

Practice Interview Questions:

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. Why are you interested in this position?
3. Tell me about a time in which you worked with a team to achieve a goal.
4. Please describe an instance where you had to solve a problem and the process you used to solve it.
5. What are your goals?
6. What do you feel are your greatest strengths and why? What is a weakness or area of improvement?
7. Tell me about a time where you demonstrated effective communication skills.
8. Do you have any questions for me?



Examples of Responses to the Practice Interview Questions

1. Tell me about yourself.
 - a. Link your past experiences, skills, course work, goals, and accomplishments to the position for which you are interviewing. This is a great opportunity to give them a brief commercial about you!
 - b. **Poor Example:** My name is Bryce Young and I'm a biology major.
 - c. **Better Example:** My name is Bryce Young and I am a biology major at Lourdes University. I am interested in this position because I enjoy research and development.
 - d. **Best Example:** My name is Bryce Young and I am a biology major at Lourdes University. I have always enjoyed the natural sciences, ever since I was a young boy. My priority in my education was to be able to develop the skills necessary to do lab research and write for professional journals on my findings. The experience I gained at DNA Laboratories allowed me to work on my written communication skills, as well as titration skills, preparing samples, pipetting, and operating lab equipment. I am very interested in your Assistant Scientist position in the Immunochemistry Lab.
2. Why are you interested in this position?
 - a. Make sure you demonstrate that you've done your research on the company, industry trends, and express interest in the company.
 - b. **Poor Example:** I really like the idea of being in sales. Could you please tell me more about your company and its sales department?
 - c. **Better Example:** Your Company's headquarters are located in Cincinnati, Ohio, and your sales team has territories all over the world. I'm interested in being a part of that department.
 - d. **Best Example:** I'm interested in growing with the sales department here at ABC Incorporated. I've researched your strategic marketing initiatives and believe that the opportunity to promote this company to potential buyers would be a great way to utilize my business courses and internship experiences. I was able to develop an effective sales plan for Situation Sports Limited to increase business revenue by 25% in the last quarter I was an intern. I'm especially interested in continuing to improve my skills and collaborating with different departments to discuss strategies to bring more accounts to ABC Incorporated.
3. Tell me about a time in which you worked with a team to achieve a goal.
 - a. Employers ask behavioral questions to see your past behaviors or accomplishments. They want to find out what kind of skills and a worker you have the potential to be for them. Utilize the SOAR Model to answer these questions (See Page 4)
 - b. **Poor Example:** At Gifts for Kids I was asked to work on a fundraising project with a group of people. We all had different ideas and it was very hard and I did not enjoy it.
 - c. **Better Example:** At my internship with Gifts for Kids I worked with a team to develop a fundraising initiative. I took on a leadership role and helped them to raise a good amount of money.
 - d. **Best Example:** At my internship with Gifts for Kids my colleagues and I worked on a fundraising initiative. We all had divergent fundraising ideas and we were not making much progress selecting a project to pursue. I decided to take the leadership role and acknowledged everyone's excellent ideas. Then, I categorized and grouped them by underlying themes and by timeframe feasibility. Finally, I shared the idea clusters with the group. We were able to identify a combined idea that best fit our needs. Once we implemented our fundraiser it was a great success and we raised more than \$5,000.
4. Please describe an instance where you had to solve a problem and the process you used to solve it.
 - a. This is an opportunity to discuss your problem-solving skills. Virtually every position will deal with your ability to decipher issues or concerns and address them professionally.

- b. **Poor Example:** Generally speaking, I like to avoid problems and prefer to focus on my own work.
 - c. **Better Example:** In my position as Tutor Coordinator at Peacock College there was an issue with assuring concept competencies for our tutors who were not college students at our university. We addressed the problem by creating a training program.
 - d. **Best Example:** In my position as Tutor Coordinator at Peacock College we employed many retired business professionals and academic scholars that were not necessarily previous or current students at our college. We discovered that tutors were unsure of which courses they were competent to tutor because their experiences and knowledge may not have aligned with specific course. After discussing this issue and researching other institutions tutoring programs we designed a competency exam for our tutors and then offered training opportunities for subject areas they needed improvement on. Many tutors were able to gain more confidence and students were also happy with the results from their sessions.
5. What are your goals?
- a. Be sure to focus on your professional goals and the steps you plan to take to achieve them. Try to link them to the organization and/or position for which you are applying.
 - b. **Poor Example:** I'd like to obtain this position and make lots of money.
 - c. **Better Example:** I would really like to work for the Metroparks of Toledo as a Natural Science Educator. My coursework in the sciences and interest in the environment would aide me well for this position.
 - d. **Best Example:** One of my goals is to make a difference in the lives of youth by educating them in best practices and the issues related to the environment, so they can be informed, caring citizens in the future. As a Natural Science Educator I could fulfill this goal through creative and educational programming on site at one of the parks. Promoting this kind of program to students at various local elementary schools would achieve my desired learning outcome.
6. What do you feel are your greatest strengths and why? What is a weakness or area of improvement?
- a. Emphasize the strengths as they related to the position. Your weakness can be a skill set that you are working on and attempting to improve.
 - b. **Poor Example:** My greatest strength is my creativity and my greatest weakness is that I like to be perfect.
 - c. **Better Example:** My greatest strength is my creativity, because I really enjoy thinking outside of the box and the courses I've taken in marketing. My greatest weakness would have to be my perfectionist attitude.
 - d. **Best Example:** My greatest strength is my creativity. I enjoy the opportunity to think outside of the box and develop creative and innovative marketing plans. For example, a student organization asked me to assist them in developing marketing materials for their upcoming dance. We developed creative flyers and videos, collaborated with local business owners, and decided on a Pirate Theme. I created an appropriate timeline for delivering the information to students and over 200 students attended the dance. It was a great success. My greatest weakness is being a perfectionist. I spend a lot of time making sure everything I am doing is done right and sometimes review things too often. I'm working on delegating or asking for another individual to review my work to get a fresh perspective and make sure that I'm communicating what I intend to. This seems to be helping thus far and helping me to be more productive with my time.
7. Tell me about a time where you demonstrated effective communication skills.
- a. Another opportunity to utilize the SOAR method! Make sure you give the final "Result" as this is an area many people sometimes forget.

- b. **Poor Example:** In my interpersonal communication class I had to get a persuasive speech and I think I really nailed it!
 - c. **Better Example:** In my interpersonal communication class it was asked of us to give a persuasive speech on any topic we desired. I chose to discuss the benefits of studying abroad as topic and it went very well. I received an A on it.
 - d. **Best Example:** In my interpersonal communication class we were assigned to give a persuasive speech on any topic we desired. After thinking about my various interests, I decided to speak on the benefits of studying abroad. I spoke with the Office of International Affairs on campus and did research in the library on the skills individuals learn and develop through international experiences. I interviewed several students that had already studied abroad and spoke with one student who was preparing to leave in just one week for a semester abroad in England over the summer. I summarized all of my findings in a written document and rehearsed my speech in front of a couple of my close friends. Their feedback helped me to clearly define my learning outcomes and focus on the persuasive nature of my argument. By working for PNK Travel, I believe that my ability to speak persuasively about travel experiences and the skill sets you will utilize and appreciate on trips would help your organization to succeed. I'm very confident in my ability to speak to anyone and encourage them to really think about where they dream to visit someday and make that a reality now.
8. Do you have any questions for me?
- a. Always prepare to have questions ready. This is a wonderful opportunity to learn more about the culture and day to day operations of a place that you may work in for many years to come. It's safe to ask for a business card of the professionals that are interviewing you so you can follow-up appropriately.
 - b. **Poor Example:** I have no other questions except what the intended salary is for this position.
 - c. **Better Example:** What is the culture like at this organization? Will you train me?
 - d. **Best Example:** How would you describe a typical day here? What are some of the projects you are planning for? What opportunities exist for professional development? How often are evaluations and how are they conducted? Will there be a training program or opportunity? What is the next step in the process? Are there any other questions or experiences you'd like me to elaborate on?

Answering Behavioral Based Questions

Your interview will probably include a couple of behavioral questions, which will ask for examples from your work, academic, or athletic past. Typically, the best way to approach these questions is to use the SOAR Method:

- S Situation – Describe the situation that faced you.
- O Obstacle – Describe the tasks/obstacles you needed to take or overcome
- A Action – Actions taken to overcome the problem. What role did you play in the situation?
- R Result – How was the problem resolved? If it didn't end well, what did you learn?