

HR Interview Questions and Answers

1. How are you today?

HRs usually ask this question to set the mood and environment for the interview. No matter what your day's experience has been, it would help if you positively answered this question with a smile on your face. Keep your answer short and simple, like:

“I am doing great, thank you. It's good to be here.”

2. Tell me something about yourself.

This is one of the first few questions that HR Managers ask candidates. As simple as it sounds, the question is quite tricky as it will put you (the candidate) on the spot. In a pressurizing and challenging situation like this, it is important to stay composed and calm. Try to analyse what your interviewer is interested to hear from you.

Start with a breezy and confident tone – keep in mind, your answer shouldn't sound scripted. So, your sentences should be well-articulated, and pronunciation should be on point. Be quick to bring the focus on your most significant accomplishments first.

Do not repeat the things that you've already mentioned in your resume. Also, make sure that you never come off as overconfident or arrogant. Never downplay your accomplishments and talk negatively about yourself.

Here are two examples of how you can answer this question:

If you are a fresher just out of college/university, here are two excellent ways of shaping your answer –

“I am among the top graduates of my batch. Besides having a BA/BSc/BCom degree in X subject, I also have an MBA degree in Operations/Digital Marketing/Business Analytics/International Business

from XYZ institute. As for my interests, I love exploring new domains, and I'm a fast learner."

If you are an experienced professional, your answer could be something like this –

"For the past few years, I've been deeply dedicated to administrative and managerial work in my organization. In this capacity, I've been lucky to have worn multiple hats like that of a Business Analyst, Team Lead, and Project Manager. I strongly believe in my power of persuasion and people skills. So, I can be a good fit for people-centric roles in your company."

3. Why do you want to work for us? /Why do you think you are a good fit for this role?

This question aims to help the interviewer understand whether or not you know the job profile's requirements if you are a suitable candidate for the role, and what is your intent/goal behind choosing the company and the particular job role.

Your answer must convince the interviewer that you are indeed a good fit for this role. Here, you must explain and highlight your best qualities that sync well with the job role in question. You could talk about your past projects that are similar to this role's requirements and your present/future career aspirations. This is where your knowledge of the company and its top executives will come in handy.

Here are two ways answers to this question:

"I chose this job profile and your company because I feel it's a perfect match for my skills and experience. Presently, this is exactly the kind of role that I can visualize myself in as it aligns well with my career goals. I think with my skill set and background, and your guidance, I can grow to be a valuable asset to your company."

“Sir/Ma’am, I feel extremely grateful to have been called in for an interview with your company. It’s a privilege to be associated with your company, which boasts of a long-standing history in thought leadership. I’ve done my homework, and I know what the company stands for, and I feel that your vision perfectly aligns with my beliefs. I would very much like to be a part of your X team because this is where my skills and knowledge will be best utilized.”

4. What do you consider to be your strongest and weakest points?

Another tricky question up the HRs sleeves, this is a direct hit to divulge your best and weakest qualities both as an individual and a professional. The interviewer wants to know more about your characteristics to judge if you are the right candidate for a particular job profile.

While answering this question, always be honest. First, state your strongest qualities and skills that you think will match well with the job role. List your strengths in a connected manner to make it more cohesive.

Ensure that you never mention any trait or skill you don’t possess since it can be counterproductive if the interviewer asks you to back your claim. Coming to the weakness part, do not state more than two weak traits. Talk about weaknesses that aren’t directly related to the job role and always say that you’re working to improve them.

Here’s how you can frame your answer:

“I think my greatest strengths are that I am a team player and master negotiator. I have excellent people skills. Some of my other strong points are that I’m a self-motivated, fast learner. Whatever task I set out to do, I commit myself to it and complete it diligently. However, my biggest

weakness is that I trust people quite easily. Also, sometimes I tend to overthink things, but I'm working on bettering myself constantly."

"Over the years, I've honed my analytical, critical-thinking, planning, and organizational skills. I can work comfortably in a team or individually. I prioritize work and always ensure that I complete my tasks before the deadline. As for my weak points, I get nervous while speaking in a group, although I'm actively working on it. I hope I can overcome this soon so that I can share my ideas with the entire team and feel like an important part of it."

5. What motivates you?

This is a straightforward question that demands an honest and inspired answer. When you answer, stick to things like job satisfaction, achieving your career goals, becoming a valuable part of the team, sharpening your professional skills, and excitement for new challenges, as the primary motivators for excelling in your professional life.

You can also mention money, but make sure you keep it towards the end – it should not come off as your primary motivating factor. Never brag about material things while answering this question.

Below are two examples to help you understand what the interviewer expects to hear from you:

"I'm a very passionate person, and passion is my strongest motivator that continues to push me to become a better version of myself. When it comes to working, I believe that great results will follow if I put in the commitment, dedication, and patience in whatever I do. Working as a part of a team excites me. The thrill of being able to create something valuable motivates me to work harder."

“My greatest motivation is to become the best version of what I can be. It excites me to exceed my expectations and accomplish tangible results. I love to be productive and achieve milestones. This gives me a sense of fulfilment and satisfaction. Learning new things and completing new challenges also motivates me to go the extra mile.”

6. What holds more importance for you: work or money?

There's only one way to answer this question – work comes first. Even if money is a vital driving factor for you, remember that interviewers want individuals who're passionate about working in their company.

A few examples to help you frame this answer:

“For me, work is a priority. I feel like if I'm satisfied with what I do and if I'm good at it, money will follow. My goal is to keep learning and upskilling. As my professional skills continue to grow, my professional worth will naturally increase.

“Being of a practical mindset, money has always been an important factor in my life. However, I firmly believe that if my work fails to satisfy me at the end of the day, I won't be able to enjoy the money I earn. So, work will always be my foremost priority, and if I can prove my mettle in the workplace, I will be adequately rewarded.”

7. Why do you want to leave your present job? /Why are you looking for a job change?

One of the most common HR interview questions, this question is mainly directed towards experienced professionals. Whatever your reason be for a job change, be it a bad working environment or low salary package at your current company, do not divulge such information. Do not talk negatively about your present employer – it will put you in a bad light. Instead, keep it very professional.

You could say something like this:

“Sir/Ma’am, I feel like I’ve learned all that I possibly could in my present organization, and now, I’m looking for something different. I want to explore new avenues and am more than willing to take on challenging roles.”

“I feel like it’s time to expand my horizons. I’ve been with my present organization for quite some time, and while I’m grateful for all that I’ve learned there, I want to go beyond my current role. And I feel that your company is the perfect place for me to challenge myself and push my limits.”

8. Tell us about your salary expectations.

When an interviewer asks this question, don’t get too eager to put a number on yourself. Instead, show your commitment towards the job and then frame your answer as something like this:

“To be honest, the role interested me, and that’s why I wish to work for your company. And I hope to be compensated according to my skill set and industry experience.”

“Since I am a fresher, my main goal is to learn and gain experience. As for the salary, I’m sure you will compensate me for matching my knowledge and skills. I am looking forward to growing as a professional with your company, and I’m ready to accept the standard industry salary offered for this position and my skillset.”

9. What is your aim in life?

This answer needs to be on point and practical. You need to show the interviewer that you have a vision in life and are set out to do something in life. After listening to your answer, they should feel like you’re a goal-oriented person and have the confidence to hire you.

You could say something like this:

“Presently, my goal is to become an integral part of a reputed organization where I can enrich my real-world skills and take on new challenges. I want to apply my knowledge and skills to contribute to an organization’s growth and success. Most importantly, I want to be happy and satisfied with my job. As for my long-term goals, I wish to build a comfortable life for myself and my family.”

10. How would you be an asset to our company?

When you answer this question, merely don’t point out your good qualities like honesty, punctuality, dedication, team spirit, etc. These are the qualities that any company’s management will expect from a candidate by default. Talk about these qualities in the context of past experiences depicting that you are a reliable resource for the company.

Here’s what you could say:

“I believe I have the essential qualities that match your company’s job profile. This is the reason I want to become a part of your organization. I have always been a goal and result-oriented person, and I know that whatever responsibilities come my way, I will see them through. If I get the space and push to grow and develop as a professional, I will repay it with fierce loyalty and dedication.”

“As a fresher, I’ve not been exposed to the work environment yet. But I know that given the right platform and mentorship, I can prove my mettle and drive in tangible results for the organization. I’m headstrong, practical, and possess excellent people skills. If given a chance, I’ll be ready to expose myself to different challenges, roles, and working conditions. So, I think, in a short time, I’ll be able to grow into a valuable asset for your company.”

11. How well can you handle stress and pressure?

This is a pretty straightforward question aimed to understand how do you conduct yourself and handle workplace pressures. Usually, corporate jobs come with their quota of stress and anxiety. It takes experience and agility to manage the pressure and stress of the daily grind of the workplace.

This is how you can frame your answer:

“While nobody can escape work pressure and stress, I believe that having an organized schedule can help a great deal. Also, prioritizing work is a must. I like to stay ahead of my timeline to deliver my tasks/projects in time. As for stress buster, I love to listen to calming music. It helps me keep my calm and continue with my work. For me, the most important thing is to keep a calm head. When you have a calm mind, it’s much easier to figure out ways to handle stressful situations.”

“Being in the industry has helped me understand that pressure and stress are very much a part of the job. I am fully aware of the kind of pressure that comes with a particular position, and I’m up for it. I’ve never felt discouraged by pressure. Rather it motivates me to push myself and accomplish the task I’m set to do.”

12. How do you feel about working overtime or at odd hours?

You must try to be as honest and clear about your intentions and comfort zone while answering this question. Do not agree to working overtime or on odd hours to bag the job, or later you’ll find yourself stuck where you aren’t comfortable. Try to use a diplomatic tone in your answer:

“Sir/Ma’am, if I’m required to put in extra hours to complete urgent deliverables, or if there’s a resource crunch in the team, I’ll be willing to put in overtime for my team and organization. I am always willing to contribute to my team in any way possible, including working extra hours and odd times. However, I do expect to get comp offs to unwind and get back on track for what’s ahead of me.”

“In my current position, my job is set within the 9-6 routine. However, I never back off from putting in extra effort and time if the need arises. If I’ve to work odd shifts and extra hours to achieve something for myself and my company, I am willing to do it, provided I get compensatory time off after.”

13. Assuming we hire you, how long would you be with us?

The aim of asking this question is to get a sense of your long-term plan. Essentially, the interviewer wants to know if training and mentoring you will be worth the effort and time. They need to see if you’ll invest your time in the company in return. Nobody wants to invest in candidates who take up jobs whimsically or just for the sake of it.

Here are a few examples of what your answer could be like:

“As long as I feel like I’m contributing to the growth of your company while also undergoing personal growth, I will be loyal to the organization. I need job satisfaction and scope for professional development. So, if I continue to learn new things and scaling up the promotional ladder, I will never feel the need to jump ships.”

“I will happily continue to work with your company as long as there’s mutual growth. While I’ll contribute actively to promote the organization’s growth, I will also expect to get ample opportunities to grow both professionally and financially.”

“If I enjoy working here and I feel like I have a bright future ahead of me, I’ll be a dedicated and loyal employee of your organization. I’m looking forward to a healthy work environment where I can upskill and grow personally and professionally. As long as I find these aspects here, I’ll never think about changing my job.”

14. If needed, would you be willing to relocate for this job?

With this question, the interviewer wants to know if you can take up field jobs and tasks that require extensive traveling. Do not say “Yes” straightaway – build your answer. It will only make you look desperate. If you have familial obligations to stay at your location, make sure to state it honestly. Understand the tone of your interviewer and answer diplomatically, like this:

“I will certainly like to travel if the opportunity presents itself and is rewarding for my career at your company. I think work-related travels are excellent for exploring new places, new business opportunities, and connecting with people from diverse backgrounds.”

If you are inclined to travel, you could say:

“Yes, I would be willing to travel/relocate to new locations. I love traveling, and I think going to new places will be a delightful experience for me.”

15. Do you consider yourself a team player?

By this question, the interviewer asks whether you can work and collaborate with others in an organization. So, answer this question positively. Your answer should make the interviewer believe that you will fit in well with the team they assign you to and contribute to the company individually and as a part of the team.

Here’s what you can say:

“Yes, I do consider myself as an excellent team player. I’ve been lucky enough to work both as an individual contributor and as a part of the XYZ team in my present organization. So, I am fully aware of what each role demands of me. When given a task, I can handle it well with minimal supervision, and I can also work seamlessly within any team. As part of a team, I always keep communication lines open and am always ready to help my teammates wherever I can. I know that collaboration is often the

key to innovation and success, and I'm perfectly comfortable with working in a team environment."

"Yes, I am. Right now, I'm working as an independent contributor to my present company. However, I've worked with my colleagues on numerous projects, and my transition into the team structure happens quite naturally. I like being a part of the team as it allows me to open up to new ideas and explore new avenues while working on different projects."

16. Do you have any serious medical issues that we should know?

This is a crucial question that often makes it to most HR interviews. Interviewers ask this question to understand if you are suffering from any severe or life-threatening illness that hampers your productivity. When you answer this question, only mention serious conditions like cancer, epilepsy, heart diseases, etc. Also, expectant mothers must disclose if they are pregnant. Such conditions must be declared in the first instance to avoid any problems at the workplace in the future.

If you do not have any severe issues that are worth considering at this point, do not stretch your answer. Say the needful without mentioning too many details of your health status. Remember that any kind of harmful exaggeration here may cause HRs to assume that you'll have a bad attendance record. You can end up losing a good job opportunity, and even if you get the job, you might miss out on travel opportunities.

Keep your answer brief and simple:

"Sir/Ma'am, I'm perfectly fit, and as of now, I haven't been diagnosed with any serious illness or medical condition. While the occasional fever and flu aren't strangers to me, I try to keep myself as fit and healthy as I can."

17. What is your work ethic?

HRs usually ask this question to judge what kind of an employee you will be and if you are a professional through and through. This question aims

to divulge if a candidate is disciplined, organized, and well-behaved. While answering this question, focus on your core strengths and posit them as your work ethic, like so:

Though I'm a fresher, I've always been organized and planned with my schedule. Even during my academic days, I was a very disciplined student. I like planning my schedule and follow it diligently. My aim as a professional is always to deliver quality work within due time. I believe no job is menial and that all tasks should be given equal importance."

"To be honest, my work ethic lies in my diligence, commitment, and passion for my work. So far, in my professional life, I've worked dedicatedly to never miss a deadline without compromising my work quality. I believe that teamwork and collaboration go a long way into creating a healthy work environment."

18. How do you deal with criticism?

This question aims to judge your attitude toward feedback or criticism and how you react to feedback. The key to answering this question is to make the interviewer understand that you're open to constructive criticism and feedback. While you should exude confidence, you should never come off as a stubborn or ignorant person who cannot take input in any form.

You can say something like this:

"Sir/Ma'am, I know that I'm not perfect. I'm still learning. Naturally, I make mistakes, but I feel that I can learn from my mistakes. I've always been enthusiastic about learning new things and acquiring new skills. If anyone offers me constructive feedback or criticism, I'll surely consider it and try to better myself. If you have a piece of advice for me that can benefit me and my work, I'll make sure to keep it with me moving forward."

"Over the years in my professional experience, I've learned how to turn criticism into positive insights that I can use in my daily life. If ever I'm wrong and I'm criticized, I understand that I'm at fault. In such instances,

I always try to rectify myself. I feel that I'm flexible and mature enough to handle criticism, both positive and negative."

19. What would you rate yourself on a scale of 1 to 10?

As a rule of thumb, do not convey the message that you are completely perfect and that there's no scope for improvement anymore. The trick is not to sound overconfident but also keep yourself in the good graces of the interviewer:

"On a scale of 1 to 10, I will rate myself an 8. The reason for this is because I know that I'm not perfect. There's always room for improvement and upskilling. I believe this is pivotal to improving both personally and professionally. One should have the interest to learn and grow. So, that's why an 8."

20. Suppose you win a lottery now that ensures you are set for life. Would you still work, or would you quit?

Do NOT, under any circumstance, say "Yes" to this question! Any employee who's purely materialistic and money-centric isn't a valuable asset to an organization. If you show that a job is only a means to earn money and that you could easily give it up if a lump sum is handed to you, no company will ever want to hire you.

Instead, say something like this:

"Sir/Ma'am, if I win a lottery, I will be thrilled. It will mean that now I have hefty savings ready for me and my family's future. But not even for once will I think of quitting my job because I'm a professional. I enjoy my work, and I would like to continue to learn and excel in my field."

"While the thought is tempting, I think I will continue to work because I enjoy what I do. I love learning and exploring new domains in my field, and I cannot give it up for anything. I aim to retire after having completed a rich and fulfilling career."

21. Do you think you are overqualified for this job role?

This trick question is directed to understand if a candidate is boastful or humble. There's a thin line between confidence and overconfidence, and you must never sound overconfident before the interviewer. Even if you are overqualified for a particular job, don't mention it out loud. Frame your answer like this:

"No, Sir/Ma'am, I don't think I am overqualified for this job role, but I think I'm perfectly qualified for it. I have the right skill set, educational background, and experience for this post, and I believe I can use them to my advantage at your company, that is, if I'm hired. I feel that there's no end to learning. So, yes, I'm well qualified for this post."

22. Would you rather be liked or feared?

You must answer this question diplomatically. No interviewer will like to hear a candidate saying they would love to be feared at the workplace.

Here's what you can say:

"Honestly, I would love to be well-liked and respected in my organization. For me, respect is necessary at my workplace. I would never like to be someone with whom my colleagues or my juniors cannot talk to. I believe 'respected,' and not 'feared' is the right word here because being feared doesn't always command respect."

23. What sets you apart from other candidates?

Since you are a candidate who's not aware of the strengths and weaknesses of other candidates, make sure you start with this point as a disclaimer. This shows that you know you're not in a position to judge other candidates and pit yourself against them.

When answering, frame it like this:

“I’m sure that this profile has attracted many candidates with impressive profiles. However, since I’m not familiar with what other candidates have to bring to the table, I’ll not compare myself to others. As for myself, I am a creative individual with excellent organizational and problem-solving skills. I’m also a diligent and dedicated professional, and I think these qualities make me a strong contender for this position.”

24. In the past year, what steps have you taken toward upskilling?

The question is pretty self-explanatory. Generally, companies expect professionals who’re always learning and gaining new skills to create value for their organization. So, if you say that you haven’t done anything in the last year to improve your professional knowledge, they might swap you for another candidate who takes an active interest in upskilling. However, remember that you shouldn’t lie here. If you say you have done/completed some course while you haven’t, the interviewer might ask you something related to it and catch your bluff.

Here’s what you can say:

“Last year, I attended various seminars for professional grooming and personality development. Also, I took two courses relevant to my field of work and attended training workshops conducted by my present employer.”

“Although I haven’t attended any professional seminar or course in the past year, I did complete a few online courses on XYZ as it is highly relevant to my work. I’ve also been regularly working on my communication skills through online tutorials and books.”

25. Are you good at time management?

This is a straightforward question that demands a simple and honest answer. For this question, you could say:

“I take on a very professional approach to time management. It’s my habit to make schedules and timelines for work to complete my tasks before the deadline. I also make to-do lists and make sure to stick to my routines. These little things help me keep my days and weeks organized.”

“For time management, I believe there’s nothing better than to-do lists and schedules. Once I have a list of tasks to do, I prioritize the tasks and then schedule them in my weekly/monthly schedule. I also follow a scheduling system for my meetings so that they never collide. This helps me to keep things well-planned and organized, both at work and home.”

26. Would you be willing to lie for the company?

This is an extremely tricky question. Although it is not a very common question in HR interviews, you should be prepared for it.

If you’re asked this question, answer diplomatically, like so:

“Sir/Ma’am, my inclination or willingness to lie for the company would depend on the situation and the outcome. If my lie can bring about a positive result for the company and its employees, and if the lie isn’t jeopardizing anyone’s position in the company, I can lie. However, given a choice, I do not feel good about lying.”

“At first go, I’d probably say no to lying. But if my lie would profit the company and its employees without bringing any harm whatsoever, I would be okay with lying. But I would never want to jeopardize or harm anyone through my lie.”