COMMON INTERVIEW QUESTIONS CONT.

Interview questions often have common themes that can help you understand what the employer is trying to learn. Use these questions to your advantage in an interview so you can show off the features the employer is seeking. The five themes are:

1. Background and Goals
2. Skills and Experience
3. Behavior Questions
4. Reliability/Accountability
5. Work Style

*Capitalized questions are the most common questions.*

**Theme 1: Background and Goals:** Show the employer you are goal oriented and have prepared for the interview by learning something about the company.

1. **TELL ME ABOUT YOURSELF.** The purpose of this question is to summarize your qualifications and skills that would demonstrate to the potential employer you can do the job. Discuss your overall background which relates to the employer’s needs: what type of experience do you have? How does this job fit into your career plan? What are your career goals for the next few years? Don’t discuss your age, your family, or desired salary.
2. **WHERE DO YOU WANT TO BE IN 5 YEARS?**
3. **IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO TELL ABOUT YOURSELF THAT MAY HAVE BEEN OVERLOOKED?**
4. **TELL ME WHAT YOU KNOW ABOUT OUR COMPANY.**
5. Why do you want to work here? What salary are you seeking?
6. What are your future career plans?
7. Why do you think you would like this particular job?
8. If you had to describe yourself in one word, what would it be?
9. What motivates you to do a good job?
10. Why are you leaving or why did you leave your previous job?
11. Do you plan to continue your education?
12. You have one minute to convince me that you’re the best candidate for this job. Begin.

**Theme 2: Skills and Experience:** Use brief examples to demonstrate your skills. Talk about what you have learned from each career experience. When you talk about a challenge or a skill you would like to improve, emphasize that this will not be a problem to the employer. What have you done or are currently doing to improve yourself?

1. **WHAT ARE YOUR GREATEST STRENGTHS? WEAKNESSES?**
2. What can you do for us that other candidates can’t?
3. Define customer service.
4. Why should I hire you rather than anyone else?
5. What have you learned from some of the jobs you’ve held?
6. Have you ever supervised people before? How many?
7. Why is customer service so important today?
8. What do you think are the most important abilities that lead to success on the job?
9. If there were one area you’ve always wanted to improve upon, what would that be?
10. Give some examples of things you’ve done in previous jobs or school that demonstrate your willingness to work hard.
11. Describe a time when you took personal accountability for a conflict and initiated resolution.

**Theme 3: Behavior Questions:** These questions often begin with “tell me about a time…” and are a request that you demonstrate you have acquired a skill. Tell a brief story (30 seconds to a minute) which demonstrates your skill in the area requested. Often employers will ask questions about how you handled a problem in the workplace. The employer wants to be sure that if you have a conflict at work, you will not (1) get into a fight; or (2) quit. Be positive if you are discussing a difficult situation. Emphasize your efforts to solve the problem directly and if applicable, tell about going to a supervisor if you were unable to resolve the conflict directly.

1. Give me an example of when you had to deal with an angry customer or client. What were the results?
2. Tell me about a time when you had to make a difficult decision. How did you go about making the decision?
3. Think of a time when you worked on a team. What was your role? What was the process? What were the results?
4. Think of a situation where you had a conflict with another individual. How did you resolve it?
5. Give me an example when you had to deal with stress. How did you handle it?
6. Describe a specific problem you solved for your employer or professor. How did you approach the problem? What role did others play? What was the outcome?
7. Describe a time when you got co-workers or classmates who dislike each other to work together. How did you accomplish this? What was the outcome?
8. Tell me about a time when you had to make a decision but didn’t have all the information you needed.
9. Describe a situation that required several things to be done at the same time. How did you handle it? What was the result?
10. Give me an example of when you were able to meet the personal and professional (or academic) demands in your life yet still maintained a healthy balance.
11. Tell me about the most difficult or frustrating individual that you had to work with and how you managed to work with that person.
Theme 4: Reliability/Accountability: The employer is trying to learn more about your work ethic and your soft skills (problem solving, teamwork, attendance, punctuality, grooming, etc.). Do you do what you say you will do? Do you put forth 100% effort?

1. HOW WAS YOUR ATTENDANCE AT SCHOOL OR YOUR LAST JOB?
2. What jobs have you held and why did you leave?
3. Can you get recommendations from previous employers?
4. What are three things your last boss would say about you? What will your manager say when you give notice that you’re leaving?
5. How have you handled work pressure or deadlines?
6. Is it all right to call your previous employer for reference?
7. If you are hired, how long do you plan to stay with our company?
8. Would you be willing to attend any special training programs?
9. Why are you leaving or why did you leave your previous job?
10. Are you planning to give notice that you’re leaving for another job?
11. Do you have a driver’s license? What type? Do you have a car?
12. How were your grades in Math? English?
13. What quality or attribute do you feel will most contribute to your career success?

Theme 5: Work Style: The employer is trying to learn whether you will fit in well with the work group or team. Demonstrate that you are flexible and exhibit a positive attitude.

1. When were you most satisfied with your job?
2. Do you prefer to work alone or in a group?
3. Would you speak up if your point of view differs from your co-workers or supervisors?
4. What types of people seem to rub you the wrong way?
5. If you were told to report to a supervisor who was a woman, a minority, or who had a disability, what problems would this cause for you?
6. Do you like to travel?
7. What would you change about your previous jobs?
8. Would you rather be in charge of a project or work as part of the team?
9. Would you be willing to relocate?
10. How would you describe yourself in terms of your ability to work as a member of a team?
11. Would you say that you can easily deal with high-pressure situations?
12. For what kind of supervisor do you work best? Provide examples.