Interview Question Playbook
10 Types Every Candidate Should Master

---

1. Behavioral Interview Questions

Purpose: Assess past behavior as a predictor of future performance.
Looking for: Self-awareness, structure (e.g., STAR method), and relevant examples.
No right answer—it's about your story, reflection, and how you grew from the experience.

1. Tell me about a time you had to meet a tight deadline.
2. Describe a situation where you had to deal with a difficult coworker.
3. Give an example of a goal you set and how you achieved it.
4. Tell me about a time you failed. What did you learn?
5. Describe a time you had to adapt to a big change at work.
6. Give an example of a time you showed initiative.
7. Tell me about a time you had to work under pressure.
8. Describe a time you went above and beyond at work.
9. Give an example of how you handled receiving constructive criticism.
10. Tell me about a time you resolved a conflict at work.

---

2. Situational Interview Questions

Purpose: Assess how candidates might approach hypothetical future scenarios.
Looking for: Decision-making logic, judgment, values.
No right answer, but poor reasoning or lack of structure will hurt.

1. What would you do if your team missed a deadline?
2. How would you handle an angry client?
3. If you were assigned a project outside your expertise, what would you do?
4. How would you approach working with a manager who gives vague instructions?
5. What would you do if you noticed a teammate wasn't pulling their weight?
6. Imagine you're asked to complete a task with unclear goals. How would you proceed?
7. How would you manage multiple urgent priorities at once?
8. What would you do if you made a mistake no one else noticed?

9. If you were asked to implement a new tool or system, how would you approach it?
10. What would you do if you disagreed with a decision your manager made?

---

3. Technical or Skills-Based Questions

Purpose: Test knowledge and proficiency in role-specific tasks or tools.
Looking for: A correct or best-practice answer.
Examples: Coding challenges, accounting formulas, tool-based usage.

1. Walk me through how you would troubleshoot a [technical issue].
2. Can you explain how [a specific tool or technology] works?
3. Describe your experience with [programming language/software/tool].
4. How would you approach optimizing a slow database?
5. What's your process for debugging code?
6. Explain a complex technical concept to a non-technical person.
7. Can you walk me through a recent project you built?
8. How do you ensure quality in your work?
9. What are your go-to resources for learning new technologies?
10. How do you stay current with industry trends?

---

4. Competency-Based Questions

Purpose: Measure specific skills and capabilities aligned with the job role.
Looking for: Evidence of specific competencies (e.g., leadership, project management).
Note: Often scored on rubrics—answers should match defined behaviors or outcomes.

1. Give an example of a time you demonstrated leadership.
2. Tell me about a time you made a difficult decision.
3. Describe how you've handled working on a cross-functional team.
4. Share an example of a time you used data to make a decision.
5. Tell me about a time you managed a complex project.
6. How have you demonstrated strategic thinking in a previous role?
7. Describe a time you had to persuade others to accept your idea.
8. Give an example of a risk you took and what happened.
9. How have you handled budgeting or resource allocation in the past?
10. Describe a situation where you improved a process or system.

5. Cultural Fit or Values-Based Questions

Purpose: Gauge alignment with the company's culture, values, and mission.
Looking for: Authenticity and alignment—not a "right" answer, but the *right fit*.
No universal right answer—just the one that reflects **you** and how you work.

1. What kind of work environment helps you thrive?
2. How do you align your work with company values?
3. What does integrity mean to you in the workplace?
4. Describe your ideal manager or leadership style.
5. What do you value most in a team?
6. How do you contribute to a positive work culture?
7. Tell me about a time you had to speak up for your values.
8. How do you handle feedback and continuous improvement?
9. What does "diversity and inclusion" mean to you?
10. Why do you want to work at this company specifically?

---

6. Icebreaker or Personality Questions

Purpose: Build rapport and get a sense of the candidate's character.
Looking for: Personality traits, confidence, tone—not facts.
There's *definitely* no right answer—but fumbled delivery or awkwardness can still be telling.

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. What's your superpower?
3. How do you spend your weekends?
4. What's something interesting that's not on your resume?
5. If you could have dinner with anyone, who would it be?
6. What's your favorite book or movie and why?
7. How would your friends describe you?
8. What motivates you to get up in the morning?
9. What's a fun fact about you?
10. How do you unwind after a stressful day?

---

7. Case or Scenario-Based Questions

Purpose: Evaluate analytical thinking, business judgment, and problem-solving.
Looking for: A strong, structured solution—not always one "right" answer, but some paths are clearly stronger.
Example: A marketing case might have multiple good options, but some are objectively more strategic.

1. How would you approach increasing our sales by 10% in six months?
2. Walk me through your thought process for launching a new product.
3. How would you reduce customer churn for a subscription service?
4. If our competitor launched a similar product, how would you respond?
5. What would you do if our product team was missing deadlines?
6. Create a plan to expand into a new market.
7. A client is unhappy with the results of a campaign—what do you do?
8. We're losing users during onboarding. How would you fix it?
9. You've been given limited budget and high goals—what's your strategy?
10. How would you solve a dip in team morale?

8. Stress Interview Questions

Purpose: Observe how candidates respond to pressure or discomfort.
Looking for: How you **respond under pressure**, not what you say.
No right answer—just don't get rattled.

1. Why weren't you promoted in your last job?
2. This resume doesn't impress me—why should I hire you?
3. What makes you think you're qualified for this role?
4. What's your biggest weakness?
5. What would you do if your manager constantly criticized your work?
6. Why have you had so many jobs?
7. Can you take criticism?
8. What would you do if your team refused to follow your direction?
9. Why did you fail in your last role?
10. Why do you think you're better than other candidates?

9. Brainteasers or Logical Puzzles

Purpose: Test critical thinking and problem-solving under ambiguity.
Looking for: A correct answer **or** a strong problem-solving process (depending on context).
Note: In tech/finance roles, accuracy might matter more than process.

1. How many golf balls can fit in a school bus?
2. Why are manhole covers round?
3. How would you weigh an airplane without a scale?
4. You have 8 balls, one is slightly heavier. How do you find it in two weighings?
5. How many windows are in New York City?
6. Describe a creative way to find a needle in a haystack.
7. If you had only one match, and entered a dark room with an oil lamp, a candle, and a fireplace, which would you light first?
8. What comes next in the sequence: 2, 6, 12, 20, ___?
9. How would you explain a database to a 5-year-old?
10. How many ways can you arrange the letters in "SUCCESS"?

---

10. Closing or Reflective Questions

Purpose: Wrap up interviews, gauge interest, and uncover final insights.
Looking for: Insightful, honest answers.
Again, *no right answer*, but bad or lazy answers stand out.

1. Do you have any questions for us?
2. Why do you want this job?
3. Where do you see yourself in five years?
4. What are you most proud of in your career?
5. What's your biggest career lesson so far?
6. Is there anything else we should know about you?
7. What would you do in your first 30 days here?
8. How do you define success in your work?
9. What's one thing you'd improve about our company?
10. What are you hoping to find in your next role?