

Commonly Asked Interview Questions

Tell me about yourself...

Why are they asking this? Employers often use this as an icebreaker and a way to find out more about you, what sort of personality you have, what you are interested in and what you are good at. They need to know what you bring to the role and whether you would fit into the organisation. This is the sort of question that sounds easy but it's worth preparing what you are going to say because there are things that you should talk about and things that you shouldn't.

Talk about

- What school you go to
- Subjects you enjoy
- Sports you play
- Any clubs you belong
- Any hobbies or interests you have

Don't talk about

- Personal information like whether you have a boy/girlfriend
- Who you hung out with on the weekend
- Anything that could be considered inappropriate or just unnecessary

What do you know about the position?

Why are they asking this? Employers want to know how familiar you are with the company and position as this will show that you are genuinely interested in the job. How much you know or have bothered to find out about the role and the company is a good test of your interest levels.

Talk about

- What the company does
- How long it has been doing it
- How many staff work there
- Whether they have other businesses in other parts of the country.
- Praise the company with specific examples – e.g. the company has an excellent reputation in the community with a good record of providing excellent customer service

Don't talk about

- Vague or obvious information, e.g. it's a restaurant, it serves food
- Don't go overboard with your praise for the company, you don't want to be seen as insincere

What skills do you think you could bring to the role?

Why are they asking this?

Employers are keen to know whether your skills match the job.

Talk about

- Any ‘technical’ skills you have that are relevant to the position i.e. Use of a cash register, EFTPOS machine, computer database etc.
- Expand on your other ‘transferable’ skills: literally those skills you have gained from other jobs, activities or experiences that you can ‘transfer’ to the job e.g. communication skills, team player, conflict resolution, customer service.

Don’t talk about

- Skills that are not relevant e.g. your unique party trick skills such as swallowing ten grapes at once.
- Don’t list off every skill you have, make sure they are relevant to the position

What are your strengths?

Why are they asking this?

The question gives interviewer a chance to see what motivates you and what you consider is important. They also want to see what will make you a great employee and how your strengths will compliment others in the team.

Talk about

- It can be a bit weird talking about what we are good at, but if ever there is a time to promote yourself – this is it!
- Be honest, keep it work related or link it to the skills we know employers are looking for like teamwork, communication skills and Initiative

What are your weaknesses?

Why are they asking this?	An employer wants to see how self-aware you are and again how you will fit into the team and company. It is important that you are able to show that you are aware of your weaknesses but you are working to improve them.
Talk about	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work related weaknesses such as at school you sometimes struggle to stay focused in class • Always let them know how you are overcoming your weaknesses – e.g. you have been working on this and you are much better now than you were two years ago
Don't talk about	Personal weaknesses such as relationship problems.

Do you have any questions for us?

Why are they asking this?	This question is a good way for employers to work out whether you're really interested in the position and whether you are a good fit (yes it comes back to that again). A well thought out question should demonstrate your interest in the job and in the company – e.g. how can I be successful in this company?
Talk about	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure you ask something! Have at least two questions prepared • Ask questions that demonstrate that you are interested in the well-being of the company not just yourself
Don't talk about	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't ask questions that are self-centred and suggest that you are only interested in you such as wage rates, holiday entitlements etc.