

Tricky Interview Questions - 'Tell me About Yourself'

Some interviewers like to keep job seekers 'on their toes' with unusual or quirky questions, but sometimes even the most innocent or simple questions can be tough to answer.

This article will help you with the classic opener for a job interview: *'Tell me about yourself'*. This is a simple question and in theory should be an easy one to answer... but for most people, it's far from easy.

Why? Because it's a big question that can be answered in so many different ways. The most common mistake people make with this question is providing too much information, e.g. talking through their entire employment history.

Here's the most important thing you need to know about this question: **This is a big opportunity for you.**

This is your opportunity to shine. How you answer this question can make an excellent first impression - and to set the tone for the rest of the interview. It also puts you in the driver's seat - and that's a good thing!

There are several different ways you can answer this question.

Approach #1

- Tell them who you are (starting with what is most impressive and most relevant).
- Tell them why you are qualified/suitable (three-four key points, leave the details for later).
- Tell them why you are here (one-two sentences about your interest in the job).

Approach #2

- Start with the present (e.g. your most recent job and something you are proud of).
- Touch on the past (e.g. give some background about how you got to where you are in your career, mentioning previous experience as it's relevant).
- Talk about the future (this is your chance to demonstrate your motivation and why you're interested in the job).

Approach #3

- Start with one of your strengths you know the interviewer will be impressed with.
- Tell them how that strength has helped your current or previous employer.
- Provide some figures and examples about what you achieved with that strength.
- Tell them how this job will help you grow your skills even more.

Tip Sheet: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

While 'Tell me about yourself' is an opportunity to tell the interviewer a bit of your story, it's important to be succinct. Here are some more tips to help you.

Do

- Provide a brief overview of your work experience
- Focus on recent work examples
- Align your experience and skills to this specific job
- Describe your top strengths or 'selling points' for this specific job
- Inject a bit of your personality into your answer
- Demonstrate your interest in the job and passion (if relevant)
- Write down some key points for your answer (but don't memorize)

Don't

- Give a long answer that details every job and your entire career history or life story
- Start your answer by referring to the beginning of your career
- Summarize your resume
- Be negative about your current employer or previous employers
- Mention highly personal information (e.g. political or religious views, marital status, health conditions, children)
- Launch straight in to why you want the job