

What Interviewers Want to Know

During an interview, potential employers want to gather information to gauge whether you, the position, and the organization are a good fit.

Here are some generic questions—and examples of specific questions—an employer may ask in an interview. Use these as a guide to your preparation.

Generic Questions	Specific Examples
What do you know about the organization?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What do you think a typical day is like here?• What sparked your interest in [this organization]?• Do you have any suggestions for how we can make our organization better?• What made you decide to apply for this job?
What do I need to know about your personal traits or characteristics?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is your strongest attribute?• What is your greatest weakness?• What personality traits make you suitable for this position?• If someone said one word to describe you, what would that word be?
How do you work with others?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Would you rather be micro- or macro-managed?• Tell us about your best and worst boss.• What is your ideal work environment? That is, what type of boss/co-workers would you like to work with?
What skills do you have relevant to this position?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What work experience have you had that is relevant to this position?• Tell us about any specialized training or certifications you have.• What skills do you think you need to add to your repertoire?• How will you get those skills? I know about your college and work background, but what else have you done that would aid us if we were to hire you for this position?
What are your personal goals?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Why do you want us to hire you?• What is your dream job? How would this position

	<p>help you get there?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is your seven-year career plan? • Do you have plans for graduate school?
How much do you know about your specialized area?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are your strongest points with [two specific skills that the job requires]? • What are the most important traits of a person in your field?
How have you handled specific situations? (Behavioral questions)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you tell me about a time when you effected a change? • Give me an example of a situation that didn't work out well. • What have you done that you are most proud of? • Tell us about a time when you took a unique approach to solving a problem.

Adapted from "The Job Interview," an article by Susan M. Katz in the NACE Journal.