

Exercise

Interview Before the Interview, Part 1

The following chart includes some of the most commonly asked interview questions and some tips for answering each one. It's important to use your own words and style when answering questions and to give honest answers.

It is better to have "talking points" in mind rather than trying to memorize answers. Trying to memorize answers creates unnecessary stress for you and may give the appearance that you're not being yourself. For each question, write down some points you would like to make as you answer. Make sure to include work-related accomplishments (STAR stories with situation-task-action-result) whenever appropriate.

Questions	Tips & Talking Points
1. <i>Tell me about yourself.</i>	Because you have done your homework on the interviewer and employers, you can talk about common background and interests, which builds relationship. You can share work-related info such as education, experiences, accomplishments and strengths. Talk no more than 2 minutes.
2. <i>Why do you want to work for us?</i>	Using what you know about the employer and position, focus on their needs and how you can meet them. Emphasize what you do and like best that they need most! Be positive. Convey sense of "I can do it."
3. <i>What do you find most attractive about the position we are discussing?</i>	Talk about the challenges of the position and needs of the employer, and then talk about how your strengths can contribute to the organization's success.
4. <i>What are your strengths?</i>	Give 3-4 work-related strengths. Use STAR stories to give examples of accomplishments and strengths.

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Interview Before the Interview, Part 2

Questions	Tips & Talking Points
<p>5. <i>Tell me about a time when you achieved your greatest accomplishment.</i></p>	<p>Use your STAR story to talk about the Situation, Task, Actions and Results. Make it work-related, even related to the position for which you are interviewing. Don't hold back. This is a chance to shine.</p>
<p>6. <i>What are you looking for in salary? What was/is your last/current salary?</i></p>	<p>Defer this question until later if at all possible. State that you are interested in the overall opportunity to contribute and grow. If you feel you must answer, talk about the total compensation and a salary range.</p>
<p>7. <i>What are your career goals? Where do you want to be in 5 years?</i></p>	<p>Relate your answer to the position for which you are interviewing. Talk about your desire to grow in your field and to contribute to the organization.</p>
<p>8. <i>Why should we hire you? What contributions can you make?</i></p>	<p>Give 3-4 strengths supported by examples of accomplishments. Relate them to the needs of this employer/position. Use this opportunity to tell another STAR story.</p>

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Interview Before the Interview, Part 3

Questions	Tips & Talking Points
<p>9. <i>What are your weaknesses?</i></p>	<p>Be prepared to talk about a time when you failed to achieve your goals. Keep it brief. Do not elaborate. Tell what you have learned or done to improve.</p>
<p>10. <i>Tell us about a conflict with a boss or co-worker. How was it resolved?</i></p>	<p>Note that if you say no, some interviewers will keep drilling deeper to find a conflict. The key is how you behaviorally reacted to conflict and what you did to resolve it. A STAR story can work nicely here</p>
<p>11. <i>Why did you leave/are you leaving your last/current position?</i></p>	<p>If you are employed, talk about your goals and plans for meeting them, seeking new opportunities. Tell them if you were laid off, fired or quit. Share with them what you learned and how it helps you contribute in your next job. DO NOT say anything negative about any past employer or boss.</p>
<p>12. <i>What do you know about our organization?</i></p>	<p>Do your research. Check the employer's website, and talk to anyone you can find who works there. Include information about the organization's mission, services, products, markets, size, scope.</p>