1. Tell me about yourself.

**Do:** Keep your answer short (approximately 1-2 minutes), and highlight your place of education, degrees obtained, one or two relevant experiences/jobs you’ve held, and how those experiences led you to apply for this particular position.

**Don’t:** Get too personal; this is not the time to share hobbies or information not relevant to the position or your qualifications

1. Why do you want this position?

**Do:** Study the job description thoroughly and pick our key skills or requirements that you know you will excel in. Focus on those details, and also how this job fits into your future goals. It is also a good idea to know the organization’s mission, and be able to explain how it aligns with your personal values.

**Don’t:** Say things like “I need a job to pay my bills” or “I saw the position listed, and thought I’d give it a shot.” They want to know specifically why you are applying to their organization for this particular position.

1. What are your greatest strengths and your greatest weaknesses?

**Do:** Focus on the positives, and be very specific. Be able to provide an example of your strength in action. When discussing your weakness, make sure you are able to illustrate how you’ve already taken steps to improve it.

**Don’t:** Pick a weakness that falls into one of the desired skills or requirements in the job description. Also, do not be tempted to use a faux-weakness (e.g. “sometimes I care *too* much” or “I am a perfectionist”). And above all, DO NOT refer to it as a “WEAKNESS”, instead phrase your answer in a way that maintains a positive connotation: “Something I have been working on improving recently is \_\_\_\_\_\_, and here’s what I’ve been doing to improve.”

1. Tell me about a time you were unable to meet a deadline. How did you handle the situation?

**Do:** Be honest, but focus the majority of your answer on the process—how you handled the situation and what you learned from it. Use the SAR method.

**Don’t:** Choose an example when you completely failed and there was no resolution.

1. Describe your work style.

**Do:** Illustrate not only a self-starter mentality, but your ability to adapt your work style to the work environment and supervisor’s needs.

**Don’t:** Forget to use specific examples to illustrate your style.



1. Describe a time that you successfully worked as part of a team.

**Do:** Pick an example of a time when you were a group leader or a significantly contributing member of a team. Be able to illustrate your ability to be both a leader and a follower, and focus on what personal skills you used in these roles. Use the SAR method.

**Don’t:** Pick an example that fails to acknowledge the contribution of other team members. Do not illustrate an “I can do it all myself” mentality.

1. Tell me about a time you had a conflict with a co-worker or supervisor.

**Do:** Use the SAR method, and spend the majority of your answer talking about the process you use to resolve conflict. Focus on your ability to remain calm and clearly communicate in difficult situations.

**Don’t:** Pick an example of a conflict that could not be resolved, or a conflict that reflects negatively on your communication abilities. Do not spend the majority of your answer explaining the conflict in detail—the less time you spend on the negativity, the better.

1. What can you bring to this job that others can’t?

**Do:** Highlight your unique capabilities, and be specific to the job description. This is your time to shine! Be respectful of the other candidates in the pool, but don’t be afraid to tout your own accomplishments.

**Don’t:** Put-down or discount the other candidates in the pool—the truth is, you do not know who they are and you cannot speak to their abilities; you can only focus on what you know you will bring to the position.

1. Do you have any questions for us?

**Do:** Have questions already prepared. See the Career Resource Manual for ideas about questions you should ask at the end of an interview.

**Don’t:** Say “No”!



**QUESTIONS FOR YOU TO ASK THE EMPLOYER**

* What types of assignments might I expect in the first six months on the job?
* What will the first three weeks be like? Is training provided?
* What do you like best about your job/company?
* What products (or services) are in the development stage right now?
* Do you have plans for expansion?
* What characteristics do the achievers in this company seem to share?
* Is there a lot of team/project work?
* What are your growth expectations for the next year?
* How do you feel about creativity and individuality?
* In what ways is a career with your company better than one with your competitors?
* What is the largest single challenge facing your staff (department) right now?
* Where does this position fit into the organizational structure?
* What is the next step? When should I expect to hear from you or should I contact you?
* How would you describe the management style in this company/department?
* Where might a person who has been in this position expect to be in five years?
* **What is the next step in the interview process? When should I expect to hear a decision?**