

Common Interview Questions and How To Answer Them

 [indeed.com/career-advice/interviewing/top-interview-questions-and-answers](https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/interviewing/top-interview-questions-and-answers)

Indeed Editorial Team

1. Interviewing >
2. Common Interview Questions and How To Answer Them

Updated March 4, 2024

Looking to land a job in retail? In this video, you'll learn how to answer 4 common interview questions that you may be asked for retail positions.

You might already know that an updated resume and a polished cover letter will help you stand out in a crowd of candidates. But do you know how to make yourself shine in your next job interview? Understanding the kinds of questions you'll likely be asked during a job interview can give you the opportunity to compose answers that best highlight your qualifications and why you're the right candidate for the job. In this article, we'll discuss all the top interview questions to expect during your next job interview, plus we'll arm you with tips to prepare answers that will impress any interviewer.

28 top interview questions with sample answers

To help you prepare for your next job interview, we've compiled a list of 28 common questions you'll likely be asked. Please scroll down for sample answers and tips to help you craft your own responses.


1. What makes you unique?
2. Tell me about yourself and your qualifications.
3. Why do you want to work at this company?
4. What interests you about this role?
5. What motivates you?
6. What are your greatest strengths?
7. What are your greatest weaknesses?
8. What are your goals for the future?
9. Where do you think you'll be in five years?
10. What did you like most about your last position?
11. What did you like least about your last position?
12. Can you tell me about a difficult work situation and how you overcame it?
13. How do you respond to stress or change?
14. How do you handle conflict at work?
15. What is your greatest accomplishment?
16. How do you define success?
17. How do your skills align with this role?

18. Why should we hire you?
19. Why are you leaving your current job?
20. What is your salary range expectation?
21. Do you have any questions?
22. What are you passionate about?
23. What is your teaching philosophy?
24. What does customer service mean to you?
25. Tell me about your work experience.
26. How do you work under pressure?
27. What is your dream job?
28. What can you bring to the company?

1. What makes you unique?

Employers often ask this question to identify why you might be more qualified than other candidates they're interviewing. To help you prepare an answer to this question, we asked Indeed's resident career coach Jennifer Herrity to offer some guidance. "There are times when helping to prepare someone for an interview that I find they overlook their unique skill sets," Jennifer told us. "For example, it can be easy to not recognize traits or skills that are natural strengths like the ability to speak another language or motivate a team." Jennifer further advises, "Start by reflecting on what advice or support people seek you out for — this is an indicator of what you uniquely have to offer." You can structure your answer by following these three bullet points:

- Review the job description for qualities that the employer finds valuable.
- Incorporate ways you've been successful in your previous roles.
- Highlight the traits or skills you've been praised for by former managers and colleagues.

Example answer: "I think what makes me unique is my ability to meet and exceed deadlines without sacrificing accuracy in my work. In my previous role, my manager consistently praised me for completing the quarterly status reports early and with a high level of quality. This allowed me to take on additional responsibilities and eventually led to my promotion." [Read more: Interview Question: "What Makes You Unique?"](#) 

2. Tell me about yourself and your qualifications

The employer asks this question to better understand your skills and accomplishments and why you think you'd be a good fit. Your answer should be concise and direct. Include information about your background, your key achievements and why you think you're suited for the open role. Example answer: "I've been a bookkeeper for the past three years where I track accounts payable and receivable, as well as oversee payroll. I've been able to find and resolve discrepancies between amounts owed and received, which has ended up saving our

company thousands of dollars in underpaid bills. I recently earned my CPA degree and think my experience with bookkeeping and attention to detail would make me a great fit for your open public accountant role.”Read more: [Interview Question: “Tell Me About Yourself”](#)

3. Why do you want to work at this company?

Interviewers ask this question to see if you took the time to research the company and consider how you would fit within the company culture. The best way to prepare for this question is to do your homework and learn about the products, services, values, history and culture of the prospective employer. In your answer, mention specific aspects of the company that align with your values and career goals. Example answer: “This company is always ahead of tech trends and is constantly looking for ways to improve their products, and that sort of innovative thinking really inspires me. I also appreciate how much this company has given back to the community, especially in efforts to produce more eco-friendly products. I’m always looking for ways to lower my own carbon footprint.”Read more: [Interview Question: “Why Do You Want To Work Here?”](#)

4. What interests you about this role?

Hiring managers often ask this question to make sure you understand the role and also to allow you an opportunity to highlight your relevant skills. Study the job description carefully and compare its requirements to your skills and experience. In your answer, focus on a few job responsibilities that you would particularly enjoy and that you have experience in handling. Example answer: “The job description mentioned that this role would be responsible for onboarding new employees, as well as compiling and distributing an updated employee handbook. In my current role, I enjoy working with new employees to help them feel welcome and confident in their roles. And I’ve found that an updated employee handbook can be an excellent resource to help them adapt to company policies, such as rules for hybrid roles, and often helps employees adjust more quickly.”Read more: [Interview Question: “Why Are You Interested in This Position?”](#)

5. What motivates you?

Employers ask this question to gauge your level of self-awareness and to ensure that your motivations align with the role and the company overall. To answer, be as specific as possible, provide real-life examples and tie your answer back to the job role and/or the company’s mission. Consider asking yourself these three questions to prepare your answer:

1. What did a great day at work look like in your previous role and why?
2. What made you choose your profession or field?
3. What prompted you to apply for the role when you read the job description?

Example answer: “Making a true difference in the lives of my patients and their families motivates me to strive for excellence in everything I do. I look forward to seeing my patient’s

reactions when we get a positive outcome that will change their lives forever. That's why I became a nurse and why I'm pursuing a position in pediatrics."Read more: Interview Question: "What Motivates You?" (With Examples) [↗](#)

6. What are your greatest strengths?

In your answer to this question, share your most relevant technical and soft skills. While it may feel uncomfortable to speak highly of yourself, remember that this is your opportunity to tell the hiring manager what makes you a great candidate. To answer, follow the formula below:1. Share one or two positive qualities and personal attributes: "I've always been a natural leader and worked well in a fast-paced environment..."2. Back them up with examples: "...I've exceeded my KPIs every quarter and have been promoted twice in the past five years. I look back at those successes and know that I wouldn't have reached them if I hadn't built and led teams composed of highly skilled and diverse individuals. I'm proud of my ability to get cross-functional groups on the same page..."3. Relate them back to the role for which you're interviewing: "...I've also regularly honed my management skills through 360 reviews and candid sessions with my team, and I know continuing to build my leadership skills is something I want from my next role."

7. What are your greatest weaknesses?

It can feel awkward to discuss your weaknesses in an environment where you're expected to focus on your accomplishments. However, when answered correctly, sharing your weaknesses shows that you're self-aware and have an interest in continued growth and learning—traits that are attractive to many employers. Consider using this formula for your response:1. Select an actual weakness (not a strength) that's honest but professionally relevant: "I'm naturally an introvert..."2. Add context: "...From my first job out of college, I tend to do well with little supervision and a high degree of independence..."3. Provide a specific example: "...After being assigned to a team that needed to give monthly progress updates, I knew I owed it to my teammates and myself to learn how to collaborate better with others..."4. Explain how you overcame or are working to overcome it: "...I took an online course on improving communication skills and learned how to reach out to my teammates with more confidence, and also how to brush up on presentation skills so that I felt more relaxed when it was my turn to deliver a monthly presentation. I'm never going to be the most vocal person in a meeting but I can definitely contribute to any conversation and be an effective team player."

8. What are your goals for the future?

Hiring managers often ask about your future goals to determine whether you're likely to stay with the company long-term. Additionally, this question is used to gauge your ambition, expectations for your career and ability to plan ahead. The best way to handle this question

is to examine your current career trajectory and how this role could help you reach your long-term goals. Example answer: "I'd like to continue developing my marketing expertise over the next several years. One of the reasons I'm interested in working for a fast-growing startup company is that I'll have the ability to wear many hats and collaborate with a variety of departments. I believe this experience will serve me well in achieving my ultimate goal of someday leading a marketing department." Read more: Interview Question: "What Are Your Future Goals?" [↗](#)

9. Where do you think you'll be in five years?

Understanding how you imagine your life in the future can help employers understand whether the trajectory of the role and company fits in with your personal development goals. To answer this question you can provide specific career goals including any dream roles or projects. Example answer: "Some of my future goals for the next few years include leading a design team in a formal capacity. I'm also excited about the prospect of working with product and event teams on developing streamlined processes since this is a natural fit with my project management background. I'd also like to further develop my skills in user experience to aid in creating more user-focused designs." Read more: Interview Question: "Where Do You See Yourself in Five Years?" [↗](#)

10. What did you like most about your last position?

Knowing what you enjoyed about your last position can offer employers insight into your motivations and personality, and whether you'll enjoy the open role. Jennifer advises, "When answering a question about what you enjoyed most in a previous role, it can help to mention a skill, trait or responsibility that is required of the role that you are applying for. This can demonstrate that you understand what you are applying for and that you already know there are aspects of the role that you would enjoy."

Example answer: "My last position was a great entry-level role at a start-up agency. Not only was I learning more about marketing, but management was also very transparent, teaching us a great deal about owning a business. It was a collaborative atmosphere, and the team and I worked together on almost every project." Read more: Interview Question: "What Did You Like Most About Your Job?" [↗](#)

11. What did you like least about your last position?

This question can tell employers about the kind of work you enjoy, your experience level and whether you'd be a good fit with the company culture. But avoid saying anything negative about your former employer, managers or colleagues. "Keeping a positive tone and outlook is key when discussing reasons for leaving a job," Jennifer advises. "For example, if you share that your previous role didn't provide you with an opportunity to grow, this can still be a

positive reason for leaving because it shows that you are interested in advancing in your career.” Instead, make your answer more about your career growth and enthusiasm for joining the company. Jennifer emphasizes, “The desire to take the next step in your professional journey should always be seen as a good thing when you express gratitude for the opportunity your previous role offered you and excitement for how you can contribute and expand your skillset in this new position.” Example answer: “While I enjoyed my time learning and growing in my last job, there was a lack of opportunity in the way I wanted to progress in my career. I deeply enjoy being challenged and getting better at what I do, which I understand is a top priority for managers at your organization. That’s why I’m excited to continue having conversations about this opportunity.” Read more: Interview Question: “What Did You Like Least About Your Last Job?” [↗](#)

12. Can you tell me about a difficult work situation and how you overcame it?

This question is often used to assess your problem-solving skills and how well you perform under pressure. Consider using the STAR method [↗](#) to illustrate a work challenge and how you overcame the situation. Specifically, you would structure your answer by stating the context of the Situation or challenge, your role or assigned Task, the Action you took to overcome the challenge, and the Result or outcome. Example answer: “My boss had a family emergency and needed to be out of the office for two weeks without advance notice. Our biggest client had already made plans to visit our office during that time to hear an ad campaign pitch and was concerned that no one else in the office would be up to speed on the project before the deadline. I scheduled an immediate video call with the client to assure them I could represent my boss’ pitch in the meeting. I even made a point of mentioning the client’s specific parameters for the campaign. The pitch went ahead as planned and we won the account.” Related: Interview Question: “What Is the Biggest Challenge You’ve Faced In Work?” [↗](#)

13. How do you respond to stress or change?

How you handle stressful situations and adapt to change is an indicator of your ability to solve unexpected problems and learn new processes. Employers want to hire candidates who react to stress constructively and are willing to try new solutions, so it’s important that your answer to this question demonstrates personal growth. Provide an answer that demonstrates your ability to stay calm under pressure and adapt to new processes. Example answer: “I’m able to stay calm by focusing on the bigger picture first and then breaking down my projects into smaller tasks. I always start by identifying the ultimate goal I’m trying to achieve. From there, I make a list of short and long-term action items that will get me to my final goal.” Read more: Interview Question: “How Do You Handle Stress?” [↗](#)

14. How do you handle conflict at work?

Employers ask this question to gauge your communication skills, problem-solving skills and how well you deal with stress. A good answer will illustrate a time when you confronted an obstacle, remained calm and worked toward a productive solution. Example answer: "I was working as an IT project manager and one employee was constantly late finishing tasks. When I approached him about it, he got defensive, so I kept calm and acknowledged that the deadlines were challenging and asked how I could help him meet expectations. He told me that he had been pulled into another project so I met with the other project manager and we came to a resolution that lightened the technician's workload. For the remainder of the project, the technician delivered great work. I learned that you don't always know what others are experiencing and by keeping that in mind, you can better navigate conflict and be a more helpful and supportive colleague." Read more: Interview Question: "How Do You Handle Conflict in the Workplace?" [↗](#)

15. What is your greatest accomplishment?

It can be overwhelming to pinpoint your single most impressive accomplishment. Instead, think of a few achievements that showcase your work ethic and values. If you can, choose examples that also tie back to the main responsibilities of the open role. Example answer: "In my last role, I managed all of the company's social media content. I noticed other brands were experimenting with videos and seeing great engagement from their customers, so I asked my boss if we could do a low-budget test. She agreed, so I produced a video cheaply in-house that drove double the engagement we normally saw on our social channels. It also drove conversions with 30% of viewers visiting our website within a week of seeing the video." Read more: Interview Question: "What Is Your Greatest Accomplishment?" [↗](#)

16. How do you define success?

Employers ask this question to see how your definition of success might influence your goals and how you measure them. A good answer will show that you know how to define and measure goals and you're willing to challenge yourself and work hard to meet them. Consider your proudest achievements, your long- and short-term successes and how the company you're interviewing with views success. Give specific examples of how you've succeeded in the past. Example answer: "I define success as fulfilling the goals and expectations of my role as well as helping my colleagues achieve their own benchmarks so the company can be successful. In my previous role, success meant exceeding weekly quotas and, implementing new processes that increased productivity and decreased the amount of time it took us to complete our tasks." Read more: Interview Question: "How Do You Define Success?" [↗](#)

17. How do your skills align with this role?

While this is similar to questions like “Why should we hire you?” or “What can you bring to the company?” it allows you to be more specific about your work ethic, style and unique abilities as it relates to the role. An impactful answer will discuss your hard and soft skills, and how those skills benefitted your employer. Example answer: “I can make anyone feel comfortable in a new environment, which makes me a good fit as a human resources representative. In my previous position, a new employee came to me and told me that she didn’t think she was right for the company culture. I took the time to talk with her and it turned out she had misunderstood a list of volunteer opportunities her manager had emailed as being a very long list of mandatory work she was expected to complete during weekends. I was able to assure her that we did not have any such demands, and she eventually signed up for one of the volunteer positions and loved the experience.” Read more: Interview Question: “What Skills Would You Bring to the Job?” [↗](#)

18. Why should we hire you?

While this question may seem intimidating interviewers are generally just giving you an opportunity to pitch your best qualifications for the job. Use this time to reinforce your best qualities and skills and mention anything else that didn’t come up during the interview. Practicing your answer in advance will help you sound confident and reinforce your communication skills. Example answer: “I think I’m a great fit for this job because I’m highly deadline-oriented and I thrive in a fast-paced work environment. You mentioned that you prefer weekly status updates over monthly updates and that’s something I’m already doing in my current job. So this job feels like a realistic workload and something that would be an exciting challenge.” Read more: Interview Question: “Why Should We Hire You?” [↗](#)

19. Why are you leaving your current job?

There are many acceptable reasons for leaving a job. Prepare a thoughtful answer that will give your interviewer confidence that you’re being deliberate about this job change. Instead of focusing on the negative aspects of your current or previous role, focus on the future and what you hope to gain in your next position. Example answer: “While I value the experience I’ve gained from my current role, there aren’t any opportunities for advancement and I’d like to continue challenging myself by taking on more responsibilities.” Read more: Interview Question: “Why Are You Looking for a Job?” [↗](#)

20. What is your salary range expectation?

Interviewers ask this question to make sure your expectations are in line with the amount they’ve budgeted for the role. If you give a salary range exceedingly lower or higher than the market value of the position, it gives the impression that you don’t know your worth. Here are three ways to approach this response:

Provide a range

Research the typical compensation range for the role on [Indeed Salaries](#) and set your range accordingly based on your experience and skill level. Be sure to let the hiring manager know if you're flexible. "My salary expectation is between \$00,000 and \$00,000, which is the average salary for a candidate with my level of experience in this city. However, I have some flexibility."

Include negotiation options

There may be other benefits, perks or forms of compensation you find just as valuable as your salary. "I'm currently earning \$00,000 and I'd like an increase in compensation but I'm willing to consider other forms of compensation, including paid time off and bonuses, to increase that number."

Deflect the question

If you're early in the hiring process and still learning the specifics of the job duties and expectations, you may want to deflect the question for later in the conversation. "Before I answer, I'd like to ask a few more questions to get a better idea of what the position entails. That way, I can provide a more accurate expectation." If you're unsure about what salary is appropriate to ask for the position you're applying to, visit [Indeed's Salary Calculator](#) to get a free, personalized pay range based on your location, industry and experience.

21. Do you have any questions?

This might be one of the most important questions asked during the interview process because it allows you to explore any topics that haven't been addressed and shows the interviewer you're serious about the role. Remember that you're interviewing the company too. Take time to ask the interviewer about their own experiences with the company and address any lingering questions you may have. Example answers:

- What do you love most about working for this company?
- What would success look like in this role?
- What are some of the challenges people typically face in this position?"
- How important is it that you hire someone with XYZ qualities?
- Do you have any hesitations about hiring me?

Read more: [Interview Question: "Do You Have Any Questions?"](#)

22. What are you passionate about?

Employers might ask this question to better understand what drives you and what you care most deeply about. Your answer can help them understand whether you're a good fit for the role and whether the position will meet your long-term goals. To answer, consider this

structure:1. Select something you are genuinely passionate about and explain why you're passionate about it: "As a software developer, I'm passionate about creating efficient products to help people perform better at their jobs..."2. Provide examples of how you've pursued this passion: "...One of the things I loved about my last job was being able to track the results of my team's code update and watch as our months of work yielded positive user feedback..."3. Relate it back to the job: "...Having the opportunity to lead projects from ideation through launch was one of the reasons I was so excited to apply for this role."Read more: Interview Question: "What are you passionate about?" [↗](#)

23. What is your teaching philosophy?

This isn't a question solely for those applying for teaching positions. Employers may ask this of anyone who might be leading or teaching others. Your response will allow employers to gauge your personal skills and if you would be a good culture add. A good answer will concisely identify what you think teaching should achieve and include concrete examples to illustrate your ideas.Example answer: "My teaching philosophy is to start by asking questions that hopefully get the person to come to a new conclusion on their own. This way, they feel ownership over the learning rather than feeling micromanaged. For example, in my last role, I was editing an article written by a copywriter I managed. The story didn't have a clear focus or hook. In a one-on-one meeting, I asked her what she thought was the main point of the article if she had to sum it up in a sentence. From there, I asked if she thought the focus was clear in the article. She didn't think it was clear and instead thought she should rework her introduction and conclusion. As a result, the article improved and my direct report learned a valuable writing lesson that she carried into her future work."Read more: Interview Question: "What is Your Teaching Philosophy?" [↗](#)

24. What does customer service mean to you?

If you're applying for a public-facing role, an employer may ask this question to determine what aspects of customer service are most important to you. A good answer will align with the company's values, which you can glean through researching their customer service policy, understanding their products and clientele and reflecting on your own experiences as a customer. Your answer can either come from the perspective of a customer or a customer service provider.Example answer: "In my experience, good customer service involves taking responsibility when something goes wrong and doing what you can to make it right. For example, on a recent flight, I had pre-ordered my meal only to discover they didn't stock enough of my dish. Instead of simply stating the facts, the flight attendant apologized sincerely and offered me a free drink or premium snack. To me, this apology went a long way in smoothing things over. The freebie was a bonus that made me feel valued as a customer and choose the same airline for my next flight."Read more: Interview Question: "What Does Customer Service Mean to You?" [↗](#)

25. Tell me about your work experience

This question gives you the opportunity to elaborate on your most relevant work experiences. Employers will want to know about the skills and accomplishments that will be most useful in the open role. According to Jennifer, “You want to be concise, curated and current when discussing your work experience in an interview. To do this, keep your work summary brief and focus on recent experience that is relevant to the role you are interviewing for. When possible, include an accomplishment that you are proud to share.” Example answer: 1. Quantify your experience: “I have 10 years of experience in personal finance management, and I have assisted 45 repeat clients in increasing their capital by an average of 15% every year.” 2. Illustrate connections to the role: “As a financial analyst, I’ve used visual growth charts to show my clients how each saving plan option can impact their goals. When I became a senior financial analyst, I supervised other analysts and trained them in providing the most helpful experience to our customers.” 3. End with a goal statement: “As your senior financial consultant, I aim to integrate my individualized approach to helping clients build the retirement fund they will depend on.” Read more: Interview Question: “Tell Me About Your Work Experience” [↗](#)

26. How do you work under pressure?

Many jobs involve moments when there are unexpected situations that require swift action. The ability to stay calm and think logically in such a scenario is a major asset. This question offers another opportunity to use the STAR method to talk about a specific time you faced a stressful and calmly found a solution. Example answer: “Throughout my career, I’ve discovered how to embrace working under pressure. I find that routine can make us complacent, so I try to look for challenges that push me to grow. One time, I was supposed to deliver a project to a client in five days. A colleague who was working with another client had the same deadline, but he had to take a leave of absence due to personal reasons. I was asked to take up both projects at the same time. While I felt an initial sense of panic, I came up with a very detailed time management plan and found new ways to boost my efficiency that enabled me to deliver both projects on time.” Read more: Interview Question: “How Do You Work Under Pressure?” [↗](#)

27. What is your dream job?

Employers typically ask this question because they want to ensure that your interests and goals are compatible with the career path of the open position. However, Jennifer cautions, “While it can be tempting to say, ‘This is my dream job!’ it isn’t always a good answer on its own, even if it is true. Interviewers want to know that you have a good understanding of what you’re looking for in a role and that you’re not just applying for random positions.” The best answer, Jennifer explains, focuses on your specific qualifications. “Describe the skills, tasks and even work environment that you enjoy and make the connection to the role that you are

interviewing for by highlighting how this role would allow you to focus on that kind of work."Example answer:1. Mention the skills you want to use: "I enjoy guiding other team members on projects and making sure everything goes smoothly..."2. Describe a job in general: "...My dream job would be a leadership position where the other team members are active participants and communication happens daily..."3. Discuss your values: "...I love seeing a project through to the end and celebrating everyone's hard work..."4. Tailor to the job for which you are interviewing: "...For instance, if you're applying for a leadership position, you might discuss how your dream job would include supervisory responsibilities."Read more: Interview Question: "What Is Your Dream Job?" [🔗](#)

28. What can you bring to the company?

This question is similar to "Why should we hire you?" A strong answer will demonstrate how your skills and experience will make you successful in the new role.

As Jennifer explains, "Like with answers to many questions asked in an interview, this is your opportunity to show you have done your research, you understand the role, and you are aligned with the company's goals and values." She goes on to point out, "This is an opportunity for you to share an example from your past using the STAR method that demonstrates success in an area relevant to the role or company.

Example answer: "My problem-solving abilities allow me to work well under pressure. In a previous position, I was responsible for organizing our company's annual conference. This involved renting a meeting space and hiring caterers, scheduling speakers and arranging for technical equipment, as well as coordinating travel arrangements for out-of-town attendees from our other office branches. There were often cancellations and equipment mishaps and it was my job to find replacements and make sure the conference ran smoothly so no one was aware of any behind-the-scenes challenges. I will bring the same attention to detail and problem-solving skills to the position here at ABC Company."