



Difficult Interview Questions

By Melissa Wall

The easiest way to handle difficult interview questions is to think about as many of them as possible in advance and get prepared. In many instances, there may not be a specific right or wrong answer. The interviewer is trying to gauge whether you will be a good cultural fit or whether you have the ability to learn from past behavior or whether you can think on your feet and effectively communicate your thoughts without rambling.

Here are some questions to get you thinking:

1. Which people do you most/least admire and why? *(Provides insight into your values.)*
2. Describe the kind of person you like to work for. *(Trying to see if you will mesh or clash with the hiring manager and/or management team.)*
3. Do you agree or disagree with the statement "Everybody cheats on their taxes?" *(Testing not just for honesty but to see how far you will push the envelope.)*
4. What difficulties would you expect in this job? *(Looking for you to reveal your weaknesses or areas of self-doubt.)*
5. What are your strengths/weaknesses? *(Strengths are the easy ones to answer, remember weaknesses are strengths taken to an extreme.)*
6. Where do you see yourself in 3-5 years? *(Looking for planning ability, focus.)*
7. Tell me about a time you failed at something. *(Everyone has failed at something; it's what you learned from it that counts.)*
8. Tell me about an obstacle you overcame. *(Looking for your problem solving capabilities.)*
9. What's the best/worst thing that ever happened to you in your career to date? *(Looking at your behavior patterns and what you have learned from situations you have experienced.)*
10. What books have you read lately? *(Looking for an insight into what makes you tick, whether you are up-to-date on popular culture, and perhaps whether you keep up on your field and have an inquiring mind. It's better to read something than nothing.)*



11. How would you describe your management style? *(Looking for people who match the company culture. Watch for clues the interviewer drops about the management style at the hiring company. If you don't know, hedge your bets by indicating that you are collaborative and care about your staff but equally everyone knows where the buck stops.)*
12. Tell me about yourself. *(Intended to be a short recap from childhood to now. Keep it to less than two minutes.)*
13. What activities do you enjoy most/least? *(People are often good at the things they like to do and weak at the things they don't. This is another way to root out your weaknesses.)*
14. What appeals to you about this job and this company? *(You must know something about the company to answer this and your answers indicate your interest in that you have researched sufficiently to have an opinion.)*
15. What would you like to know about us? *(Certainly do not ask about the benefits – especially on the first interview. This is something to ask the HR person or recruiter at some point.)*

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