



## TELEPHONE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS



Hiring managers don't necessarily want to spend a lot of time, money and energy interviewing every potential candidate face-to-face. So most of them fall back on the practical: phone interviews. A telephone interview is usually short, just enough time to rule you in or out, so the focus is on questions that help evaluate you quickly. Your goal is to turn it into a face-to-face meeting, so your answers need to be concise.

As a rule of thumb, keep your answers to less than two minutes, if an interviewer wants to know more s/he will ask. While you'll never be able to fully guess all the phone interview questions you'll be asked, there are several that hiring managers like to ask. Here are a few of the more common questions.

**"Tell me a little about yourself,"** Interviewers often lead with this question, and no, it isn't an ice breaker to try to make you feel more comfortable. Keep personal information out of your answer and start selling yourself for the job. Start with your education, hit a few highlights from your experience, and always keep in mind the job description.

**"Why are you interested in this job?"** The interviewer wants to gauge your level of interest. Here's a good way to answer the question: "This job is a great fit for me. My skills and background in XYZ mean that I'd be successful in this role, which would benefit us both." Talk about how you meet their qualifications and exceed them in some way. (By the way: Make sure you listen carefully to the name of the company when you receive a call, especially if you've applied for several jobs. You don't want to accidentally refer to the wrong company or job position.)

**"Why do you want to leave your current job? Or why did you leave your last job?"** Don't get defensive with this question even if a less friendly interviewer makes it sound accusatory. All the company wants to know are the reasons why you're unemployed or looking for different work. Here's an effective and positive way to answer the question. "While I enjoy the work environment at my current job, I feel that my role isn't challenging enough. I'm looking for an opportunity to better use my skills. I believe that the position of [mention position] at [company name] will allow me to do this." Keep it positive and clear that you're running to this job, not from your old one.

**"Where do you see yourself in 5 years?"** It depends on the company (big companies have room for advancement; small ones might not...answer accordingly), but you can always talk about how you expect to have developed your skills and have contributed in a meaningful way to this company.

**"Why should we invite you for an on-site interview?"** This is another version of: Why should we hire you? Your answer could be something like this: "I really believe that I can contribute to the success of [company] and that my personal skills and values match [position] perfectly. When we meet in person, I think you'll clearly see that I'm a good fit for the company."

The telephone interview comes to an end when you are asked whether you have any questions. If you have not already been invited to meet the interviewer, now is the time to take the initiative, "The most pressing question I have is when we can meet?"

In closing your conversation, take care to ascertain the correct spelling and pronunciation of the interviewer's name, for your follow-up email.

