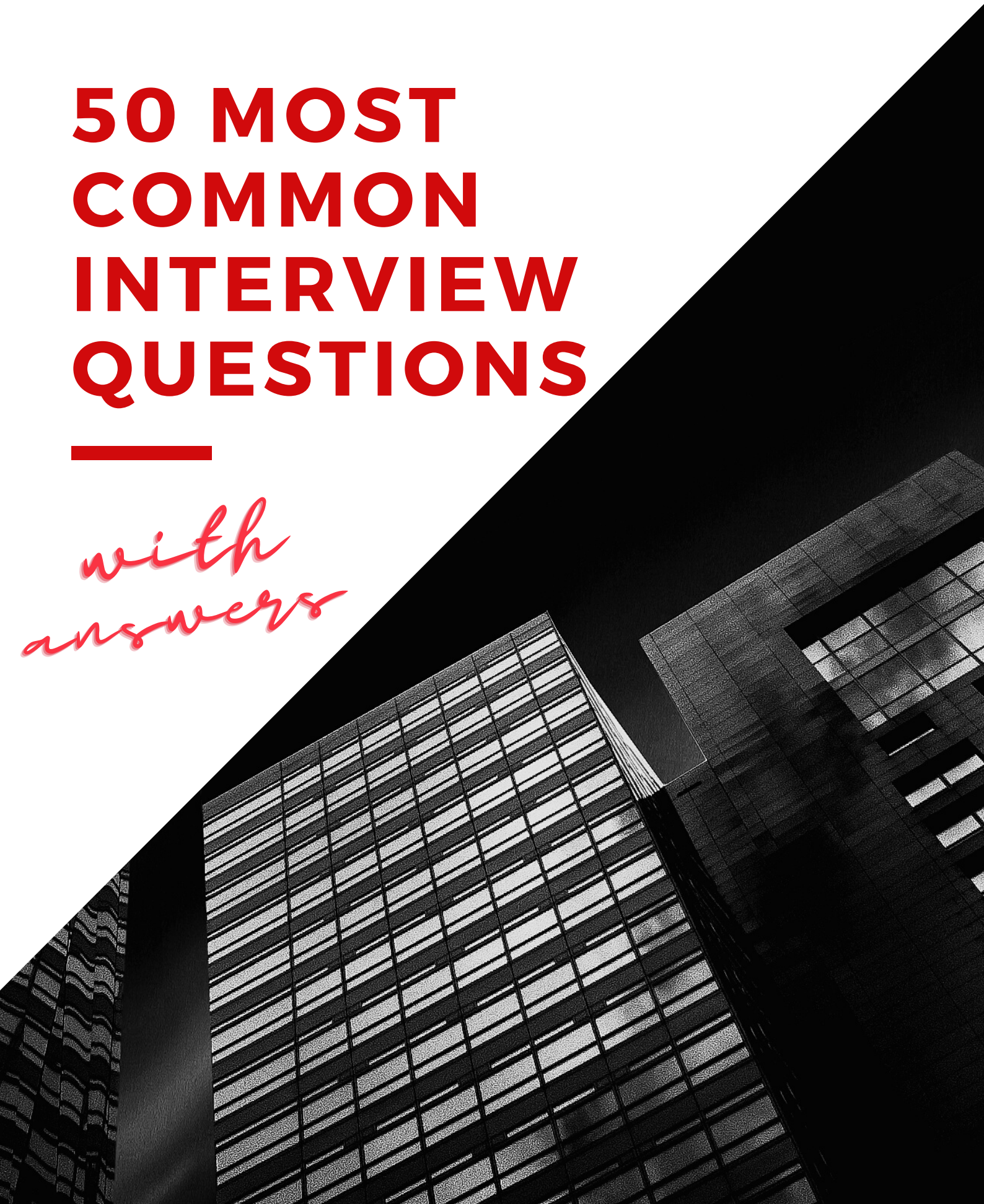


CURATED BY:
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50 MOST COMMON INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

*with
answers*





50 MOST COMMON INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Tell me about yourself.

The most often asked question in interviews. You need to have a short statement prepared in your mind. Be careful that it does not sound rehearsed. Limit it to work-related items unless instructed otherwise. Talk about things you have done and jobs you have held that relate to the position you are interviewing for. Start with the item farthest back and work up to the future (Key Focus: Past - Present - Future)

2. Do you consider yourself successful?

You should always answer yes and briefly explain why. A good explanation is that you have set goals, and you have met some and are on track to achieve the others. Give examples and use action verbs to make the answer more objective and powerful

3. What do your coworkers say about you?

Be prepared with a quote or two from co-workers. Either a specific statement or a paraphrase will work. "Jill Clark, a co-worker at Smith Company, always said I was the hardest worker she had ever known." It is as powerful as Jill having said it at the interview herself.

4. What do you know about our organisation?

This question is one reason to do some research on the organisation before the interview. Find out where they have been, and where they are going. What are the current issues, and who are the major players?

5. Why do you want to work for this organisation?

This may take some thought and certainly should be based on the research you have done on the organisation. Sincerity is extremely important here, and will easily be sensed. Relate it to your long-term career goals.

6. Do you know anyone who works for us?

Be aware of the policy on relatives working for the organisation. This can affect your answer even though they asked about friends not relatives. Be careful to mention a friend only if they are well thought of.

7. What kind of salary do you need?

A loaded question. A nasty little game that you will probably lose if you answer first. So, do not answer it. Instead, say something like, "That's a tough question. Can you tell me the range for this position?" In most cases, the interviewer, taken off guard, will tell you. If not, say that it can depend on the details of the job. Then give a wide range.

8. Are you a team player?

You are, of course, a team player. Be sure to have examples ready. Specifics that show you often perform for the good of the team rather than for yourself are good evidence of your team attitude. Do not brag, just say it in a matter-of-fact tone. This is a key point.

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9. What is your philosophy towards work?

The most often asked question in interviews. You need to have a short statement prepared in your mind. Be careful that it does not sound rehearsed. Limit it to work-related items unless instructed otherwise. Talk about things you have done and jobs you have held that relate to the position you are interviewing for. Start with the item farthest back and work up to the future (Key Focus: Past - Present - Future)

10. Explain how you would be an asset to this organisation.

You should be anxious for this question. It gives you a chance to highlight your best points as they relate to the position being discussed. Give a little advance thought to this relationship. Make sure you use factual examples and link your answer to your profile, skills and approach.

11. Why should we hire you?

Well, the sad truth is - we are no different from other candidates, if you look at our CV. But if you focus on what makes you special and unique: your special skills, talents, gifts, experience - the picture changes. Point out how your assets meet what the organisation needs. Do not mention any other candidates to make a comparison.

12. Tell me about a suggestion you have made.

Have a good one ready. Be sure and use a suggestion that was accepted and was then considered successful. One related to the type of work applied for is a real plus.

13. What irritates you about co-workers?

This is a trap question. Think "real hard" but fail to come up with anything that irritates you. A short statement that you seem to get along with people is great.

14. What is your greatest strength?

Numerous answers are good, just stay positive and provide examples when possible. Some ideas:

- o Your ability to prioritize.
- o Your problem-solving skills.
- o Your ability to work under pressure.
- o Your ability to focus on projects.
- o Your professional expertise.
- o Your leadership skills.
- o Your positive attitude.

15. Tell me about your dream job.

Stay away from a specific job. You cannot win. If you say the job you are contending for is it, you strain credibility. If you say another job is it, you plant the suspicion that you will be dissatisfied with this position if hired. The best bet is to stay generic and say something like: "A job where I love the work, like the people, can contribute, and can't wait to get to work."



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16. Why do you think you would do well at this job?

Give several reasons and include skills, experience, and interest.

17. What is more important to you: the money or the work?

Money is always important, but the work is the most important. There is no better answer.

18. Tell me about a problem you had with a supervisor.

Biggest trap of all. This is a test to see if you will speak ill of your boss. If you fall for it and tell about a problem with a former boss, you may well blow the interview right there. Stay positive and develop a poor memory about any trouble with a superior.

19. What has disappointed you about a job?

Don't get trivial or negative. Safe areas are few but can include:

- o Not enough of a challenge.
- o You were laid off in a reduction.
- o Company did not win a contract, which would have given you more responsibility.

20. Tell me about your ability to work under pressure

You may say that you thrive under certain types of pressure. Give an example that relates to the type of position applied for.

21. What motivates you to do your best on the job?

This is a personal trait that only you can say, but good examples are:

- o A challenge
- o Achievement
- o Recognition

22. Are you willing to work overtime? Nights? Weekends?

This is up to you. Be totally honest.

23. Do you have any blind spots?

Trick question. If you know about blind spots, they are no longer blind spots. Do not reveal any personal areas of concern here. Let them do their own discovery on your bad points. Do not hand it to them. What you can say is that you are always open to feedback and - if you learned about a blind spot of yours, you would certainly want to work on it.



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24. Would you be willing to relocate if required?

You should be clear on this with your family prior to the interview if you think there is a chance it may come up. Do not say yes just to get the job if the real answer is no. This can create a lot of problems later on in your career. Be honest at this point and save yourself future grief.

25. Describe your management style.

Try to avoid labels. Some of the more common labels, like "progressive", "salesman" or "consensus", can have several meanings or descriptions depending on which management expert you listen to. The "situational" style is safe, because it says you will manage according to the situation, instead of "one size fits all."

26. What have you learned from mistakes on the job?

Here you have to come up with something or you strain credibility. Make it a small, well-intentioned mistake with a positive lesson learned. An example would be ... working too far ahead of colleagues on a project and thus throwing coordination off.

27. How do you propose to compensate for your lack of experience?

First, if you have experience that the interviewer does not know about, bring that up. Then, point out (if true) that you are a hard working quick learner.

28. What qualities do you look for in a boss?

Be generic and positive. Safe qualities are knowledgeable, a sense of humor, fair, loyal to subordinates, and holder of high standards. All bosses think they have these traits.

29. Tell me about a time when you helped resolve a dispute between others.

Pick a specific incident. Concentrate on your problem solving technique and not the dispute you settled.

30. What position do you prefer on a team working on a project?

Be honest. If you are comfortable in different roles, point that out.

31. Describe your work ethic.

Emphasize benefits to the organization. Things like, "determination to get the job done" and "work hard but enjoy your work" are good.

32. What has been your biggest professional disappointment?

Be sure that you refer to something that was beyond your control. Show acceptance and no negative feelings.



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33. Tell me about the most fun you have had on the job.

Talk about having fun by accomplishing something for the organization.

34. How has your career so far prepared you for this position?

To prepare for this question, identify the most important skills and experience that you'll need to be successful in this role. Then, choose an achievement or lesson that you've learned in your career so far that relates to each of these Success factors. Three or four examples will be enough to make your case persuasive – as long as you include specific details, and mention measurable results.

35. How good are you in a crisis?

This question allows you to define what a crisis is in your role or industry, and to outline the skills that you've developed to handle one if it occurs. Use a couple of carefully chosen examples to demonstrate key strengths, such as clearheadedness, initiative, problem solving, and common sense.

This is also a chance to show that you have the confidence and the interpersonal skills needed to lead others through difficult times.

36. When have you demonstrated leadership skills?

Start by explaining what good leadership means to you, and back up your points with examples. Leadership plays a part in almost every role, to some extent, so you should be able to demonstrate leadership credentials whatever stage you're at in your career.

The STAR method is a good way to structure a clear and memorable answer. Talk about a time when you had a specific leadership challenge to overcome, and how you used skills such as strategic thinking, empathy, decisiveness, and clear communication to do so.

37. Describe a time when you showed initiative.

Initiative covers a number of key professional skills, including confidence, being a self-starter, spotting problems and opportunities, and coming up with creative ideas. For this answer, tell a story about a time when you not only showed initiative, but also achieved something measurable as a result.

38. What makes you unique?

Think about why people choose to come to you for help or advice on certain things, rather than anyone else. This a great way of framing your unique abilities, without appearing boastful. Talk about your accomplishments, too – for example, when you were the first to do something, or when you achieved more than anyone else.



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39. What are you hoping for from this role?

Use your answer to show that you have a detailed understanding of the role, and ambitious expectations for what you can achieve in it. Demonstrate your enthusiasm, and talk about the ways in which you'd benefit – for example, by being challenged more, by learning new skills, or by enriching your experience in the industry.

Focus most on what you want to contribute to the role, and how you'd go about achieving a positive impact. Show the interviewer that you're realistic, but also optimistic – and ready to deal with whatever the role throws your way.

40. When have you failed?

This is another question where you can define the terms to your advantage. What exactly does failure mean to you? It's a great chance to show your values and expectations, and to demonstrate key attributes such as empathy, realism and self-awareness.

But choose your examples carefully. Don't reveal anything that would put the interviewer off hiring you. And always focus on what you learned by failing, and the positive changes you made as a result, rather than on the failure itself.

41. Tell me about a time you made a mistake.

Resist the urge to say "I haven't" – but steer clear of mentioning any serious missteps.

Instead, give an example of a mistake that you were successfully able to fix. This shows that you're open and honest about errors that you make, and that you're able to correct and learn from them.

You can also use your answer to talk about the value that you place on attention to detail, honest feedback, self-reflection, and resilience

42. What do you do if you disagree with someone's decision?

It's best to use examples of times when you dealt with disagreements and managed to resolve them. Focus on your ability to stand your ground, to communicate persuasively, and to debate matters respectfully.

But, demonstrate that you're able to change your perspective in the face of compelling evidence or changed circumstances. Paint a picture of someone who's capable under pressure and able to drive effective decision-making that's always in the best interests of the business.

43. Describe a time when you faced an ethical dilemma.

Choose an example which shows that you understand how a significant ethical dilemma in your industry might emerge. If possible, pick one that relates to a value that's particularly important to this company to emphasize that your own ethical standards are in line with theirs. Outline the competing factors that made this a real dilemma. Then explain how you reached a decision that you could be proud of, however difficult that was. Don't forget to say what happened as a result – and what you learned in the process.



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44. What do you consider to be your weaknesses?

Don't be tempted to go for a cliché such as "perfectionism," or to claim that you don't have any weaknesses. But don't highlight anything that might worry the interviewer, either. Instead, choose something that you've found challenging in the past, but have successfully addressed. Use specific examples to show how you identified the weakness, what you did to improve, and the positive impact this has had on your work since

45. What sort of criticism do you most often receive?

It's important to show that you're open to criticism, and that you can respond to it positively. But, as with the previous question, don't bring up anything that might reflect badly on you. One approach is to choose one of your strengths, and describe a time when you took it too far, and had to dial it back. For example, maybe your enthusiasm led to you becoming overcommitted. Or perhaps your passion for collaboration held you back from taking control of a project. Use your answer to demonstrate humility, self-awareness, and a track record of continuous self-improvement

46. How do you prioritize your work?

Before you talk about any particular tools or techniques that you've used to do this, outline your overall approach to managing your workload. Use examples – ideally with some metrics – of times when you've met tight deadlines, coped with unexpected tasks, or responded to sudden priority changes.

It's important to show that you know the difference between important and urgent; that your approach is both organized and flexible; and that you're able to maintain a healthy work-life balance.

47. Where do you see yourself in five years?

Make it clear that this isn't the first time you've considered this question! Have an answer ready that's positive and ambitious, but also realistic in terms of where this job could actually take you.

One approach is to think about the skills and experience that you'd like to gain. Then, describe what those improvements might mean for you in five years' time. This emphasizes your commitment to the new role, and demonstrates how you'd make the most of it – for the organization as well as yourself.

It's great to mention longer-term aspirations – but don't say anything that suggests you're not committed to the job at hand first.

48. What motivates you?

This is a great opportunity to tell a powerful story, so that your interviewer can visualize you working with energy and enthusiasm, and having a real impact.

Choose an example that's relevant to the role that you're applying for. Explain exactly where your motivation came from, how it felt, and what you achieved as a result.

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49. How did your last experience (work/study) prepare you for this role?

Be specific and show you know a lot about the role. Do not forget about mentioning how you improved your soft skills and how the project work you did in the past will come in handy in the new position.

50. Do you have any questions for me?

It's important to remember that this is an invitation to dialogue. So, make sure you do not waste it - ask about the things that could make you look growth-oriented: training opportunities, mentoring, etc.

Bonus

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

This is a fun question designed to draw out your personality - so smile! And make sure that you use it to your advantage. Pick one of your strengths - one that's particularly important for the job - and think of an animal that exemplifies it.

If you were a superhero, what would be your superpower?

Again, start with characteristics that you want to highlight, particularly if you haven't already had a chance to mention them. Then, exaggerate them, to create superpowers that you can talk about convincingly. You might even be able to link them to famous superheroes.

How many pennies would be as high as the Empire State building?

Calculation questions like these may only seem relevant to roles like budget manager or quantity surveyor. In fact, they're used in a wide range of interviews. You can use them to show that you enjoy a challenge, that you can deal with uncertainty, and that you're ready for anything.

These questions are also a great way to show strong thinking skills, and the ability to communicate clearly.

First, clarify the problem ("Do you mean room lights, or even light bulbs in vehicles and machines?"). Then break it down into steps, explaining each one as you go.

Highlight any assumptions that you're making ("... assuming that the tower of pennies would stay upright in the wind...") - and use words like "so" and "because" to explain your logic.

Be alert to any obvious "traps" (for example, "Is it currently day or night in China?"). And, when you reach your final answer, say how accurate you think it might be - and also what you could do to improve it.