# 4 Types of Interview Questions & How to Answer Them

## 1) General Interview Questions

General interview questions focus on general information about you, the position you're applying for, or the organization.

### EXAMPLES

- Tell me about yourself.
- Why do you want to work for this company?
- What are two qualities that make a great nurse?

### HOW TO ANSWER THEM

- **Do some self-reflection**: Consider what you want the employer to know about you and what skills or experience you want to mention before the interview is over. Be prepared to talk about your strengths and weaknesses. You should be able to answer: "Why you?"

- **Research the employer**: Research their website, especially the "About" or "Mission" section, check for recent posts on LinkedIn to find current news or trends, and re-read the job description. The more you can connect what you can offer with the mission of the organization, the more compelling your general interview question responses will be.

## 2) Behavioral Interview Questions

Behavioral questions ask for examples of past situations where you have demonstrated the skills or behaviors employers want in their ideal candidate.

### EXAMPLES

- Describe a time you performed well in a stressful situation.
- Give us an example of when you used your leadership skills at work.
- Tell me about a time you worked with someone difficult. How did you handle it?

### HOW TO ANSWER THEM

- **Utilize the S.T.A.R. method**: The STAR method is a basic framework for answering behavioral questions that aligns well with the way you would naturally tell a story:

**S**ituation: Provide the details needed to set the scene.
**T**ask: What was the thing that needed to get done?
**A**ction: What action did *you* take to contribute to a solution or address the situation? Be specific!
**R**esults: What was the outcome or achievement? If you didn't meet a goal, what did you learn?

**Example Response:**

*"In my senior capstone course last fall, we had to produce a software that managed a livestock auction and present it to the class. I created a project schedule so that we could factor in time for testing, debugging, and creating the presentation for our project. By creating the schedule and checking in with my group members throughout the project, we were able to finish testing early and have extra time to practice the presentation. As a result, we felt more confident presenting as a group and our professor commented that our presentation was the most polished."*

## 3) Situational Interview Questions

Situational interview questions present a hypothetical question for employers to gain insight into your problem solving and critical thinking skills. These might also include questions presenting an ethical dilemma.

### EXAMPLES
- What would you do if you were working in a team on a group project and a team member was not performing their role as expected?
- Let's say you were a part of a research team and a member of the team wanted to include a representation of the data that was misleading. What would you do?
- How would you go about suggesting an innovative idea for improving a process or procedure to your supervisor?

### HOW TO ANSWER THEM
- **Don't forget the "why"**: When you are giving your response, include *why* you would choose to do or say something. Understanding your motivations or the factors influencing your decision-making gives employers more insight into your skillset and adds more detail to your response. For technical roles, this is where you can really let your interpersonal and communication skills shine!

- **Walk them through your decision-making**: If you are given a question where you don't know what you would do, walk them through how you would decide what to do. You're essentially thinking out loud to show them that you can navigate problems that you haven't faced before to find a plausible solution.

## 4) Technical Interview Questions

Technical questions focus on knowledge required in the industry and focus on technical skills and experiences. If there is a specific skill, software program, process or procedure listed as a responsibility in the job description, be prepared to talk about your experience related to it.

An employer might also incorporate a technical portion of the interview where you have to work with the software or tool to prove your competency.

### EXAMPLES
- In Excel, how would you go about sorting a list by last name, then by date of birth?
- How would you write a method to return the Fibonacci sequence in java?
- In network security, what is a honeypot, and why is it used?

### HOW TO ANSWER THEM
- **Have your examples ready:** Check for any software or technical skill mentioned in the minimum requirements of the job description and be prepared with an example of when you solved a problem or created a solution using that tool.

- **Be prepared for a technical task:** An employer may ask you to perform a task using a requisite technology or skill as part of the interview. This could be anything from creating code to writing an email responding to a disgruntled customer.