to keep it positive. And remember, telling a story will almost always make your answer more memorable.

### Possible answer to "What's your work style?"

*"I tend to do my best work when I'm collaborating with colleagues and we're working together toward a common goal. I was that rare student who loved group projects and now I still get a rush of excitement when I'm planning marketing campaigns with a team and bringing new and different voices into the fold. When I was working at XYZ Agency, I made it a habit to extend invitations to folks in different departments to join certain brainstorming and feedback sessions. Some of our most successful campaigns grew out of the ideas we generated together with coworkers in IT, HR, product, and customer success. That's why I was so excited to learn that this role would have me working closely with the product and sales teams as well as with a talented marketing team. The other thing I find is crucial to making these collaborations successful is organization and documentation, so I'm also really big on creating one central home for all materials related to a project, including meeting notes, action items, drafts of campaign copy and visuals, and timelines."*

**Read More:** [How to Answer "What Is Your Work Style?" in an Interview \(Plus Examples!\)](#)

## 25. What's your management style?

The best managers are strong but flexible, and that's exactly what you want to show off in your answer. (Think something like, "While every situation and every team member requires a bit of a different strategy, I tend to approach my employee relationships as a coach...") Then share a couple of your best managerial moments, like when you grew your team from five to 15 or coached an underperforming employee to become the company's top salesperson.

### Possible answer to "What's your management style?"

*"Management style is so hard to put your finger on, but I think in general a good manager gives clear directions and actually stays pretty hands-off, but is ready and available to jump in to offer guidance, expertise, and help when needed. I try my best to make that my management style. I also go out of my way to make sure I know when my team needs help. That means plenty of informal check-ins, both on the work they're doing and on their general job satisfaction and mental well-being. I remember one project in particular at my most recent position that involved everyone working on a separate aspect of the product. This meant a lot of independent work for my team of seven people, but rather than bog everyone down with repetitive meetings to update me and everyone else on progress made, I created a project wiki that allowed us to communicate new information when necessary*

*without disrupting another team member's work. I then made it my job to make sure no one was ever stuck on a problem too long without a sounding board. Ultimately, despite the disparate project responsibilities, we ended up with a very cohesive product and, more importantly, a team that wasn't burnt out."*

**Read More:** [How to Answer "What's Your Management Style?"](#)

## 26. How would your boss and coworkers describe you?

First, be honest (remember, if you make it to the final round, the hiring manager will be calling your former bosses and coworkers for references!). Then try to pull out strengths and traits you haven't discussed in other aspects of the interview, such as your strong work ethic or your willingness to pitch in on other projects when needed.

### Possible answer to "How would your boss and coworkers describe you?"

*"Actually, in my most recent performance review in April, my direct supervisor described me as someone who takes initiative and doesn't shy away from hard problems. My role involves a lot of on-site implementation, and when things go wrong, it's usually up to me to fix it. Rather than punting the problem back to the team, I always try to do what I can first. I know she appreciates that about me."*

**Read More:** [3 Strategies for Answering "How Would Your Boss or Coworkers Describe You?"](#)

## 27. How do you deal with pressure or stressful situations?

Here's another question you may feel the urge to sidestep in an effort to prove you're the perfect candidate who can handle anything. But it's important not to dismiss this one (i.e. don't say, "I just put my head down and push through it," or, "I don't get stressed out"). Instead, talk about your go-to strategies for dealing with stress (whether it's meditating for 10 minutes every day or making sure you go for a run or keeping a super-detailed to-do list) and

how you communicate and otherwise proactively try to mitigate pressure. If you can give a real example of a stressful situation you navigated successfully, all the better.

## Possible answer to “How do you deal with pressure or stressful situations?”

*“I stay motivated by thinking about the end result. I’ve found that even in the midst of a challenging situation, reminding myself of my goals helps me take a step back and stay positive.”*

**Read More:** [3 Ways You’re Messing Up the Answer to “How Do You Deal With Stressful Situations?”](#)

## 28. What do you like to do outside of work?

Interviewers will sometimes ask about your hobbies or interests outside of work in order to get to know you a little better—to find out what you’re passionate about and devote time to during your off-hours. It’s another chance to let your personality shine. Be honest, but keep it professional and be mindful of answers that might make it sound like you’re going to spend *all* your time focusing on something other than the job you’re applying for.

## Possible answer to “What do you like to do outside of work?”

*“I’m a huge foodie. My friends and I love trying new restaurants in town as soon as they open—the more unusual the better! I love discovering new foods and cuisines, and it’s also a great activity to share with friends. I try to go out with the same group at least once a week and it’s a fun way to make sure we keep in touch and share experiences even when we’re busy with other things. We even took a trip to New York City and spent each day in a different neighborhood, buying something to share from a few restaurants.”*

**Read More:** [How to Answer “What Are Your Hobbies?” in an Interview \(It’s Not a Trick Question!\)](#)

## 29. Are you planning on having children?



Questions about your family status, gender (“How would you handle managing a team of all men?”), nationality (“Where were you born?”), religion, or age are illegal—but they still get asked (and frequently). Of course, not always with ill intent—the interviewer might just be trying to make conversation and might not realize these are off-limits—but you should definitely tie any questions about your personal life (or anything else you think might be inappropriate) back to the job at hand.

### **Possible answer to “Are you planning on having children?”**

*“You know, I’m not quite there yet. But I am very interested in the career paths at your company. Can you tell me more about that?”*

**Read More:** [5 Illegal Interview Questions and How to Dodge Them](#)

## **30. How do you stay organized?**

Would you want to work with a hot mess? Yeah, we didn’t think so. Neither does anyone else. A disorganized worker doesn’t just struggle in their own role, they can also create chaos for peers, managers, direct reports, clients, customers, and anyone else they interact with. So interviewers will often ask about how you keep yourself organized to make sure you’d be able to handle the workload and gauge what you’d be like to work with. In your answer, you’ll want to reassure them you’d have things under control (both in what you say and how you say it), describe a specific system or method you’ve used (bonus points if you can tie it to the role you’re interviewing for), and explain how it benefited you and your team. Just make sure your answer is succinct and, well, organized.

### **Possible answer to “How do you stay organized?”**

*“I take pride in my ability to stay organized, and it’s really come in handy in my past roles and especially the social media assistant job I’m in now. First, I keep a really meticulous calendar for each of the platforms I’m responsible for using Hootsuite—which I noticed you use here as well—and I try to block off time twice a week to get ahead on creating and slotting in posts.*

*“Second, I’m a big fan of Trello, where I have one personal board I use as a to-do list color-coded by type of task and marked with priority level and one shared marketing team board*

*that we use to coordinate campaigns launching across social, email, and other channels. We pay very close attention to the news in case we need to pause a campaign. If needed, I'd tag all the relevant stakeholders on Trello, immediately suspend all scheduled content in Hootsuite, and start a discussion on Slack or suggest a meeting to reassess strategy.*

*"Finally, I created a shared folder on Google Drive with subfolders by campaign that I update with one-pagers on goals and strategies, assets, a record of the actual posts deployed, performance analyses, and retros. That way, there's a go-to place for anyone on the team to refer back to past projects, which I've found really helps us learn from every campaign and incorporate those learnings into what we're working on next."*

**Read More:** [What Interviewers Really Want to Know When They Ask "How Do You Stay Organized?"](#)

## 31. How do you prioritize your work?

Your interviewers want to know that you can manage your time, exercise judgement, communicate, and shift gears when needed. Start by talking about whatever system you've found works for you to plan your day or week, whether it's a to-do list app you swear by or a color-coded spreadsheet. This is one where you'll definitely want to lean on a real-life example. So go on to describe how you've reacted to a last-minute request or another unexpected shift in priorities in the past, incorporating how you evaluated and decided what to do and how you communicated with your manager and/or teammates about it.

### **Possible answer to "How do you prioritize your work?"**

*"I'd be lost without my daily to-do list! At the beginning of each workday, I write out tasks to complete, and list them from highest to lowest priority to help keep me on track. But I also realize priorities change unexpectedly. On one particular day recently, I had planned to spend most of my time making phone calls to advertising agencies to get price quotes for an upcoming campaign. Then I did a quick check-in with my manager. She mentioned she needed help putting together a presentation ASAP for a major potential client. I moved the more flexible task to the end of the week and spent the next few hours updating the time-sensitive presentation. I make it a point to keep lines of communication open with my manager and coworkers. If I'm working on a task that will take a while to complete, I try to*



*give a heads-up to my team as soon as possible. If my workload gets to be unmanageable, I check in with my boss about which items can drop to the bottom of the priority list, and then I try to reset expectations about different deadlines.”*

**Read More:** [\*A Foolproof Method to Answer the Interview Question “How Do You Prioritize Your Work?”\*](#)

## 32. What are you passionate about?

You’re not a robot programmed to do your work and then power down. You’re a human, and if someone asks you this question in an interview, it’s probably because they want to get to know you better. The answer can align directly with the type of work you’d be doing in that role—like if, for example, you’re applying to be a graphic designer and spend all of your free time creating illustrations and data visualizations to post on Instagram.

But don’t be afraid to talk about a hobby that’s different from your day-to-day work. Bonus points if you can “take it one step further and connect how your passion would make you an excellent candidate for the role you are applying for,” says Muse career coach Al Dea. Like if you’re a software developer who loves to bake, you might talk about how the ability to be both creative and precise informs your approach to code.

### Possible answer to “What are you passionate about?”

*“One of my favorite pastimes is knitting—I love being able to create something beautiful from nothing. Of course, knitting also requires a keen attention to detail and a lot of patience. Luckily, as an accountant I have cultivated both of those qualities!”*

**Read More:** [\*3 Authentic Ways to Answer “What Are You Passionate About?” in a Job Interview\*](#)

## 33. What motivates you?

Before you panic about answering what feels like a probing existential question, consider that the interviewer wants to make sure you’re excited about *this* role at *this* company, and that you’ll be motivated to succeed if they pick you. So think back to what has energized you in

previous roles and pinpoint what made your eyes light up when you read this job description. Pick one thing, make sure it's relevant to the role and company you're interviewing for, and try to weave in a story to help illustrate your point. If you're honest, which you should be, your enthusiasm will be palpable.

### **Possible answer to "What motivates you?"**

*"I'm driven primarily by my desire to learn new things—big or small—and take on new responsibilities so that I'm constantly growing as an employee and contributing more to my team and organization. I spent several summers working as a camp counselor and felt most fulfilled when I volunteered to lead planning for a talent show, jumped in to help with scheduling logistics, and learned how to run pickups efficiently. All of that experience helped immensely when I took a step up to become the lead counselor last year focused on operations, and that's what excites me so much about the opportunity to take on this managerial role for the after-school program."*

**Read More:** [5 Easy Steps to Answer "What Motivates You?" in an Interview](#)

## **34. What are your pet peeves?**

Here's another one that feels like a minefield. But it'll be easier to navigate if you know why an interviewer is asking it. Most likely, they want to make sure you'll thrive at their company—and get a glimpse of how you deal with conflict. So be certain you pick something that doesn't contradict the culture and environment at this organization while still being honest. Then explain why and what you've done to address it in the past, doing your best to stay calm and composed. Since there's no need to dwell on something that annoys you, you can keep this response short and sweet.

### **Possible answer to "What are your pet peeves?"**

*"It bothers me when an office's schedule is really disorganized, because in my experience, disorganization can cause confusion, which can hurt the motivation of the team. As a person who likes things to be orderly, I try to help keep my team on task while also allowing for flexibility."*

**Read More:** [6 Tips for Answering "What Are Your Pet Peeves?" in an Interview](#)

## 35. How do you like to be managed?

This is another one of those questions that's about finding the right fit—both from the company's perspective and your own. Think back on what worked well for you in the past and what didn't. What did previous bosses do that motivated you and helped you succeed and grow? Pick one or two things to focus on and always articulate them with a positive framing (even if your preference comes from an experience where your manager behaved in the opposite way, phrase it as what you *would* want a manager to do). If you can give a positive example from a great boss, it'll make your answer even stronger.

### Possible answer to "How do you like to be managed?"

*"I enjoy having my hands in a lot of different projects, so I like working with managers who allow their employees to experiment, be independent, and work cross-functionally with other teams. At the same time, I really welcome it when a boss provides me with support, guidance, and coaching. No one can do anything alone, and I believe when managers and employees collaborate together and learn from one another everyone comes out on top."*

**Read More:** [3 Easy Steps to Answer "How Do You Like to Be Managed?" in an Interview](#)

## 36. Do you consider yourself successful?

This question might make you uncomfortable. But you can think of it as an opportunity to allow the interviewer to get to know you better and to position yourself as an excellent choice for this job. First off, make sure you say yes! Then pick one specific professional achievement you're proud of that can be tied back to the role you're interviewing for—one that demonstrates a quality, skill, or experience that would help you excel in this position. You'll want to explain *why* you consider it a success, talk about the process in addition to the outcome, and highlight your own accomplishment without forgetting your team. Zooming in on one story will help if you feel awkward tooting your own horn!

### Possible answer to "Do you consider yourself successful?"

*"I do consider myself successful, even though I'm early in my professional career. I took a full load of classes in my junior year of college because I wanted to take that summer to*

*volunteer for a human rights organization overseas. I knew that I needed to make sure I was on track with my major, minor, and graduation requirements. It was difficult to juggle it all with my part-time job, which I kept to help account for the fact that I wouldn't be earning money over the summer, and there were a few sleepless nights. But it was worth the hard work: I ended the year with a 3.9 GPA and the opportunity to volunteer for the agency in Ghana without falling behind my graduation timeline. For me success is about setting a goal and sticking with it, no matter how hard it is, and this experience was proof that I could be successful even when there's a lot to balance, which I know there always is at a nonprofit like this one."*

**Read More:** [How to Answer "Do You Consider Yourself Successful?" Without Feeling Like a Show-Off](#)

## 37. Where do you see yourself in five years?

If asked this question, be honest and specific about your future goals, but consider this: A hiring manager wants to know a) if you've set realistic expectations for your career, b) if you have ambition (a.k.a., this interview isn't the first time you're considering the question), and c) if the position aligns with your goals and growth. Your best bet is to think realistically about where this position could take you and answer along those lines. And if the position isn't necessarily a one-way ticket to your aspirations? It's OK to say that you're not quite sure what the future holds, but that you see this experience playing an important role in helping you make that decision.

### Possible answer to "Where do you see yourself in five years?"

*"In five years, I'd like to be in a position where I know more about my longer-term career aspirations as a designer. I will have gotten experience working for a design agency and know more about the industry overall. I'll have grown my technical skills and learned how to take feedback from clients and incorporate it. And the way your agency is set up, I'll also have gotten the opportunity to design different kinds of deliverables—including websites, branding, and ad campaigns—for different kinds of clients to see where I really feel at home before settling on a focus."*

**Read More:** [How to Answer "Where Do You See Yourself in 5 Years?"](#)

## 38. How do you plan to achieve your career goals?

Having goals shows interviewers you care, are ambitious, and can think ahead. Having a plan for how you'll achieve your goals demonstrates your self-motivation as well as organizational and time management skills. Finally, the fact that you've accomplished past goals you've set for yourself is proof of your ability to follow through. All together, these are indications that you can not only set and achieve goals of your own, but also help your prospective boss, team, and company do the same. To craft your answer, make sure you focus on one or two goals in detail, explain why the goals are meaningful, communicate what milestones are coming up, highlight past successes, and connect back to *this* job.

### Possible answer to "How do you plan to achieve your career goals?"

*"My current goal is to earn the CPA license so that I'm fully certified and prepared to contribute in a junior staff accounting job. My undergraduate degree is in finance and I completed an accounting internship with XYZ Company last summer. While I was there, I decided that each week I'd ask one person from a different team to coffee to learn about their job and career path. Not only did those conversations impress upon me the importance of getting my CPA as soon as possible, they also helped me realize I was eager to pursue forensic accounting, which is why I'm so excited about the opportunity to join this team. In order to ensure I earn my CPA this year, I enrolled in NASBA workshops, created a study schedule to keep myself on track, and will be taking my first trial test in three weeks. I plan on taking the actual test within the next three to six months."*

**Read More:** [How to Answer "How Do You Plan to Achieve Your Career Goals?" in an Interview](#)

## 39. What are your career aspirations?

Career aspirations are bigger and loftier than career goals. With this question, interviewers are asking: What kind of career would make you happiest (while also being realistic)? Your aspirations might revolve around what kind of company you'd like to work for, what tasks you'd like to do, who you'd like to help, or how you'd like to be seen by your colleagues. So to answer this question, talk about what would energize and fulfill you and connect it to the



position you're interviewing for. Be specific about how this job will help you achieve your career aspirations.

## Possible answer to "What are your career aspirations?"

*"After growing up in a food desert, my biggest professional aspiration is to help make healthy food more widely available and accessible regardless of where you live. I also love solving complex problems. Currently, as a project manager, I specialize in strategic planning and combine it with a natural ability to engage critical stakeholders—resulting in on-time and under-budget delivery. This role would help me use those skills to work on a mission I'm passionate about. I am determined to use these skills to help your organization guarantee our community has access to affordable, nutritious food and information to make healthy decisions. In the next five or so years, I would love to take on additional responsibility and be in a decision-making role to drive the mission beyond our community and support even more families in gaining access to nutritious food options."*

**Read More:** [How to Answer "What Are Your Career Aspirations?" in an Interview](#)

## 40. What's your dream job?

Along similar lines, the interviewer wants to uncover whether this position is really in line with your ultimate career goals. While "an NBA star" might get you a few laughs, a better bet is to talk about your goals and ambitions—and why this job will get you closer to them.

**Read More:** [The Secret Formula to Answering "What's Your Dream Job?" in an Interview](#)

## 41. What other companies are you interviewing with?

Companies might ask you who else you're interviewing with for a few reasons. Maybe they want to see how serious you are about this role and team (or even this field) or they're trying to find out who they're competing with to hire you. On one hand, you want to express your enthusiasm for this job, but at the same time, you don't want to give the company any more leverage than it already has by telling them there's no one else in the running. Depending on where you are in your search, you can talk about applying to or interviewing for a few roles

that have XYZ in common—then mention how and why *this* role seems like a particularly good fit.

## Possible answer to “What other companies are you interviewing with?”

*“I’m interviewing with a few companies for a range of positions, but they all come down to delivering an excellent customer experience. I wanted to keep an open mind about how to best achieve that goal, but so far it seems that this role will really allow me to focus all of my energy on customer experience and retention, which I find very appealing.”*

**Read More:** [How to Answer “What Other Companies Are You Interviewing With?”](#)

## 42. What makes you unique?

“They genuinely want to know the answer,” Dea promises. Give them a reason to pick you over other similar candidates. The key is to keep your answer relevant to the role you’re applying to. So the fact that you can run a six-minute mile or crush a trivia challenge might not help you get the job (but hey, it depends on the job!). Use this opportunity to tell them something that would give you an edge over your competition for *this* position. To figure out what that is, you can ask some former colleagues, think back to patterns you’ve seen in feedback you get, or try to distill why people tend to turn to you. Focus on one or two things and don’t forget to back up whatever you say with evidence.

## Possible answer to “What makes you unique?”

*“I basically taught myself animation from scratch. I was immediately drawn to it in college, and with the limited resources available to me, I decided to take matters into my own hands—and that’s the approach I take in all aspects of my work as a video editor. I don’t just wait around for things to happen, and when I can, I’m always eager to step in and take on new projects, pick up new skills, or brainstorm new ideas.”*

**Read More:** [A Simple Way to Answer “What Makes You Unique?” in Your Job Search \(Plus, Examples!\)](#)

## 43. What should I know that’s not on your resume?



It's a good sign if a recruiter or hiring manager is interested in *more* than just what's on your resume. It probably means they looked at your resume, think you might be a good fit for the role, and want to know more about you. To make this wide-open question a little more manageable, try talking about a positive trait, a story or detail that reveals a little more about you and your experience, or a mission or goal that makes you excited about this role or company.

### **Possible answer to "What should I know that's not on your resume?"**

*"Well, one thing you won't find on my resume: the time I had to administer emergency CPR. Last year, I was at the lake when I saw a young girl who looked like she was drowning. I was a lifeguard in high school, so I swam out, brought her to shore, and gave her CPR. Although this was—hopefully—a one-time event, I've always been able to stay calm during stressful situations, figure out a solution, and then act. As your account manager, I'd use this trait to quickly and effectively resolve issues both within the team and externally. After all, obstacles are inevitable, especially in a startup environment. And if anyone needs CPR at the office beach party, well, I'm your woman."*

**Read More:** [The Right Way to Answer "What Should I Know That's Not on Your Resume?"](#)

## **44. What would your first few months look like in this role?**

Your potential future boss (or whoever else has asked you this question) wants to know that you've done your research, given some thought to how you'd get started, and would be able to take initiative if hired. (In some interviews, you might even get the more specific, "What would your first 30, 60, or 90 days look like in this role?") So think about what information and aspects of the company and team you'd need to familiarize yourself with and which colleagues you'd want to sit down and talk to. You can also suggest one possible starter project to show you'd be ready to hit the ground running and contribute early on. This won't necessarily be the thing you do first if you do get the job, but a good answer shows that you're thoughtful and that you care.

### **Possible answer to "What would your first few months look like in this role?"**

*“It’s been exciting to hear about some of the new initiatives the company has started in our previous conversations—like the database project and the company-wide sync, but I know there’s still a lot for me to learn. The first thing I’d do is line up meetings with the stakeholders involved in the projects I’d be tackling to help me figure out what I don’t know and then go from there. Hopping into a database project halfway through can be tricky, but I’m confident that once I know what all the stakeholders are looking for, I’ll be able to efficiently plot out our next steps and set appropriate deadlines. From there, I’ll be focused on hitting the milestones that I’ve set for the team.”*

**Read More:** [The 30-60-90 Day Plan: Your Secret Weapon for New Job Success](#)

## 45. What are your salary expectations?

The number one rule of answering this question is: Figure out your salary requirements ahead of time. Do your research on what similar roles pay by using sites like PayScale and reaching out to your network. Be sure to take your experience, education, skills, and personal needs into account, too! From there, Muse career coach [Jennifer Fink](#) suggests choosing from one of three strategies:

- Give a salary range: But keep the bottom of your stated range toward the mid-to-high point of what you’re actually hoping for, Fink says.
- Flip the question: Try something like “That’s a great question—it would be helpful if you could share what the range is for this role,” Fink says.
- Delay answering: Tell your interviewer that you’d like to learn more about the role or the rest of the compensation package before discussing pay.

(And here’s some more info on responding to a question about your [salary requirements on an application form](#).)

### Possible answer to “What are your salary expectations?”

*“Taking into account my experience and Excel certifications, which you mentioned earlier would be very helpful to the team, I’m looking for somewhere between \$42,000 and \$46,000 annually for this role. But for me, benefits definitely matter as well. Your free on-site gym,*

*the commuter benefits, and other perks could definitely allow me to be a bit flexible with salary.”*

**Read More:** [3 Strategies for Answering “What Are Your Salary Expectations?” in an Interview](#)

## 46. What do you think we could do better or differently?

This question can really do a number on you. How do you give a meaty answer without insulting the company or, worse, the person you’re speaking with? Well first, take a deep breath. Then start your response with something positive about the company or specific product you’ve been asked to discuss. When you’re ready to give your constructive feedback, give some background on the perspective you’re bringing to the table and explain why you’d make the change you’re suggesting (ideally based on some past experience or other evidence). And if you end with a question, you can show them you’re curious about the company or product and open to other points of view. Try: “Did you consider that approach here? I’d love to know more about your process.”

**Read More:** [How to Answer the “How Would You Improve Our Company?” Interview Question Without Bashing Anyone](#)

## 47. When can you start?

Your goal here should be to set realistic expectations that will work for both you and the company. What exactly that sounds like will depend on your specific situation. If you’re ready to start immediately—if you’re unemployed, for example—you could offer to start within the week. But if you need to give notice to your current employer, don’t be afraid to say so; people will understand and respect that you plan to wrap things up right. It’s also legitimate to want to take a break between jobs, though you might want to say you have “previously scheduled commitments to attend to” and try to be flexible if they really need someone to start a bit sooner.

**Possible answer to “When can you start?”**

*“I am excited for the opportunity to join your team. I have several projects to wrap up in my current role at [Company]. I plan to give them two weeks’ notice to make a smooth transition for my coworkers and will be happy to come onboard with the team here after that time.”*

**Read More:** [4 Ways to Answer the Interview Question “When Can You Start?”](#)

## 48. Are you willing to relocate?

While this may sound like a simple yes-or-no question, it’s often a little bit more complicated than that. The simplest scenario is one where you’re totally open to moving and would be willing to do so for this opportunity. But if the answer is no, or at least not right now, you can reiterate your enthusiasm for the role, briefly explain why you can’t move at this time, and offer an alternative, like working remotely or out of a local office. Sometimes it’s not as clear-cut, and that’s OK. You can say you prefer to stay put for xyz reasons, but would be willing to consider relocating for the right opportunity.

### Possible answer to “Are you willing to relocate?”

*“I do love living in Raleigh and would prefer to stay here. However, for the right opportunity I’d be willing to consider relocating if necessary.”*

**Read More:** [The Best Responses to “Are You Willing to Relocate?” Depending on Your Situation](#)

## 49. How many tennis balls can you fit into a limousine?

1,000? 10,000? 100,000? Seriously? Well, seriously, you might get asked brain-teaser questions like these, especially in quantitative jobs. But remember that the interviewer doesn’t necessarily want an exact number—they want to make sure that you understand what’s being asked of you, and that you can set into motion a systematic and logical way to respond. So take a deep breath and start thinking through the math. (Yes, it’s OK to ask for a pen and paper!)

**Read More:** [9 Steps to Solving an Impossible Brain Teaser in a Tech Interview \(Without Breaking a Sweat\)](#)

## 50. If you were an animal, which one would you want to be?

Seemingly random personality-test type questions like these come up in interviews because hiring managers want to see how you can think on your feet. There's no wrong answer here, but you'll immediately gain bonus points if your answer helps you share your strengths or personality or connect with the hiring manager. Pro tip: Come up with a stalling tactic to buy yourself some thinking time, such as saying, "Now, that is a great question. I think I would have to say..."

**Read More:** [4 Steps for Answering Off-the-Wall Interview Questions](#)

## 51. Sell me this pen.

If you're interviewing for a sales job, your interviewer might put you on the spot to sell them a pen sitting on the table, or a legal pad, or a water bottle, or just *something*. The main thing they're testing you for? How you handle a high-pressure situation. So try to stay calm and confident and use your body language—making eye contact, sitting up straight, and more—to convey that you can handle this. Make sure you listen, understand your "customer's" needs, get specific about the item's features and benefits, and end strong—as though you were truly closing a deal.

**Read More:** [4 Tips for Responding to "Sell Me This Pen" in an Interview](#)

## 52. Is there anything else you'd like us to know?

Just when you thought you were done, your interviewer asks you this open-ended doozy. Don't panic—it's not a trick question! You can use this as an opportunity to close out the meeting on a high note in one of two ways, Zhang says. First, if there really is something relevant that you haven't had a chance to mention, do it now. Otherwise, you can *briefly* summarize your qualifications. For example, Zhang says, you could say: "I think we've covered most of it, but just to summarize, it sounds like you're looking for someone who can really hit the ground running. And with my previous experience [enumerate experience here], I think I'd be a great fit."



**Read More:** [How to Answer “Is There Anything Else You’d Like Us to Know?”](#)

## 53. Do you have any questions for us?

You probably already know that an interview isn’t just a chance for a hiring manager to grill you—it’s an opportunity to sniff out whether a job is the right fit from your perspective. What do you want to know about the position? The company? The department? The team? You’ll cover a lot of this in the actual interview, so have a few less-common questions ready to go. We especially like questions targeted to the interviewer (“What’s your favorite part about working here?”) or the company’s growth (“What can you tell me about your new products or plans for growth?”) If you’re interviewing for a remote role, there are some specific [questions](#) you might want to ask related to that.

**Read More:** [57 Smart Questions to Ask in a Job Interview in 2022](#)

## Bonus questions

Looking for more interview questions? Check out these lists of questions (and example answers!) for different types of interviews.

- [Behavioral interview questions](#)
- [Phone interview questions](#)
- [Remote interview questions](#)
- [Second interview questions](#)
- [COVID-related interview questions](#)
- [Diversity and inclusion interview questions](#)
- [Emotional intelligence interview questions](#)
- [Internship interview questions](#)
- [Manager interview questions](#)
- [Account management interview questions](#)

- [Accounting interview questions](#)
- [Administrative assistant interview questions](#)
- [Brand management interview questions](#)
- [Customer service interview questions](#)
- [Data science interview questions](#)
- [Digital marketing interview questions](#)
- [Financial analyst interview questions](#)
- [IT interview questions](#)
- [Nursing interview questions](#)
- [Product marketing interview questions](#)
- [Project management interview questions](#)
- [Retail interview questions](#)
- [Sales interview questions](#)
- [Software engineering interview questions](#)
- [Teaching interview questions](#)

## Want even *more* advice for answering common interview questions?

Click through for more tips and examples!

1. [Tell me about yourself.](#)
2. [Walk me through your resume.](#)
3. [How did you hear about this position?](#)
4. [Why do you want to work at this company?](#)

5. Why do you want this job?
6. Why should we hire you?
7. What can you bring to the company?
8. What are your greatest strengths?
9. What do you consider to be your weaknesses?
10. What is your greatest professional achievement?
11. Tell me about a challenge or conflict you've faced at work, and how you dealt with it.
12. Tell me about a time you demonstrated leadership skills.
13. What's a time you disagreed with a decision that was made at work?
14. Tell me about a time you made a mistake.
15. Tell me about a time you failed.
16. Why are you leaving your current job?
17. Why were you fired?
18. Why was there a gap in your employment?
19. Can you explain why you changed career paths?
20. What's your current salary?
21. What do you like least about your job?
22. What are you looking for in a new position?
23. What type of work environment do you prefer?
24. What's your work style?
25. What's your management style?
26. How would your boss and coworkers describe you?
27. How do you deal with pressure or stressful situations?

28. What do you like to do outside of work?
29. Are you planning on having children?
30. How do you stay organized?
31. How do you prioritize your work?
32. What are you passionate about?
33. What motivates you?
34. What are your pet peeves?
35. How do you like to be managed?
36. Do you consider yourself successful?
37. Where do you see yourself in five years?
38. How do you plan to achieve your career goals?
39. What are your career aspirations?
40. What's your dream job?
41. What other companies are you interviewing with?
42. What makes you unique?
43. What should I know that's not on your resume?
44. What would your first few months look like in this role?
45. What are your salary expectations?
46. What do you think we could do better or differently?
47. When can you start?
48. Are you willing to relocate?
49. How many tennis balls can you fit into a limousine?
50. If you were an animal, which one would you want to be?