



Interview Questions: Work History



Q. For jobs you have had you will be asked the name of company, job title and description, dates of employment.

A. Interviewers expect you to be able to give details on your work history. Be prepared to tell them the names of the companies you worked for, your job title, your starting and ending dates of employment, how much you earned and what your job involved.

If you don't have a CV, make sure what you tell the interviewer matches what you filled out on your job application. Make sure that you have a copy of it and take it with you.



Q. What were your starting and final levels of wages?

A. Interviewers expect you to remember the exact wages that you earned. Be prepared to tell the interviewer how much you earned at each of your previous jobs.

Make sure that what you tell the interviewer matches what you listed on your job application. Many employers will check references and confirm your salary history before making a job offer. A difference between what you and the employer says could mean that you don't get the job.



Q. What were your responsibilities or duties?

A. When you are asked questions about the job that you do now or other jobs, it's important to be clear and positive about what you did.

The best way to answer is to describe what you do in detail and to connect them to the job you are applying for. Try to link your experience to what is needed to do the new job. That way, the employer will see that you have the skills needed.

It's also important to be honest. The interviewer will check your references so you might get caught out.



**Q. What major challenges and problems did you face?
How did you handle them?**

A. When asked the job interview question "How did you handle a challenge?" be sure to include examples of how you handled a difficult situation.



Q. What did you like or dislike about your previous job?

A. When you're asked what don't like about your previous job, don't be too negative. The reason is that you don't want the interviewer to think that you'll speak badly about the new job or the company when you're ready to move on, if you get this job. It makes more sense to talk about yourself and what you're looking for in a new role.

Sample Answer

I enjoyed the people I worked with. It was a friendly and fun place and I enjoyed going into work each morning. The managers were great. They knew all of their employees on a first name basis and tried to get to know everyone.

One of the reasons I am leaving is that I felt I want more of a challenge. While I did enjoy working there and appreciate the skills I learned with the company, I feel the job I am applying for would help me to develop more.



Q. What was the biggest achievement/ failure in this position?

A. Your potential employer will want to know what you did well and what you had problems with in your current or last job.

The best way to give an example of something good that you did that will help show you are suited to the job you are applying for.

If you didn't fail at anything, say so. If you can think of an example, be sure that it's a minor one and turn it into a positive. For example, if you were working on a project that was behind deadline, explain to the interviewer how you managed to get back on track and ahead of schedule.



Q. Questions about your supervisors and co-workers.

A. You want to show that you are a team player here. Try to show that you got on with everyone and knew how to deal with situations that came up. This could be things like

- Someone not doing their fair share
- A co-worker doing really well and you congratulating them
- A supervisor giving you a hard time and how you dealt with this
- How you handled working with someone you didn't get along with
- A time where you helped a co-worker



Q. What was it like working for your supervisor?

A. The reason this is asked is to find out how you got along with your boss. Be careful how your answer. Interviewers don't like to hear too much (or much at all) about bad bosses because it could be someone from their company that you're talking about next time around.

Talk about the positives and try not to talk much about any difficult situations. Say what strengths your past supervisors had and how they helped you succeed in your job.



Q. What do you expect from a supervisor?

A. Sample answers

- I appreciate a workplace where supervisors try to get to know their team.
- In my last job, I liked the fact that management did not have favourites and they understood employees needs, as well as their strengths.
- I would like to be able to go my manager if I have an issue or idea and to be able to feel comfortable to tell them about it. I would also expect my supervisor to be open and honest with me

and to let me know if there is anything I could do to improve on my work.



Q. Who was your best boss and who was the worst?

A. Best Answers

- I've learned from each boss I've had. From the good ones, what to do, from the challenging ones - what not to do.
- Early in my career, I had a manager who helped me a lot, we still stay in touch. I've honestly learned something from each boss I've had.



Q. Why are you leaving your job?

A. One of the questions that is typically asked in an interview is "Why are you leaving your job?" or "Why did you leave your job?" if you have already moved on. If you were fired we will cover this later in this guide.

Regardless of why you left, don't speak badly about your previous employer. The interviewer may wonder if you will be bad-mouthing his company next time you're looking for work.

Think about answers to typical job interview questions, like this one, before the interview. Practice your answer so you sound positive, and clear, about this and your goals for the future.

Q. What have you been doing since your last job?



A. If you have a gap in your job history on your CV, the interviewer will probably ask you what you have been doing while you were out of work.

The best way to answer this question is to be honest, but have an answer ready. You will want to let the interviewer know that you were busy and active. Here are some suggestions on how to explain what you did while you were out of the workforce.

- I volunteered for a local charity that helps disadvantaged children.
- My elderly parents needed a temporary carer and I spent time looking after them.

- I took some college classes.

It doesn't really matter what you did, as long as you can explain what you did.



Q. Why were you fired?

A. Sample Answers

- My skills were not the right match for the employer's needs but it looks like they'd be a good fit in your organisation.
- The job wasn't working out so my boss and I agreed that it was time for me to move on to another position. So here I am, ready to work.
- After thinking about why I left, I realise I should have done some things differently. That job was a learning experience and I think I'm wiser now. I'd like the chance to prove that to you.
- A new manager came in and laid off a lot of staff to bring in members of his old team.
- Some personal problems, which I now have solved, unfortunately upset my work life. These problems are not there now and I really want to and can do well in my new job.
- I usually hit it off very well with my bosses, but this was different. We just didn't get on well. I'm not sure why.
- I outlasted several rounds of redundancies but the last one included me.
- I was desperate for work and took the wrong job without thinking about the long term. I won't make that mistake again.