

## Acing Interviews

Here are 20 common questions that you may be asked at an interview. It is a good idea to read these over, and think of answers and examples you may wish to give. Look out for the mistakes to avoid!

Don't be scared to seek clarification if you don't understand a question and don't be frightened of silence. If you need a break to think, then tell your interviewers that you'll have to think about the question, stop speaking and pause for a moment or two.

### About You

1. Tell me a little about yourself.

👉 Don't be tempted to tell your life story. Concentrate on your education, work and skills, and be concise with your answer.

2. What is the most useful thing you've learnt at school?
3. What do you believe are your greatest strengths and weaknesses?

👉 Don't focus too much on the negatives here but don't avoid the question altogether. Follow your weakness with a solution to positively overcome it or an assurance that you're working on it, so you could say for example "I used to be quite a shy person, but since I've joined the Drama club and become a Prefect I'm more confident at approaching and speaking to new people." Be careful not to use any clichés or cheesy answers... "well I can be a bit of a perfectionist."

4. What is your biggest achievement to date?
5. Describe a situation where you have had to take responsibility.
6. Describe a time when you have had to prioritise.
7. Describe a problem you have solved successfully.
8. Describe an instance when you have worked under pressure.
9. How do you think your teachers would describe you?
10. Outside of school/work, what are some of the things you like to do?

For competency-based questions, which usually start 'describe a time when...' always give a specific example to demonstrate your actions. Don't speak in general terms. Use the STAR framework to structure your answers.

Think carefully about the hobbies you could give here, choosing ones that display some of your commendable qualities. For example, regularly attending a club shows commitment, and group activities show your ability to work in a team.

## About the job you are applying for

11. How did you find out about this job?
12. What attracted you to this job?
13. What knowledge and skills can you bring to this job?
14. What do you know about the company?

👉 Don't go into an interview without having done your research about the company and what the job entails. Look back at the job description (if there was one), and identify and explain where your experience and expertise match what they are looking for.

15. What will motivate you to do well at this job?
16. Why do you think you are the right person for this job?

👉 Don't focus on why you may be better than other candidates. Instead point out all the assets you have which makes you perfect for this job.

17. Do you prefer to work on your own or with others?
18. Where do you hope this job will lead you in your future career?
19. Do you have any concerns about this job?
20. Do you have any questions for us?

👉 Don't answer with just one word. If your answer to this is no, then elaborate by stating that your concerns or questions have been answered through the course of the interview.

**Finally, don't be too nervous! Try your best to relax and remember that an interview is as much your opportunity to see if the company and job suits you, as it is for them to check that you are suitable for the job.**