

Quick tips to answer the Personal Interview questions

- As you go for a personal interview, always expect the question "Tell us something about yourself". Go prepared to answer it.
- Understand the requirements of the role properly and keep your answer ready for "Why does this role interest you?"
- To judge your stability in the personal interview, the interviewer might ask a direct question like "Why do you think should we take you?" Go prepared to answer it.
- Prepare your answer to the question the interviewer might ask about your strengths and weaknesses in the interview. Take the word weaknesses as liberally as possible.
- Analyze the qualities that you required to achieve something big. Talk your latest achievement in the interview. When asked about mistakes, mention the one from long past.
- Never approach the interviewer as a "Job Beggar". Go as a "Problem Solver". Answer in positive when you are asked if you are speaking to some other companies for your job search.
- Show your flexible attitude during the personal interview. This can be done by being open to relocation.
- If you have stayed in your last job for too long or have switched the jobs very frequently, have an answer ready to the queries that might appear during the personal interview.
- Demonstrate the keenness to learn if you do not have all the required experience.
- Never talk bad about your last jobs or employers.
- Sound ambitious but stable.
- Sound like a team player but be open to take the autonomous responsibilities.
- Don't jump on the salary in the initial part of the interview. Let the interviewer take it out first.
- Study about the company before you go for the interview. Ask intelligent questions when give a chance to ask questions to interviewers.
- Stay confident, composed and calm during the interview.

Personal interview-FAQs

When you are called for a **personal interview**, many types of questions spring across your mind, especially if you are an inexperienced job seeker. Here are some tips on answering the most frequently asked questions in a **personal interview**:

1. Tell me something about your self.

Go prepared for this question, as this is the most frequently asked question in the interview. Answer it covering your work experience, educational qualifications and a little information about your family background. Try to focus on key areas of your work while talking about your professional experience. This is an open ended question and can help you in taking the interview in which ever direction you want it to go. You should know where to put a full stop to provoke the desired question from the interviewer.

2. Why does this role interest you? Or why have you applied for this job?

Keep the focus of the answer to this question on your skills, experience and personal qualities. Link the job requirement to your skills rather than talking about the challenges, career and progression.

3. Why do you think should we take you for this job?

Don't panic if you are asked this question. Make sure that you have understood the job profile well before you go for the interview. Relate your qualifications and work experience with the job requirements. If there are any new things that you are expected to perform in the new job, say that you are always open to learn the new things and take up the new challenges.

4. What motivates you at work?

You can say that competition and new challenges motivate you at work.

5. Why do you want to leave your present job or why did you leave your last job?

The reasons for switching the job could be numerous. The best answer to offer for this question is to say, "for better prospects". Now they can ask you another question, what do you mean by better prospects? To this you can say, better prospects in terms of experience, and exposure. If you have been made redundant, put your words across very carefully. Your wrong words can give an impression that only you were the one whose position was made redundant, which hardly might be the case. May be you can say something like, "Over last 8 months a lot of restructuring was going on in the company and 40 positions became surplus. One of them was mine. I have learnt a lot during my tenure at XYZ Company and I am sure I can add a lot of value to a position like the one we are discussing about".

6. What is your greatest strength?

Interpret this question as, what is your greatest relevant strength? Or Why should we hire you? Tell them a strength that they want to buy. For this you will need to properly understand the job profile and keep your answer ready. For example, if the job needs you to have convincing answers ready for the any type customer's questions, you can sell "your presence of mind" or if you are required to change you sector or industry you can offer "your adaptability" as an answer. It is important to keep ready at least 2 examples of the mentioned strength.

7. What is your greatest weakness?

There are 3 ways to tackle this question. Judge the situation and use one of them.

First way: Use your sense of humor. If the interview is proceeding in the light way and you have built up a good rapport with the interviewer, you can get out of it by saying "Ice-cream".

Second Way: If you have to answer this question seriously, give a weakness which doesn't relate to the job under discussion. For example, you can say, I have been using a camera since childhood but I still don't know how to mend it. If it is spoiled, I will need to take it to an expert.

Third way: Understand the requirement of the role under discussion and say that your friends accuse you of having that weakness but you think that it is important for you to perform your work effectively. For example, if the job needs a detailed study and leaving a single step might need you to re-run the whole process say that "My colleagues accuse me of having a too much eye for detail but I have experienced that to do this work you need to go into details rather than cutting corners. I have worked with people following a shorter

8. What is your greatest achievement?

The underlying agenda is to know what personal qualities were required to achieve it. Don't go back too far to answer this question as this might give an impression that you have not achieved anything since then. Find a relevant answer in the recent past for this question. If you are a fresher and have been a topper of your college or university, you can say that during the interview.

9. Are you ambitious?

You can say that I am very ambitious in the way that I don't like to get a feeling of stagnancy. I want that I should always be getting new experiences and learning new things.

10. What qualities would you look for in a candidate for this position?

To answer this question, you need to analyze the requirements of the job profile before appearing for the interview. The answer to this question would estimate your understanding of the role under discussion.

11. Have you appeared for an interview with other companies? Or how is your job search going on?

This question gives you an opportunity to let the interviewer know that other companies are also interested in hiring you and gives you leverage while negotiating the salary. You can say, Yes, I am in the final round of discussion with two other companies. Approach the interviewer as a "Problem Solver" and not as a "Job Beggar".

12. Can you name the companies to whom you are talking?

You can maintain your integrity by refusing to disclose the names. You can simply say, they haven't notified these openings so I believe they would not like their names to be revealed. At times, taking the competitor's names might increase your chances of being hired. Analyze the situation and answer accordingly.

13. Are you ready to relocate?

You can say, for a right position and right company relocation should not be a problem. Do not close the discussion at the earlier stage by saying "No".

14. You have stayed for a long time with your last company-Why?

Staying with the same company for too long may be considered as the candidate being un-ambitious. While answering this question you can say, "Yes, I preferred to stay with them all this while because I was regularly adding value to my experience there and I was growing as a professional".

15. You have switched many jobs-why?

Too much job hopping gives an impression that the candidate is unstable and unreliable but you can put this query to ease by saying that you switched jobs to broaden your experience.

16. What was your biggest mistake?

There's nothing wrong in admitting a mistake. A human being is bound to commit mistakes. This time it is advantageous to go back as far as possible in the past and find an answer. The advantage of doing this is that a youngster is expected to commit more mistakes than a mature and seasoned person. This would give an impression that since that time you have committed mistakes but not that big. Take the word "mistake" as liberally as possible and go back to your student life to answer this question. Probably you can say, if I could go back to my student life, I would have studied Biology instead of Math.

17. Why haven't you got a job yet?

This question will usually arise if it has been sometime since you finished your studies and are still in the market without a job. You can say that, I have been offered some tempting positions in the last few days but had to turn them down as I did not find them right for my candidature. You can follow it up with some examples.

18. You do not have all the experience we need for this position.

To answer this question, you again need to analyze the requirements of the role properly and match them to your candidature. If you meet most of the requirements, you can say that you have most of the qualities needed for this role and for the remaining you are always open to learning them. You can follow this up with an example from your last job where you learnt and did things that you didn't know earlier. Stay confident while answering this question.

19. Why do you want to quit your present job?

The reasons for you to quit the present job could be numerous, may be you don't get well along with your boss or your salary is too less but it is not good to make derogatory remarks about your present company in an interview. You can give a more practical answer like, my present company is not able to offer me further

growth opportunities and I have a feeling that it is the time for me to grow up in hierarchy and learn further.

20. Have you ever made a mistake at work? How did you rectify it?

Everybody makes mistakes, there's nothing wrong in admitting it. In the interview you can say that yes, there have been times when you have made mistakes and learnt from them. Whatever you could correct yourself, you did that and for the rest you went back to your senior and took his help to sort it out.

21. What major problems did you face in your last role?

The agenda of this question is to understand if

- You caused the problem
- Could it have been avoided?
- Your attitude to solve it.

It is safer to mention a problem which was caused by an external party rather than the problems within internal parties. May be you can take an example of the problem caused by a customer, vendor. Discuss what you did to solve the problem.

22. Where do you see yourself 5 years from now?

By asking this question, the interviewer wants to see, how ambitious the candidate is. You can say that, 5 years down the line I would like to see myself in a responsible position where I can make important decisions in the favor of company and the company treats me as its asset. I am sure that this company can offer me growth opportunities like this.

23. How do you feel about doing repetitive work?

You can say that I understand that every job has an element of repetitive work but I enjoy fulfilling all the aspects of my job with equal enthusiasm and give them my 100%.

24. How did you manage to attend this interview during your working hours?

Everybody knows that you would not ask permission from your boss to appear for an interview. You can answer this question by simply saying that you have taken a off from the office to appear for this interview.

25. Would you like to work in a team or on your own?

The agenda behind this question is to understand if you are a team player or a solo performer. It might be risky to choose any one of them as the role for which they are considering you might need you to be a team player but the career progression which they might consider for you down a year's time may need you to handle a more autonomous position. It is better to answer this question by saying that "I don't have any such preference. I can comfortably handle both the situations, as the

need arises." Now back it up with examples where you successfully worked in a team and where you performed an autonomous role.

26. If your boss was present here, what do you think he would say about you?

This is again a question which can be answered in two ways.

First way: If the situation is light, you can that say, "He would tell you that I am the diamond of his team and you should not let me go." This needs to be accompanied by a right body language.

Second way: If the discussion is proceeding in a serious manner, you can pick up a formal appraisal he gave you and say that I think he would repeat it here.

27. Has your career grown as you had liked?

The agenda behind this question is to understand if there had been times of dip in your career and if you lay the blame for them on others. There's nothing to be ashamed of, if there have been short gap in your employment. You can justify it by giving a convincing reason. Look at your qualifications and social environment and relate your achievements to them, to answer this question.

28. What would you do if your team ceased to perform?

The agenda behind this question is to understand your management style. A good answer to this question could be, I will try to establish the reasons for non-performance of the team and try to eradicate them.

29. Would you take up this job if we offered it to you?

Again there are two ways to handle this question.

First Way: If you have built up a good rapport with the interviewer by now you can ask a more direct question, Are you offering it to me? (with a smile and right body language). If they say "Yes", you can say that off course, based on what we have discussed till now I am enthusiastic in taking up this position. When would you be able to get me a written offer?

Second Way: Alternatively you can say, based on what we have discussed till now, I will be happy to take up this position but there are still certain things that need to be discussed.

30. Your expected salary?

Don't jump at a figure when you are asked this question during the personal interview. Try to turn the ball back into the interviewer's court and ask him the type of salary the company offers for a position like this. Still, if you are required to answer this question, mention a range rather than talking about an exact figure but don't keep the range too vast, you will be offered the one at the lower end. Probably you can say, I should be comfortable with something in the range of mid fifties.

31. What will you do if you are offered a job with a salary higher than this?

By asking this question the interviewer tries to analyze if the candidate will leave the job for a couple of thousand Rupees. Recruiting a candidate costs money to the company so they would like to hire somebody who has some loyalty towards the company. You can answer this question by saying that though you know the attraction of money every job offers but you would first try to analyze the growth opportunities with both the jobs. If your present company can offer you the desired growth with the industry trend, you would not switch. You will discuss the issue with your senior and ask his views on your growth in the present job and if you see that there is a potential to grow in the present job, you will stick otherwise you will politely inform him about your decision to move ahead in life.

32. Do you want to ask us something about the company?

When you are going for a job interview, go prepared. Try to find out the latest information about the company. When you are asked this question, you can ask interesting questions like the opportunities for you to grow in the company, the expansion plans of the company and the chances for you to grow there. If the company has been in news recently, you can ask questions related to that also.

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