

1. Tell me about yourself

OK, you should ace this question because it's the most basic and expected question out of every job interview. We want to see how you carry yourself and how articulate you are. We also want to know what you think are the highlights of yourself and your career and what's special about you.

2. What are your greatest weaknesses?

You know this question is coming, let's see how honest and thoughtful you can be. Not to mention how prepared you are. Please don't give us the clichés like, "My weakness is I work too hard." We can see right through that. [This question](#) can reveal how self-aware you are and how proactive you are when a problem arises.

3. Where do you see yourself in five years?

We want to make sure you're in here for the long haul and you've really thought about this. It takes resources to train a new hire, so ideally, we would like you to stay a while. Your answer will clue us into your ambition as well, and if you've truly thought about what your career track with us will be like. It's a chance for us to hear your strengths and your goals.

4. Why do you want to work for us?

We want to make sure you really want to work for us and that you did your research. We don't want to hire people who just want this job because it's a job.

5. Why did you leave your last job?

Was there drama in your last company? We're actually curious to see if you left your company on good or bad terms. Obviously, most of you will catch on to this question, but your answer can also give us an insight into your relationship with your former company and how you work. If you badmouth your previous employer, no matter what the circumstance, we'll probably take it as a red flag. We also want to make sure that you're not going to leave our company for the same reason.

6. Do you have any questions for me?

This is my opportunity to see if you have been paying attention and how passionate you are about this position and company. It's also a test to see how much homework you've done on the company and the position. This can be your chance to wow us, and it can be one of the most memorable things about a candidate.

7. [Insert incredibly hard problem.]

We want to know how you think on your feet and what your thought process is like. You **may not be able to answer this question**, but we want to see how you deal with the stress of not being able to answer the question and to see if you can at least tell us the steps you would take to find the answer. This shows good initiative and problem-solving skills. We're not looking for someone who would give up as soon as something hard comes their way.

8. [Insert surprising question.]

OK, you may be completely thrown off by this question, but we want that to happen. It may elicit a more genuine reaction and that's what we really want to see. Perhaps, we can catch a glimpse of your personality.

9. What would your co-workers say about you?

We want to know how you think others view you. It says something about how self-aware you are, and it can clue us into how your relationships with your former co-workers are.

10. What are your hobbies?

We want to know what you are like as a person outside of your job. This is a good time to bring up your side projects and impressive hidden talents. What you do with your free time can be a big reflection of what kind of employee you will be. For example, having a successful Etsy store can show us that you're productive, driven, passionate, and creative. This is your chance to stand out and share something personal about yourself that will make us remember you. The one dreaded question that is guaranteed to come up in every interview is "What is your greatest weakness?" Perhaps it's the interviewer's way of weeding out candidates to see who is truly prepared to answer this uncomfortable question. Regardless, you can remove some of the awkwardness by prepping for the question and following these rules.

1. Don't give a cop-out answer

Please don't give tired answers like, "My greatest weakness is that I'm too much of a perfectionist/workaholic." Perhaps it is true for you, but unfortunately, it may ring false to the interviewer who is used to hearing these generic answers that come off as a way to dodge the question.

2. Be honest

Dig deep into yourself and figure out what your true weaknesses are at work. Write them down on a sheet of paper, and figure out which ones you can use in an interview. If you state a weakness you've struggled with, your answer will sound more honest. Some things that will help you come up with true weaknesses is to look at some of the challenges you have faced in your previous jobs or think about constructive criticism you've received from a manager.

3. Avoid deal breakers

Although we mention that you should be honest, it's also good to remember that there is such a thing as being too honest. You need to avoid weaknesses that will hurt your chances of getting the job. For example, say if you're applying for an HR position and you say that you're not good with people, or if you're trying for a sales job and you say you are bad at negotiating. This doesn't mean that you have to make up a weakness, but it's just preferable for you to pick another weakness that isn't a deal breaker.

4. Talk about your attempts to overcome your weakness

Always talk about the steps you have taken to overcome your weakness. This is your chance to show the interviewer that although you have your

flaws, you are proactive and resourceful enough to overcome them. In a way, your effort to conquer your weaknesses will be looked at as a strength.

When you don't know how to answer a question during an interview, the silence can seem excruciating. You might even wish the floor would open up and swallow you whole. Not to worry, though — keep these tips in mind the next time you're strapped for an answer.

1. Calm down.

First of all, the most important thing to do is stay calm. If you start freaking out, your body will begin reacting physiologically. For example, your blood pressure will start rising, and your heart may race. Once you start a stress response, you won't be thinking clearly, and you may throw out answers without thinking. Take deep breaths, and tell yourself that it's OK to not know the answer to the question. You'll just have to work through it; there's nothing you can do to change things, but you need to stay calm to find the right answer.

2. Don't say, "I don't know," off the bat. And don't make stuff up.

You should not tell the interviewer you don't know the answer without mulling it over. Then again, be careful not to **make stuff up**, because your interviewer can see right through that.

3. Ask questions.

Maybe it's the question you don't understand. Ask your interviewer to clarify what she said. Go deeper into the question to see if you can get more details that will help you figure it out.

4. Tell your interviewer what you do know.

If you do have some knowledge of the question, then take the time to tell your interviewer what you do know of the situation. Saying everything out loud can start you on the process of figuring out the problem.

5. Tell them how you would find the answer.

Even if you don't know what the answer is, you can tell the interviewer the steps you would take to figure out the problem. Interviewers ask you hard questions because they want to see what your thought process is. Sometimes, the thought process may be more important than the actual answer. They want to see that you can take initiative and have the resources to come up with a solution on your own, instead of needing someone to hold your hand through problems. While you're trying to find the solution, you can admit to not knowing certain parts; this way, you come off as being honest, and the hiring manager will know you are not trying to fake it. For example, if you need to calculate something and you're not good at math, you can respond with "I can't do the calculations off the top of my head, but I think these calculations will give me the answer. And what I can do is use a calculator to find that answer." Showing a little honesty shows vulnerability and transparency. It also makes you more likable.

6. Know the right time to come clean.

Although we mentioned not admitting to the interviewer that you don't know the answer, there is an exception to this rule. If the answer is something that you will only know through memorization, such as a definition of the word, then it's probably best to admit that you don't know the answer, as it may be impossible to figure it out independently. Here's what you can tell the interviewer: "It's a good question, but I'm sorry, I

don't have the answer off the top of my head. I will be sure to follow up with the answer after the interview."

7. Send a follow-up email.

The [follow-up email for an interview](#) could become your second chance. Try to talk about the answer you were stumped on, but be smooth when you're talking about it. And make sure you're only naming the mistakes your interviewer caught and not drawing attention to the ones she did not catch. Don't say something like "I'm sorry I did not know the answer to that question." Instead, tell her that after more time and thought, you managed to come up with a couple of solutions that could work for the problem.

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Most people know that qualities like intelligence, adaptability, integrity, and an ability to lead are all appealing to employers. But here are three more characteristics that you may not have realized can also help you land a job:

1. An ambidextrous brain.

“We live in a world increasingly dominated by data, but if all you can do is read a spreadsheet, you won’t reach the highest level,” writes Sir Martin Sorrell, founder and CEO of WPP, a multinational advertising and public relations company, in a [recent LinkedIn post](#). “Success in business means being able—as [Roger Martin of the Rotman School of Management](#) puts it—to appreciate qualities, not just quantities.”

The intangibles of judgment, creativity, intuition, and imagination, he says, are essential for great leaders, “because they are the things that make innovation happen.” And they’re “just as important as logic, financial literacy, and an eye for detail.”

2. The ability to argue.

It’s annoying when people disagree with you, Sorrell explains, “but an argument is usually a more constructive exchange than a conversation in which everyone wholeheartedly agrees with each other.” Plus, an ability to argue shows you’re passionate and willing to fight for what you believe in.

“If a leader is surrounded by yes people they learn nothing,” he says. “Good people know how to stand their ground and make their case—even (especially) when others don’t want to hear what they’re saying.”

But just remember that in arguing, especially at work, you should always be smart, effective, rational, and cordial.

3. Fast decision-making skills.

“I used to say, perhaps unwisely, that a bad decision on Monday is better than a good decision on Friday,” Sorrell says. “With the benefit of hindsight I might have modified that to ‘an imperfect decision on Monday is better than the 100% perfect decision on Friday.’ Either way, you get the point.”

He says if and when you take too much time to make a decision, “others are getting on with things and building a lead.”