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Possible interview answers and questions

This is it: The make-it-or-break-it interview stage. The interview is the hardest part of the job process, but we're here to help. To identify common job interview questions to prepare for, we reached out to Editorial Director Erica Devaney. Devaney has conducted hundreds of interviews, making her uniquely qualified to provide advice and insight about the interview process. Hi, y'all. My name is Erica Devaney. I've been at Red Ventures for nine years, working on various teams in a few different content roles — from SEO writing, to UX content, to editorial planning, and more. In 2019, I did more creative interviews than anyone else at the company, so I'd say I have some experience here. I hope some of my interview tips can be helpful to you! Interviews are crucial to finding the right person for the right role. At Red Ventures, we use interviews to make sure a candidate is a good fit for the specific role, which includes having the right skills, the right attitude for coaching, and an eagerness to learn. Common Interview Questions Every interview — and every candidate — is different, but I generally rely on a central set of questions to help me better understand the question. Here are five of my go-to interview questions. I typically interview candidates for content or design roles, so I've shared a few creative-specific questions along with more generic versions of those questions to help those of you interviewing in other industries. To help advance you through the hiring process, I'll also clue you in to what I'm looking for when I ask these questions and provide a sample response that I'd like to hear. Tell me about your (writing, editing, design, etc.) experience. I usually start with this question to get a good baseline understanding of your experience, in your own words. I've read about it on your resume or LinkedIn, but I want to hear you explain what you've done. I'm sure you'll get this question from almost everyone you talk to during the interview process, so it's good to prepare how you'd hit on the high points of your experience. I'll use your answer to ask specific follow-up questions. Example of a Good Answer "In my classes, I worked with groups on papers and presentations, and did a lot of peer editing on our papers. At my internship, I worked closely with my editor to pitch topics and learned how to publish effective posts on social media for our brand. In my current position, I own our content calendar and contribute around three articles a week, making sure to follow our style guide and the tone of the site." Tell me about a time you received some tough feedback or feedback you didn't agree with. What happened and what did you learn from getting this feedback? I'm looking for an experience that helped you grow so as to not make the same mistakes again. I'm not looking for you to place blame on someone else or to tell me about feedback you ignored. Example of a Good Answer "On my first story pitch, I got feedback that the topic didn't fit with our site. I reworked it with my manager and realized why this topic wouldn't work. Before my next pitch, I took a closer look at the types of stories we covered on the site so that I could make more informed pitches for future stories." What is your [writing, editing, design, etc.] process? I'm interested in learning HOW you actually use the skill you have, whether that's writing, editing, analyzing, marketing, SEO, or something else. I'm hoping to hear about where you put your focus — what's most important to you when you do your job? I want to know that you have a thoughtful way of doing your work — a planning or understanding phase, a stage to do the actual work, time for a final review or edits, and a last look before submitting the work or passing it along. Example of a Good Answer "Before I start editing, I make sure to have an understanding of the goal of the piece. Next I read through it, then I start making edits — big picture first to make sure the piece makes sense and has all the right information and sources, then grammar, before my final read-through. Finally I'll read through the whole thing one last time before giving it back to the writer to make any changes." Tell me about a time you had to give tough feedback or have a tough conversation. I'm hoping to learn how you handle tough situations. It's inevitable that you'll have to give someone hard feedback at some point, whether it's a small conversation or something career-changing. I know situations like these are difficult for everyone involved, but at some point you have to step up for the good of the team, the project, your coworker, yourself, and the business. Example of a Good Answer "One time I was peer reviewing an article that I thought didn't quite hit the mark for the topic and audience we were going after. The person who wrote it was senior to me, so I worried about going to them with this feedback, but I listed out all my reasons for why this article didn't work for our goals. During our conversation, they were able to understand the feedback and expressed how much they appreciated me telling them. We talked through my ideas and they were able to rework the piece into something we were both really proud of." What is the project you're most proud of completing? I want to hear about a project that was challenging or complex — something that, when it was finished, you felt proud of yourself for completing. Maybe you learned how to work well with others or came up with a process to make project completion go a little smoother, or maybe it's something that means a lot to you. There's really no wrong answer here, but I do want to hear about something that was meaningful to you. Example of a Good Answer "Last year in my class, I had a group project that took us a while to choose a topic and get started on. It was tough, but once we all sat down, aligned on the topic, and assigned roles, we came together, and I was so proud of what we accomplished. We put in a ton of work and ended up with an A on the project." Interview FAQ Here's advice for some common interview scenarios. How much information is too much information? First thing I would say here is that it's great to show your personality in an interview, but don't overshare. I once interviewed someone who was very much an oversharer and told me some really weird and personal stories — not really a good look during an interview. Secondly, try to avoid long, drawn-out answers. Give me enough information to understand your role in a project and how you worked with teammates, but don't tell me every single detail of the class. Stick to what's most important to answer the question. What are some red flags in a candidate's answer or way of answering? A few red flags for me include: Yes-or-no answers with no elaboration or details to support your answer. Dismissive phrases, like, "I already know how to do that" or "I'm already an expert at that." Anything that gives the impression that you think you have no more to learn on a topic is concerning to me. If I ask about a challenging project you worked on, it's a red flag if you place the blame on someone else. Is it OK to ask an interviewer to repeat a question? YES! If my question isn't clear or you're unsure what I'm looking for, let me know and I'll try to ask a different way. Any tips for someone who's been laid off or has gaps in their resume? In general, seeing a gap in a resume doesn't concern me. Life happens, and I'm more interested in the experience you do have, not that you may have breaks in between. However, I would suggest simply being honest about any gaps if your interviewer asks. Is sending a thank-you note after the interview expected or valuable? I personally don't expect a thank-you note after an interview and I would never count the lack of a note against anyone. But it does always make me smile when I get a thank you, especially if it's personalized to our conversation. Any Tips for Interviewing Successfully on Zoom? Zoom interviews are our current reality and we've all had to adapt. The most important thing to remember is that we're all in the same situation — most everyone is now holding their meetings over Zoom, and interviews are no different for me as an interviewer. We all have pets and kids and roommates or partners who may end up in the background of a Zoom meeting, and that's okay! We all get it. It is guaranteed that one of my two cats will walk across my screen or end up in the background of a meeting at least once a day, and interviews are not exempt from these visits. On a more practical note, I'd suggest testing your Zoom before your interview. This includes making sure you know how to log in and use your camera, testing out your audio, and ensuring you have your headphones handy. If you happen to have a shaky or unstable internet connection on the day of your interview, don't worry — we've all been there before, too. In some cases where someone has a shaky connection, I'll often suggest we both turn off our cameras and just talk, because that typically helps keep the audio from freezing. What interests you about this position? What are your greatest strengths and biggest weaknesses? What types of people do you have difficulty working with? What distinguishes you from other people who can do the same tasks as you? What role do you usually play in a group? What tools do you use to stay organized? What's something about you that people wouldn't know from your resume? What question were you hoping I'd ask today, but didn't — and what would your answer be? What aspect of your current role do you enjoy doing most? What questions do you have for me? Header Image Credits: Compassionate Eye Foundation/Gary Burchell, Luis Alvarez | Getty Images Yena Williams has been an online writer for more than 10 years. She loves writing about the process of finding a job.Be Prepared!These 30 most common interview questions were taken from interviews that I have been on personally, as well as from friends and colleagues in a variety of fields. Having an idea of the questions you'll be asked and knowing what you should say will give you an automatic edge over your competitors vying for the same job. So get your clothes ironed and get that job! 1. So, tell me about yourself.This is an oldie, and NOT a goodie. This one will come up 100% of the time, so have a mini-speech ready. Do not mention parts of your personal life, as they don't care. Start off with an introduction of yourself, talk about your education, and then go into your work history. Go in order from oldest to newest and discuss the job tasks that are relevant to the position you are applying for.2. Why are you seeking a new job?This is a nice way of asking why you are leaving your old job. Be honest and brief unless you were fired. Talk about wanting a more challenging opportunity, or wanting to try a new field.3. What do you know about this company/organization?You obviously need to research the company before going into the interview. Find out what the company does and use the good ole' Who, What, Where, When, and some current events. If you drop a line about the acquisition of a new company in a merger, they'll be pleased to know you keep up with current events in the field.4. What experience do you have in this field pertaining to this position?Go through your past positions and explain how it correlates to the current position. If the position is not exactly parallel to the position you are applying for, explain how it relates in an unexpected way. Try to plan this ahead of time, because it will be difficult to think up great answers on the spot.5. Why do you want to work at this company/organization?You now know a little bit about this company, so explain why you feel passionate about the mission of the company or the position. Try and tie in your own career goals.6. Have you done anything to further your skills and/or experiences?This can range widely from learning a new language through Rosetta Stone to taking an Adobe Photoshop class. Talk about why you care about furthering your knowledge and skill set.7. What is your greatest strength?There are numerous positive answers you can reply with. Don't gush off 20 different positive qualities, stick to a few, and expand on them. Try and relate it to the position. Are they looking for a good team worker? Do they need someone who is extremely meticulous? Keep what qualities they are looking for in mind when selecting yours. My favorite is; results-oriented.8. What is your biggest weakness?This one is quite tricky. The most common thing interviewees do is turn a positive into a negative. Obviously the hr rep will see straight through that, since the 20 people before you did the same thing. I would stay honest, but mention something minor, or something completely unrelated to the position. If you're applying for a public relations job, you can talk about how bad you are with math.9. Are you a team player? Yes, you're a team player. Never say no. Describe an experience that displays that you are a team player.10. If a co-worker were here, what would he/she say about you?Think back to any compliments you were given by a co-worker. Don't say "I think he would have said . . . ". Be specific. Mention the occurrence such as "Well, last year, my co-worker Don said about me . . . after I helped him complete a project".11. Why do you think we should hire you?Don't give a short answer here. Sound enthusiastic and give lots of reasons. Point out how your skills and ideas will directly benefit the company. Make sure they know what you can bring to the position.12. Tell me about a time you made a suggestion that was implemented?Think of a real suggestion you have made that netted positive results. Be very detailed. Don't just say, my idea had positive results, talk about how sales went up 26% within the next three months for example.13. How do you cope with pressure or stress on the job?You work great under pressure and stress.14. Have you ever had issues with any previous employers?This is a trick question. They are testing you to see if you'd ever speak badly about an employer/colleague. Say "no."15. In terms of salary, what are you looking for?This question really depends upon the work environment of the job you are going for. In some, you are expected to give your number and at others, they expect you to be more polite. If they seem to want an answer, give a large range. And, be sure to find the average salary range for that position online so that you can quote the right amount.16. How would you compensate for your lack of experience? Or Do you feel that you are over-qualified for this position?You are either one or the other. Explain your character strengths that show you can compensate. Try and tie as many related experiences as possible to the job you want. Sound confident that you could be the very best at the job. If you are over-qualified, talk about why you are passionate about the position and the company. Discuss your passions for the position and why you feel like the job is actually a perfect fit.17. How would you know if you were successful at your job?Mention something like, if the customer/your boss was happy with your work. Talk about the goals you would set and try to meet.18. Are you willing to put the needs of the company/organization before your own personal needs?Always reply "yes." Unless the company was doing something illegal.19. What kind of person do you dislike working with?Say that you get along with all types of people. They just want to know that you're not a sensitive whiner.20. If hired, how long would you expect to work for us?Don't give them a real timeline unless you really want to disclose it. Say something generic like, "For as long as the employer feels I'm doing a good job."21. What motivates you to do a good job?No, it's not money. (Even if it is!) Try something like "to become better at what I do," "to learn something new", or "feeling good about a job well-done."22. Tell me about a professional disappointment.Talk about a real situation and how you handled it. It's not negative as everyone has had a professional disappointment.23. Have you ever learned from a mistake you made on the job?Talk about a mistake and what you learned. Be sure the mistake isn't something so dramatic though. Be sure to emphasize the lesson learned and how your behavior has changed from it!24. Tell me about the most fun you've had on a job.This is straight-forward. Describe something you had fun doing, like accomplishing a huge project or landing a big-name client.25. What is your dream job?Be honest here. Especially if the job is entry-level or mid-level. They are aware that you don't want to be an assistant for the rest of your life! However, if you're going for a very high-level position, be wary. No company wants to hire someone who doesn't like doing what they do.26. How would you describe your work ethic?They are simply trying to gauge your laziness meter. Be confident and answer "it's great!"27. Do you know anyone who works for this company?This is tricky. If someone referred you or if it's a family member, you obviously shouldn't lie. However, be cautious in mentioning a bunch of friends you know, in case your employer doesn't have such a hot impression of them.28. Are you comfortable with travel? How much?Be honest here. You're the one that's going to have to travel. Give a percentage you're comfortable with. Ask about gas reimbursement.29. Would you be willing to work overtime? night & weekends?Be honest here as well, since you'll have to work those hours.30. Do you have any questions for me?Yes! You must always have questions prepared! Have at least six, since some of them could get answered along the way if you and the interviewer get caught up in conversation. Have a mix of general and specific questions related to the position. Author Note Obviously these are the most common questions, but this varies depending upon your field. If you're applying for a fashion designer position, they may ask you about fashion projects, designers, and fabrics. The same goes for a position in the food industry and etc. Be sure to brush up on specialized questions as well.GOOD LUCK! This article is accurate and true to the best of the author's knowledge. Content is for informational or entertainment purposes only and does not substitute for personal counsel or professional advice in business, financial, legal, or technical matters.Commentsmariamae on August 03, 2020:This is a helpful guide when I'll have my interview. Came up to 6 important interview question and answer also here ... you may check it out.MyCreditUnions on July 26, 2016:I had an interview as a Technology Director of Robins Federal ... and I think by far the most important piece of the interview was the closing.I always ask if they have any additional questions for me. Then I start...I ask "What is the short and long term goals of the position", and "How do you define success in the position". This allows you to determine the biggest challenges of the position and determine who is the manager.Then close with highlighting your skills around there definition of success.Works everytime.nudgereyes on November 05, 2015:thumbs up ! all the information are quiet important and useful specially for all job hunters. It was great !Carrie on November 29, 2014:Thumbs up! One of the best I ever read! Hope I get the job!ryukendo on February 22, 2014:thank u itz very usefulsirmulumba on October 16, 2012:These modal questions are typically used by most of employers during interviews. Thank you!suri fouzdar on February 25, 2012:How much i can take benefit for the it sector field .can i take chance to see some more questions related to only it sectors.!!!Yena Williams (author) from California on December 15, 2011:cordballey: Those are also great examples of possible "problem solving" interview questions. Thanks!cordbailey on December 07, 2011:Other questions to look out for are those that require you to provide a solution to particular issue such as "what would you do if you encounter a dissatisfied customer who upset and yelling in the lobby?" Or "two employees are involved in an argument, how would you resolve the situation?"Yena Williams (author) from California on October 23, 2011:I'm glad it was helpful for you!Pater Smith on October 19, 2011:I'm not afraid every anterview because of your help. It really useful. I always thank to you .Yena Williams (author) from California on August 21, 2011:ekseiman: I'm glad the info was useful for you. You're welcome!ekseiman on August 20, 2011:very useful hub. interviews are always a challenge and it's great to have some advice. thanks!Yena Williams (author) from California on August 19, 2011:Greg: Thanks!Gregory S Williams from California on August 18, 2011:Nicely handled. Straight forward and honest!Yena Williams (author) from California on March 21, 2011:vernpaulwriter: Congratulations on your job! Yes, writing jobs can be more casual than most. Thanks!Vernpaulwriter from backwoods of Nevada on March 20, 2011:good hub, I recently went to a job interview, no shave holy tee shirt and jeans and still got the job, the boss looked worse, but it was a writing job, i was there to check out the publication and did not expect the editor to be there.Yena Williams (author) from California on February 26, 2011:M Zvyagintsev: Thanks for the compliments! I'm so glad it was helpful for you even over in Japan. It's interesting how the questions don't change! Thank you!M Zvyagintsev from Auckland, New Zealand on February 25, 2011:Awesome hub!I'm applying to work and live in Japan now, eventhough it's an online application form, the questions are very similar to what you'd expect in a verbal interview.Love the sense of humour - brilliant writer :)MaxYena Williams (author) from California on February 25, 2011:agraj.us: I'm so glad it was helpful for you. Incorporating some of these questions in your company's recruiting process is a great idea. Thanks!agraj.us from CA, US on February 25, 2011:i just bookmarked this hub, really informative...i'm applying your points in my company.Keep PostingYena Williams (author) from California on February 24, 2011:@crystolite: You're welcome! I'm glad it was helpful for your interview. =)Emma from Houston TX on February 24, 2011:Thanks for this information. It will help me build up my answer in an interviewYena Williams (author) from California on February 24, 2011:Mike: Thanks!TreasuresofHeaven: Thanks for commenting, appreciate it!Sima Ballinger from Michigan on February 23, 2011:Great list of questions and responses. This is good. Vote UP!Mike on February 23, 2011:Good summation of the most common questions, definitely accurate.Yena Williams (author) from California on February 22, 2011:Hi James: Thanks, I appreciate it!James on February 22, 2011:Great info, it is helpful, nice hub :)Yena Williams (author) from California on February 16, 2011:@Peter Owen: Yes, it's definitely needed for all fellow Americans out of work, thanks!Peter Owen from West Hempstead, NY on February 15, 2011:Nice list and right on target. People should be prepared since the questions will be askedYena Williams (author) from California on February 11, 2011:DJBryle: Thanks! I really did want to help out recent graduates and other people suffering from unemployment and constant job interviews!DJBryle from Somewhere in the LINES of your MIND, and HOPEFULLY at the RIPPLES of your HEART. =) on February 11, 2011:I love this hub! Very useful and it can really give so much help for those who are seeking jobs. Thanks for sharing! =)Yena Williams (author) from California on February 10, 2011:@troyjones345: I'm glad they're on point. Welcome to Hubpages!Troyjones345 from Fredericksburg,va on February 10, 2011:Great blog. I was asked a few of these questions recently=)!!

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