

HOW TO ANSWER COMMON INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1 “Tell me about yourself.”

Don't give your life history. Be brief. You want to be ready with about a one- to- two minute answer that summarizes your career with a focus on how your background matches the company's needs.

Use a **present, past, and future** formula. Start with what you do now, then talk about your past, and top it off with the future and why you are excited about this job opportunity.

Be sure to list **three - four key strengths** you have that are pertinent to this job.

2 “What would you consider an area of weakness?”

Who's perfect? Nobody. They want to see how you have identified your area of need.

Be aware of the job requirements and don't cite a weakness related to any of the required skills or desired qualities. Select a weakness that is relatively minor and “fixable.” Also talk about your desire to bring about growth.

Fixable: *“I get nervous when speaking in front of large groups.”*

(You can get better through practice and learning new skills — and this is a common area of need)

Fixable and Growth: *“I think one area I could work on is my delegation skills. I am always so concerned about everything being done right and on time that I can get stuck in that mentality of ‘If you want it done right, do it yourself.’ Unfortunately, that's not always possible and I've realized that I can slow things down if I am too controlling.”*

3 “What are your strengths?”

Select strengths that are relevant to the skills required for the job.

Your strengths could include:

Experience — Work/Externship experience with a certain type of task, expertise in a particular industry, a track record of working with similar products or clients, etc.

Talents — Abilities such as record keeping, writing proposals, selling widgets, managing cases, organizing events, bilingual , etc. (the possibilities here are truly endless)

Soft skills — Competencies such as problem solving, influencing, team building, negotiation, managing up, etc.

Education/training — College degrees, certifications, training seminars, mentoring, externships, etc.