

Choose the best job interview responses

Choose the best response from the options in each line below. One should clearly be best even when more than one answer is possible.

Before the job interview really starts

- Sorry to keep you waiting. – Actually, I was a bit late so I've just arrived./ Don't worry about it./ Not at all./ That's okay. I've just been enjoying the view.
- Please take a seat. – Okay. Where?/ Thanks. Is here okay?/ Thanks a million.
- Would you like any tea or coffee? – No./ That's okay, thanks. I've just had one./ Yes, please. Can I have a black coffee with two sugars?
- Thanks for coming here today. – Not at all./ Thanks for inviting me./ Thanks for giving me the opportunity to speak to you today./ You're welcome.
- Did you have any trouble getting here? – I got a bit lost, but I went back to the station and looked at the map and so managed to get here in the end./ No, no trouble./ No, the map that you sent was very clear, thanks./ Yes, I got a bit a lost.
- Is this your first time in Tokyo? – It is, actually, but I've always wanted to visit./ No.
- I'm Helen Armstrong, the head of HR, and this is my colleague James Hadfield. – As you know, my name is Alex Case./ I'm Alex Case./ Pleased to meet you both.

Body of the job interview

- We'd like to start by asking you about your work experience, if that is okay. – Of course. Please go ahead./ Really? Wouldn't it be better to ask me about...?/ Okay.
- How is your experience relevant to this job? – Frankly, it's completely different. I need a change, though./ My job is exactly the same as this one, actually./ Well, although my job seems very different, in fact I often have to...
- Why did you decide to leave your last job/ your present job? – To tell the truth, my current boss is absolutely impossible to work with./ Well, I've really enjoyed this role for the last three years but I feel ready for a new challenge.
- What are your main weaknesses? – I'm a perfectionist./ To be honest, I don't think I have any weaknesses./ Well, I've never been very patient, but I've really improved on that as I've got older./ Well, I'm very stubborn.
- What is your greatest accomplishment? – I have so many achievements that it is difficult to just choose one./ I'm afraid I can't think of any big achievements right now./ I'm not sure if it is my biggest achievement, but I was proud to be involved in...
- Would you say that you are a natural leader? – I wouldn't really say "natural", but it's something I've learnt in my present job./ No. I don't have any leadership skills, actually./ Yes. Everyone says that about me.
- Can you work under strict deadlines? – I think so. For example, I'm only usually given three days to finish reports./ Yes, of course I can. It's a particular skill of mine.
- What skills have you learnt in your present job? – To be frank, I could easily do my job from day one and so haven't really developed there./ Well, I couldn't really use PowerPoint very well until I started using it in my current role.
- What experience do you have of managing foreign staff? – I have lots of experience of managing foreign staff./ Well, I don't have any overseas staff in my team, but I interact with foreign people in other teams all the time.

- Why do you want to work for us? – I heard that you treat staff very well./ I'm looking for a company which is the complete opposite of my current one./ The salary is very good./ Your company produces exactly the kind of products that I want to help develop.
- Do you have any questions for us? – No, you've told me everything that I need to know, thanks./ There are just one or two things./ Yes, I have 12 or 13 questions, actually.

Ending the job interview

- Do you have any other questions? – No, I don't./ No, I think that's covered everything, thanks./ Yes./ There are a few more things actually. Firstly, could I ask...?
- Thanks for coming all this way. – Thanks for giving me the opportunity to come here./ Thanks for inviting me./ Thanks for your time.
- Can you find your own way out? – Actually, I have no idea where I am. Could you show me the way out?/ Of course./ Yes, I can.

Compare your answers as a class or with the suggested answers. Some things can depend on what kind of job interview, so please check if you chose a different answer.

Suggested answers

Suggested best answers are in bold

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- Why did you decide to leave your last job/ your present job? – To tell the truth, my current boss is absolutely impossible to work with./ **Well, I've really enjoyed this role for the last three years but I feel ready for a new challenge.**
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Try to define good responses.

Find at least one good example of each of these good tactics:

- Dealing well with a question that you can't (really) answer
- Filling silence while you think
- Giving evidence for what you say (examples, etc)
- Long enough/ Not too short (even when it's a yes/ no question)
- Modest (but not too humble)
- Polite
- Positive (even about negative situations)

Try to think of at least one more good phrase of each kind.

Practise responding to the things above, without the interviewee being able to see the worksheet.

Do the same, but with the interviewer using different wording to that which is written above, e.g. "Is there anything else that you would like to ask us?" instead of "Do you have any other questions?"

Work together to think of other ways that things on the left that the interviewer says could be worded, e.g. "Shall we take you to the lift?" for the last one. The sentences don't need to have exactly the same meaning as the ones there, as long as they have the same function.

Underline words above which could be used to make other suitable things for interviewers and interviewees to say, then make other sentences out of.

What other things might an interviewer say to you in an interview? How should you respond?

Roleplay a whole job interview.