

## Responses To The 8 Most Dreaded Interview Questions

The following is a list of the most popularly feared interview questions with suggested responses. You WILL be asked these questions, so please prepare your answers carefully now.

Use your STAR stories to cite specific examples from past work experience. Use STAR stories whenever possible to answer questions to provide the employer with a very real idea of your capabilities. These suggestions are meant to be general guidelines. In fact, you should allow your own personality to show – your smile and your unique qualities will be your most effective selling tools.

### **Q. Tell me about yourself.**

**A.** Tell the employer about your skills and interests – especially ones relating to the position for which you are applying. Indicate positive personality characteristics such as being dependable, honest, and able to get along well with others. Cite some examples from the past to back up what you say. (Remember your elevator speech?)

### **Q. Why do you want to work here?**

**A.** Mention positive things you might have learned about the company, its products or services, and its personnel. This is an excellent time to show the interviewer that you have done your homework about the company and the job, and that you are highly enthusiastic about working there. Be certain to let the interviewer know you can do the job and that you would fit in well.

### **Q. What are your salary expectations?**

**A.** NEVER introduce the topic of salary or benefits in the initial interview. Wait for the employer to bring up the issue. If you are asked about your salary expectations before being offered the job, respond by stating that you can be flexible or salary is negotiable. Then try asking the employer what figure they have in mind for someone with your qualifications. Hopefully, the employer will respond with an idea of the salary range the company has determined is fair. If they will not offer you any information and insist that you state your expectations first, give a range of what you feel would be fair. Of course, this means that you should have done your homework ahead of time and learned as much as you could about the company's reputation and average ranges for this position. Be sure to take into consideration the monetary worth of the employer's benefit package when you make your decision to accept or reject an employment offer. After you have been offered a position and before you have accepted, you probably have the most negotiating power. The employer has decided that they want to hire you and will be likely be more flexible and open to your point of view.

### **Q. Why did you leave your last job?**

**A.** It is best to be truthful in most cases. Keep you answer BRIEF and positive. If you had problems with coworkers, be certain not to blame others. Take responsibility for your part in the problem; state what you learned and why it would be different today. Remember, the interviewer is likely to identify more with your former employer than you during the interview so watch what you say about past employers, supervisors and company policies.

**Q. What is your greatest strength?**

**A.** Be prepared to answer this one – it is a favorite! Don't be afraid to say good things about yourself; if you don't, no one else will. Describe positive past experiences as examples of being dependable, honest, hardworking, creative, or whatever else you claim. These examples will stand out in the interviewer's mind more than the general responses that most interviewees give. For example, you might state, "I am very quick to learn new things. In my last job, my supervisor had me learn all the tasks in our department and had me train new staff as well. This made the schedule more flexible."

**Q. What is your greatest weakness?**

**A.** This one can be difficult. Employers do not really expect you to confess your true weakness, though they will never stop you from doing so. The trick to this response is that you should state something that would actually be perceived by the employer as a strength. For example, "My weakness is probably that I am somewhat of a perfectionist in my work. I find that it is hard for me to stop working on a project until it is nearly perfect. However, I have learned that I cannot let perfection get in the way of getting the job done on schedule."

**Q. What would you like to be doing in five years?**

**A.** The employer wants to know if you plan to stay with the company. The interviewer is also checking out your maturity and whether or not you are a person who likes to continue to grow and learn. Avoid mentioning that you would like to be the manager or supervisor unless you are positive that would be the career path the company would have you follow. Remember too, you are probably being interviewed by that supervisor and s/he may see you as a possible threat to his own job security. Be a bit more general in your approach assuring the interviewer that you would like to be with that company in five years, growing professionally and contributing to the organization.

**Q. Why do you think I should hire you?**

**A.** Clearly and specifically point out your related skills and experiences. Tell the employer about successes in past jobs and describe yourself as hardworking and dependable. Show your interest in working for that employer and let the interviewer know that you are informed about the company and the position. Also mention education, training, and any hobbies or community activities that would be in any way related to the position and the skills necessary to do the work.