

HR interview more often, is not a selection process, but a short listing process, where few of the selected candidates from previous rounds are weeded out. So more than concentrating on getting selected, one should be focused on NOT getting rejected. First few minutes are very important and so does the first few questions. The interviewers do not know anything about you. The impression you make in the first few questions, is going to set tone for the entire session and plays a huge factor

Let us split up the questions into few categories, which will be

- About Candidate
- About Company
- About Common stuffs

HR Questions about Candidate

Hello, how are you today ?

This is more of a “make yourself comfortable” statements. Answer with a pleasant smile. If you had any trouble during the day, don't hesitate to mention it. But make sure you express it in a positive note.

Examples:

- “I am very well today sir, thank you”.
- “I am very well today sir, just that the traffic here is bit of a hassle. But I made sure, I start a bit early to beat it.”

Tell me about yourself.

The FIRST & BEST question for any HR interview. The answer to this basically sets the tone of rest of the interview. Good news is – You can earn a lot of points if this is answered right.

- Give a brief of your education background (up to plus two is fine, your family and location, any of your hobbies etc).
- You can also mention one of your major achievements, if it fits the circumstance.
- Keep the answer to just about 3-4 sentences and not more than that.
- No need to explain your strengths & weakness at this points (as that will definitely come along).
- A common mistake seen in most HR interview is to start the sentence like “I am basically from...” No need to start a sentence like that.
- Keep the answer simple, to the point and give space and time for further questions. Do not stretch it too much.

Example:

“Hi I am Kiran and hail from Bangalore. I did my B.Tech in electronics and communication from Rameswara College of engineering, which is under Bangalore University. I had completed my plus two from Chinmaya Vidhya Mission School and secured 98% in CBSE Boards. I have four members in my family and I am the youngest son. I love outdoor sports, specifically athletics and was a member of college athletic team.”

Must read - Awesome examples of Tell me about yourself with best answers

What are your key strengths ?

This is another most common question in any HR interview. The idea here is to understand how much you know about yourself and how confident you are about your strengths.

- Just stay positive. Even a simple answer like “I am a very positive person” is good enough.
- You can also change this as per the requirement of the interview. Knowing a bit about the profile you are being interviewed helps as well.
- Explaining your strength with an experience from the past is desirable here.

Also Read : Awesome examples and tips to answer Strengths and Weaknesses interview question

Example:

- “Sir, my greatest strength is my ability to learn things quickly. For example, I had to represent my college in an inter college science exhibition, and was introduced to the team at the very last minute. I was able to understand our exhibits and artifacts and present them with great success”.
- “I think my greatest strength is my positive attitude, even during the most hardest of times. During my college project, there has been couple of occasions, when our idea was not falling in place and the results were negative. I had to believe and think positively and keep my team motivated to persist on our idea, and finally we got the desired result.”

- “My best skill would be my verbal ability and articulation skill. I have worked as editor for our college magazine and have been involved with various literary forums during my school and college days.

What is one thing, which you want to improve about yourself ? (OR) what are your weaknesses ?

This is a trick question. The expectation here is to answer a negative trait with a positive twist. Something which in general a weak point of a person, but is alright from an organization perspective.

Example

- “I tend to try to take up too many things, leaving little time for myself.”
- “I am a perfectionist and sometimes, concentrate too much on one single task to get it to perfection, using up time from other tasks”.
- “I tend to say Yes, when someone asks for help. I am working on learning to say No at times”.

Where do you see yourself in 5 years from now ?

This is a question intended to know, what are your career aspirations, how long would you be committed to the organization, is there any immediate plans for you to move on etc. If you have an actual plan, explain it with reasoning. If you do not have any specific plans as of then, give a generic answer along with some interesting activity you would like to take up.

Example

- “I would like to see myself donning one of the senior positions in the organization contributing to technology as well as participating in business growth. I am hoping, I can position myself with relevant experience by then.”
- “As a fresher, I am assuming by first five years will be a huge learning curve. I want to absorb much of the industry knowledge and also to sharpen my technical abilities. In next five years I see myself playing various roles in the team from a developer to leading a team.”
- “I would like to see myself as a technical architect in next five years. My core competency is with technologies, and I would like to work and contribute in the field of most recent technologies and advancements. I would like to get take up some of the major technology certifications”

Have you been in some challenging situation ? Explain how you handled it ?

This is usually an add-on question to explain your strengths that you mention previously. This is good opportunity to give a suitable example, as to why you mentioned what your strengths are.

Example:

- “Yes, we did have some challenging situation during our final semester project delivery. Usually the kind of code logic we were trying to implemented, works with a 64bit processor, while we were trying to make it work with a lower configuration, due to budgetary constraints”. Theoretically it was possible, but result was not coming through and the team wanted to give up and upgrade the hardware. I was positive, that this will work and that we stick to the plan

and figure out our actual problem. It took some effort to convince my team, a lot more hard work and few extra hours of reading, but finally we stayed positive and cracked the issue and delivered the project.

- **The above example, explains your strength like Positive thinking, hard work etc.**
- “I have a huge passion for sports and have been a regular member of college athletic team. There was an event coming up slightly ahead of one of our exam schedule. Although our coach said, I can skip the competition, I was sure I can win points for the college. So I decided, I will put in extra time in studies late evenings, while also practicing and attending the event. I had to stretch a bit physically & mentally, and also manage my time tightly. But finally I was able to win the tournament and also come out with good scores in exam.
- **The above showcases, you multitasking capability, time management, passion for things and hard work.**

Why should we hire you ?

As a fresher, you can't commit to any expertise in any specific domain. So this question is intended to understand what quality of yours will be helpful most for the company. Knowledge about company and what quality of yours suits the organization, is the key to answer this. In case you don't know much about the company, quick learning ability, flexibility, team player etc are few common qualities that will fit any organizational needs.

Example:

- “I have had some internships and industry exposure. So being a fresher, it will still be easy for me adapt to the new environment, which is significantly lessen my training cost.”

- “I have a sharp learning curve, which will help company ramp me up quickly as a productive resource. An example of my learning curve is my final year project, where I have worked on a short time frame on an entirely new technology”
- “I am a strong team player a good leader. I have been leading teams for technical and cultural activities during my college days. In your company I will be a great player within any challenging team and provide leadership when opportunity arises”.

What are your hobbies and interests ?

You cannot say, you don't have any other interests, other than academics. Even if you are very studious, your answer should include reading non-textbooks and following cutting edge stuffs in technology. A company looks for a candidate who are more rounded and keeps diverse interests in life. Identify one of your interests other than academics and prepare answer based on that (Don't include eating, watching TV, sleeping etc.)

Example:

- “I love singing and I also play instruments like Guitar.”
- “Outdoor sports is my interest. Specifically cricket”
- “I am a numismatist (coin/ currency collector). I have been doing it since school days”

Who is the most inspiring person in your life

The important part is not who, but why? When you answer this question with a name, you should follow it up with why he / she is most inspiring person.

Example:

- “My greatest inspiration is Sachin Tendulkar. He had such a humble upbringing & his hard work took him to the greatest heights in the world of sports. He still keeps himself rooted and stays humble. I also believe in hard work and humility”.
- “My greatest inspiration is my dad. He has always thought me to not worry about my weakness and take most advantage of my strengths. This has developed a lot of confidence in me during difficult times.”

Are you willing to change your role and profile when required for project?

As a fresher, your most sought after quality is flexibility. You need to showcase, you are flexible and ready to learn. Saying you are flexible doesn't necessarily mean, you will be forced into things, you don't like. It just shows your positive attitude to learn and try new things.

Example:

“Yes, most definitely sir. As a fresher, I hope and wish to learn as much things as possible. I believe taking up different roles and profiles only helps me learn and grow in this industry”

Are you ready to relocate

As long as you do not have any compelling reasons, being a fresher it is better to be ready for relocation. Today's IT industry works on global operation model, where they have offices located at several locations. These are staffed strategically, as per need and business requirement and there could be a need for your skills at a particular location.

Being flexible enough to suit the staffing need of a company is a great advantage for a fresher and since most of freshers move around with less baggage (example: being single), it is easier for company to move them at short notice. Remember, this applies for a foreign country placement also. So denying a relocation means, you are also saying “No” to an onsite opportunity as well.

Example:

- “Yes, most definitely. I believe being at different locations helps me learn about new culture and people.”
- “Yes, I don’t see a problem in relocation. It’s always a better learning experience than being around with same environment and people”

Are you flexible with timings (if have to work in shift) ?

This question yet again checks about your flexibility. The same answer above applies here. If there is a genuine problem for you to work in night or early morning shifts, mention that.

Do you wish to pursue higher education?

If you are seriously considering higher education, it’s wise to say so.

- If you are unsure (may be – May not be), your answers could be –

- "I am interested in higher studies, but not immediately. I want to get started working and then look for higher education based on my experience and career progressions."
- "Yes, but not immediately. I plan to take up part time studies, with either an MBA or an VLSI engineering masters, depending on which will be more beneficial for my line of work."
- Some companies support and provide various incentives for part time, full time studies. If you already know of any such programs, it will be good to align your answer according to that.

Interview Questions on about Company

In today's world, with so much information available online and through various sources, it is a grave mistake to not read up about the company, you are attending the interview for. A good knowledge about the company during the interview shows your genuine interest in getting placed. Few basic things that you need to look up about a company are

- Domain expertise of the company
- Various industries they cater to
- Few niceties about being employed at that company (Eg: Best employer award by Times magazine)
- Locations they operate from and main business geographies.
- Company history, its current leaders
- General working culture
- Any subsidiaries or affiliated companies

Why do you want to work for us?

Mention some good word about the company at the same time, try to align a strength of yours with the company vision or goal or working culture.

Example

- “Working for an organization, which has won best employer award multiple times, in itself is a motivating factor. But more importantly, I would like to start off my career at a place, which values ethical practices and encourages overall development of a person.”
- “I have always admired XYZ (company), for the cutting edge products and developments it bring about in the modern world. The impact of our work, is directly reflected among the society in general, which is a great feeling. I would like to be a part of this modern day game changer bandwagon.
 - **Note the clever & subtle use of “our” work instead of “your” work. You already seems to be a part of company.**
- “I believe, life is always a mix of hard work and fun. I find the work culture of xyz to carry the same principle. “Work hard... Party harder”. What better way to start off my career, than at a place, where I will feel like home.”

What is one thing that you like about our company?

Again, always know about the company before choosing your answer. A wrong line of answer could cost you the job itself. Like you go to a research Organization & tell about your partying habit, you most likely lose the chance to get through. Most likely one of the above answers applies here also. The difference is, you don't have to align this with your interests & strengths.

What are your expectations from your first job?

You can always quote a simple vision or strategy which you like about the company. As a fresher, your most important expectation should be "To Learn" & this is what most companies expect from you. There could be additional personal expectation like contributing to society, placing yourself within corporate world, paying off your education loan etc;

Examples:

- "I have had lot of studies during all these years, but mostly theoretical leanings. My first & foremost expectation from my first job would be to learn how all these are applied in a practical and industrial way. I also want to be a part of the corporate culture and learn how this is run."
- "I consider my first job as an extension of my studies only. More like a practical class. I want to learn a lot of new technologies, learn how the corporate world works, be part of a big energetic team and contribute to the projects, develop my soft skills and to prepare myself for tougher challenges in future."

Do you have a referral in this company?

The question could be for two reasons

- To understand, if you are familiar with the company culture.
- If you will be motivated enough to join the company, if given an offer.
- If there is someone close to you, working in the company, or if there are many people you know as working here, there is a high probability, you will be a long term prospect for the company.

So, If you know anyone or many, working in the company, give the name, department & employee number. No need to tell any fake names or numbers, because in case of any verification, you might lose out a chance to make it.

Note: Reach out to them & get this information before hand

General HR Questions

Was it difficult to find the location ?

Mostly an opening statement, to make you comfortable. Be calm & start chatting up about your experience. Such conversations will also help you cool your nerves before the interview.

Do you want to ask us anything

MOST IMPORTANT QUESTION!! Never ever, go into an interview without preparing to ask any question. Always keep a question handy. This is your opportunity to voice any of your concern regarding the job profile, company profile, location, timing etc; if not already covered. If you really do not have any questions, ask some general questions like does company provide any higher education opportunity, does company encourage corporate social activities. Etc;

Suppose you win a huge money in jackpot, would you still work?

Few trick question like this might be thrown at you during HR interviews. These are not harmful or make-or-break your chances type of questions, however, it is wise to take such light hearted questions, in its light hearted manner (of course with a smile).

Example

- “Depends on how much is left after my shopping”
- “Never really thought about it... maybe, I will start a company then”.
- “I always wanted to encourage entrepreneurship and motivate youth in job creation. I guess I might invest the money in some startups and still be working”

About any current news

- If you are in the habit of reading news, don't skip it for interview.
- Keep yourself updated, especially on the fields of your expertise and stream of education.

Avoid

- Shabby and casual dressing
- Reaching late for interview
- Lies and false facts
- Stretching your answers beyond required time

- Arguments or debates
- Negative answers or criticisms