

ANSWERS TO INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Sharing too little information is just as bad as over sharing - Make sure your answers are clear and give the interviewer relevant information about you

Why have you applied for this job role?

This is where you are describing that you have the qualifications for the job and how you are matched to the company:

- **Carefully review the job description to note where you meet the job requirements.**
- **Research the company.**
- **List your successes which you can mention in your answer eg, an Engineering apprenticeship, a possible answer 'Through studying Maths and Physics in school I have developed problem solving skills and look forward to using these skills and developing them further in a work context (give an example of how you have demonstrated problem solving skills in physics).**
- **Identify and list your relevant expertise and strengths**

Then write out your answer

And, practice the answer so that you sound natural and confident.

- **First part of the answer: Start with your current/most recent job, and present the most significant highlights, the ones that would be most relevant to this job. These are the qualifications that make it clear that you are a very good candidate for the job. If you have not had a part time job as you have been in school you could describe any skills you gained from work experience and school projects. Employers won't expect a school leaver to have a lot of work experience or any work experience but they are aware that you have gained skills within school that are transferable skills in a job. If you were part of any club in or out of school you would have learnt team**

work and/or leadership skills. All school work requires you to work to deadlines and be organised. These are needed for any job role.

- Add other relevant details and accomplishments that demonstrate you are qualified for this position eg, I have had a Saturday job where I learnt excellent customer service skills and how to work effectively in a team.
- **Second part of the answer: Focus on your eagerness to be an excellent employee who would like to have the opportunity to develop within the company through training.** This shows you are someone who is keen to learn and is likely to have a very good attitude at work.
- Focus on the future - this opportunity and your career, demonstrating your interest and enthusiasm for the job and the employer: You could then describe what you learnt through the research about the company and that's why you like them.
- Try to **AVOID** saying it is because 'it is closer to home'. This is a good reason but only shows how it *benefits you* but by describing your desire to work for that company (as you found out how good it is through research and give examples of this) and be an employee who wants to develop it shows someone who wants to *benefit the company*. *An employer wants to recruit someone who is motivated to work and develop within a job role. This shows a good attitude.*

What are your Strengths?

It is a good idea to be able to name what your strengths are and be prepared to give a few examples of these.

For example, I am a natural leader and I lead a sports team or I am the head of my chess club in school.

I have excellent listening skills and my friends compliment me as they know they can turn to me for support.

I am punctual and always arrive to school and to my Saturday job on time.

EACH STRENGTH IS BACKED UP BY AN EXAMPLE

What are your Weaknesses?

Everybody has weaknesses as well as strengths but in an interview situation you want to be able to confidently name your strengths but also describe your weaknesses in a way that shows you are aware of them but also working to improve them

For example, I am a natural team player within school projects and I really enjoy coming up with new ideas. This is a strength but I am learning that the new ideas that I have will not always be ideas that others want so I have learnt and I am learning to communicate my ideas with others so that we can decide as a team what new ideas could be successful.

This shows an employer that you have a strength which you are you have needed to learn to use effectively by communicating better with others.

It would be a good idea to have 2 examples of weaknesses which you are 'working on' to improve.

How do people describe you?

Some people may not understand why it is worth preparing for this question. It is worth practicing this question too as it gives you the chance to give examples of how peoples description of you is demonstrated

Many people say that they are hard-working, good listeners and helpful or give other good examples. This would be great if you could describe how you have demonstrated this so that an employer can see your transferable skills.

Eg, I am a good listener as friends often turn to me during challenging times. I am aware that being a good listener is important in the work place as I want to work effectively supporting others by listening and understanding their needs. I am also aware that completing work effectively requires me be able to listen and understand what the company and client need.

Another example,

People describe me as hard working as I sometimes work during my school lunch hour to complete work that needs to be done. I am aware that in a working environment I may need to go to work early or work later to get work done to a deadline.

Do you have any questions?

This normally comes at the end of the interview and is important to have at least one or two questions to ask. This is because an interview is always a two-way process and allows you to get to know the company and see if the position is right for you as well as the company getting to know you.

It also shows the employer you have prepared for the interview and shows you are someone who is keen to get the job role.

This could be the time when you again show how keen you are to develop in the job role

You could ask – Are there opportunities for further training?

How will my work performance be measured and reviewed?