



## Best Questions to Ask During an Interview

The big day is approaching. You've landed an interview for your dream job, and you're probably doing what most do: preparing for the questions you'll have to field. Anticipating questions and formulating your responses is important prep work but preparing for the questions you'll ask the interviewer is equally vital. Not doing so will signal to the interviewer that you're unprepared. And employers are never looking to hire someone who fails to prepare.

While you're rehearsing answers to the questions you'll be asked, be sure and jot down questions you'd like to ask during the interview. There's a tip you can utilize when asking questions; this one comes from the legal profession. Attorneys arguing court cases don't ask questions unless they already know the answer. And answers to many of the following questions can be found on the company's website. So why should you ask questions if you already know the answer? Because you'll be ready with responses that reflect how your experiences align with their answer.

Here's a tip you can take from reporters who ask questions for a living—never ask closed-ended questions. In other words, don't ask questions that can be answered with a simple *yes* or *no*. Nothing will slam the brakes on a conversation like a closed-ended question.

### Don't Begin Questions with these Words...

- Will,
- Does,
- Are,
- Is,
- Can, and
- Could

### Begin Questions with These Open-Ended Starters Instead...

- How,
- Why,
- When,
- What, and
- Who



Now that you know how to start your questions, the following are some of the best ones to ask when you're interviewing for a job.

**What are some most important qualities that will help someone excel in this position?**

This is a great question that will uncover items not included in the job description. Their answer is one you'll want to refer to when composing that all-important thank you note. In the thank you note, be sure and re-iterate the interviewer's answer, then cite examples from your experiences that support these qualities.

**How will my success be judged?**

You're going to eventually want to know how the employer will evaluate your efforts. Ask it during the interview.

**What does this organization value the most?**

This question can usually be found by researching the company's website. When they answer the question, you'll be ready with positive examples of how you align with the company's values.

**What is the company culture like?**

The interviewer's response to this question should be pretty predictable if you've spent any time on their website. Look for answers to this question by visiting their job board. It should give you valuable insight into the company's culture.

**Who are your top competitors? What do they do well? How are they lacking?**

Make sure you study up on the company's competitors. Check out their press releases and you'll better understand their product set and how they position themselves in the marketplace.

**Why do you like working for this organization?**

While research won't uncover the answer to this question, it takes the interview to a more personal level. People like to talk about themselves, and this one will get them talking.

**How do I stack up against others who are applying for this position?**

This question can be uncomfortable for many, but isn't this an answer you're dying to uncover? Also, it portrays confidence, which all employers like. It's a question that subtly says, "I know I'm the best, I just want to hear it from you."

This might sound like a lot of work but preparing questions and doing research ahead of time will pay off. You'd be surprised how many of your competitors won't put the time in.

As mentioned earlier, always follow-up the interview with a thank you note. Use the interviewer's answers to formulate it. State their answers, and then cite examples that reflect how your prior experience aligns with their responses. Using concrete examples is always best. If they value team players, mention the award you received for your superior collaborative skills.

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