



# BASIC INTERVIEW QUESTIONS



## *An interview is*

*a process through which your skills, attributes, and potential are evaluated.*

*You also evaluate the employer. By knowing what to expect and by anticipating and preparing for interview questions, you will enhance your chance of receiving a job offer. For more in-depth information on interview tips, preparation and strategies, attend an **Interviewing for Success** workshop (check the*

*current semester Career Center Events Calendar for dates and times).*

*Detailed information is also available at*

*[www.careercenter.sjsu.edu](http://www.careercenter.sjsu.edu).*

## **TO ENSURE A SUCCESSFUL INTERVIEW, TAKE TIME BEFORE THE INTERVIEW DATE TO:**

- Review the job description.
- Select specific examples of your past performance that will convince the employer that your skills, interests and future goals match the job requirements.
- Review the following questions and decide which examples to use in formulating an answer to each question.
- Practice your answers so that you will be able to respond to the interviewer in a concise and organized manner using specific examples from your background.

## **BASIC INTERVIEW QUESTIONS:**

1. Why do you want to work for this organization? In what type of position are you most interested?
2. Tell me about yourself. Tell me about one of your class projects, internships or jobs. Describe how this experience challenged you.
3. Describe any leadership experience you have had.
4. What specific skills and abilities would you bring to this organization?
5. What are your long-term career goals? What goals have you set for yourself, and how are you planning to achieve them?
6. If you could have any position you wanted, describe the one that you would choose.
7. Why did you choose your college major? What courses did you like best: Least: Why?
8. How has your college experience prepared you for your chosen career?
9. Do you think that your grades are a good reflection of your academic achievement? Elaborate.
10. In what campus activities have you participated? Why? Which did you enjoy the most?
11. What do you consider to be your greatest strengths? Weaknesses?
12. What criteria are you using to evaluate the organization for which you hope to work?
13. Why should we hire you?

## BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

*Behavioral-based questions enable the employer to seek information about your past performance that can be compared to the specific skills needed to perform the job. Areas that could be covered are decision making, organization, commitment, planning, creativity, communication, assertiveness and interaction with others.*

1. Describe a time when you were faced with problems or stress at work or in a class that tested your coping skills. What did you do?
2. Give an example of a time when you could not participate in a discussion or could not finish a task because you did not have enough information.
3. Give an example of a time when you had to be relatively quick in making a decision.
4. Tell me about a time when you used your verbal communication skills in order to get a point across that was important to you.
5. Tell me about a job or class experience where you had to speak up and tell other people what you thought or felt.
6. Give me an example of when you felt you were able to motivate your co-workers or subordinates.
7. Give me an example of a time when you used your fact-finding skills to gain information needed to solve a problem; then tell me how you analyzed the information and came to a decision.
8. Describe the most significant written document, report, or presentation you've completed.
9. Give me an example of a time when you had to go above and beyond the call of duty in order to get a job done.
10. Describe the most creative work-related project you have completed.
11. Describe a situation in the past year in which you had to deal with a very upset customer, co-worker or classmate. How did you handle the situation?

## QUESTIONS TO ASK EMPLOYERS

- How does this position fit into the organizational structure?
- Describe projects and assignments I would have during my first year.
- Describe the supervision and training I would have during my first year.
- What might I expect to be doing over the next three to five years? How is performance evaluated and how often?
- In reviewing your organizational literature, I noticed that you have recently\_\_\_\_\_. How is that progressing?

*The SJSU Career Center does not discriminate in the provision of its services and programs. Reasonable accommodations available to those with disabilities with advance notice. Call 924-6031 for assistance.*

## HELPFUL INFORMATION ON INTERVIEWING STRATEGIES

*Materials are available in the Career Resources Lab, Modular F.*

### Select Books to Review:

*Knock 'em Dead*  
by Martin John Yate

*Get Hired!*  
by Paul C. Green, Ph. D.

*The Unofficial Guide to Acing the Interview*  
(includes salary offer negotiation)  
by Michael Tullier

*The Etiquette Advantage*  
by Peggy & Peter Post

### Select Videos to Review:

*Interviewing Techniques for Winning in the 90's*

*The Other Side of the Table: Insights from Recruiters*

*Interviewing for Non-Native Students*

*Talk The Talk: Interview Strategies for Business, Liberal Arts and the Sciences*