**What are they really asking? Some questions behind the questions.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Is the person prepared? Organized and concise?</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. **Tell me about yourself.**  
Don't spend too much time answering (1-2 minutes). Avoid details, don't ramble. Touch on two areas: Education/Work Experience and Current Situation. |
| 2. **What do you know about our organization?**  
Highlight products, services, and history |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Is this person mature and self-aware?</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 3. **In your current or last position, what were your most significant accomplishments? In your career so far?**  
Give examples of how you achieved desired outcomes. |
| 4. **Would you describe a few situations in which your work was criticized?**  
Give only one, and tell how you have corrected or plan to correct your work. |
| 5. **If I spoke with your previous boss, what would he or she say are your greatest strengths and weaknesses?**  
Be consistent with what you think they would say as a reference. Position the weakness in a positive way. Don't say you have none; give only one. Position it in a positive answer like, “I am sometimes impatient and do the work myself when we are working against tight deadlines.” |
| 6. **What are your strong points?**  
You can present three. Relate them to that particular company and job opening. |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Is this person motivated? What are his/her values and attitudes? Is there a fit?</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 7. **In your current or last position, what features did you like most? least?**  
Be careful with dislikes. Give only one and make it brief. |
| 8. **What do you look for in a job?**  
Tell what gives you satisfaction at work and relate it to the job opening. |
| 9. **Why are you leaving your present job?**  
Refer to difference in style or opinion. Never personalize. Never be negative. Keep it short. When possible, give a “group” answer (e.g., “Our office is closing; the whole organization is being reduced in size”). |
| 10. **How would your co-workers describe you?**  
Refer to your strengths and skills. |
| 11. **What do you think of your boss?**  
If you like her or him, say so and tell why. If you don’t like her or him, find something positive to say. |
| 12. **Why do you want to work in a company of this size? Of this type?**  
Explain how this size or type of company works well for you. |
| 13. **Why do you want to work for us?**  
You like what you’ve learned and the company, its policies, goals, and management. |
14. **What are you doing, or what have you done to reach your career objectives?**
Talk about formal studies, workshops, seminars. Also talk about reading, professional memberships, mentors, advisors.

15. **What was wrong with your last company?**
Choose your words carefully. Don’t be negative. Say that no company is perfect; that it had both strengths and weaknesses.

16. **What kind of hours are you used to working?**
“As many hours as it takes to get the job done,” then ask, “What’s an average working day or week here?”

### Does this person match job criteria?

17. **Why should we hire you?**
Relate past experience which represents success in solving problems and which may be similar to those of the prospective employer.

18. **What has your experience been in supervising people?**
Give examples from accomplishments.

19. **Have you ever done this kind of job before?**
Never say "no" to this type of question, since no two jobs are alike. Mention all the experience you have that makes it likely that you will quickly learn this job. If you are a quick learner, give an example. Talk about any unpaid experience which is related to this job.

20. **How have you helped to increase sales or profits? Reduce costs?**
Refer to accomplishments. Give actual examples.

21. **How much money did you ever account for? Largest budget responsibility?**
Refer to accomplishments. If you haven’t had budget responsibility, say so, but refer to an accomplishment that demonstrates the same skill.

22. **Describe some situations in which you’ve worked under pressure or met deadlines.**
Refer to accomplishments. Everyone has had a few of these pressure situations in a career.

23. **Give an example of how you have been creative.**
Refer to accomplishments.

24. **Give examples of times when you were a leader.**
Draw examples from accomplishments.

25. **What are your goals in your career?**
Talk first about doing the job for which you are applying, then talk about longer-range plans.

26. **What position do you expect to have in two years?**
A position similar to the one we’re discussing or possibly by that time, the next step up.
### How does the person handle stress? What is their confidence level?

27. You may be over-qualified or too experienced for the position we have to offer. Possible answers:
   - Explain why you particularly want to work for this company.
   - The employer will get faster return on investment because you have more experience than required.

28. How much do you expect, if we offer this position to you?

First, know your market value. There are various ways to handle this question. You can give a salary range based on standards for your field and amount of experience. You can counter the question by asking how much is budgeted for the position, in order to get an idea of the employer's range. This does not always result in a clear answer, but may be worth trying. Another approach is to say that, though you want to make a good salary, you are primarily interested in the challenges offered by the position.

### What is this person's market value?

29. How have you kept up in your field?

Discuss reading, seminars or courses in or out of work, discussions with co-workers.

30. Do you have any questions?

You should prepare questions which focus both on the specifics of the job and more generally on the company. For instance, to whom would you report? What would your first assignment be? How will your performance be evaluated? What are some of the challenges you see this organization facing in the next year? Do not ask about salary, benefits and holidays until you are offered the job and begin to negotiate your working conditions.

### Closing the Interview

Closing the sale is important, but your closing should be tailored to the position; your personality and interviewing style, and the interviewer. Keeping these things in mind will help you determine which closing is appropriate for you and the situation.

**Ask if there is anything else you can provide.**

**Examples:** References, transcripts, background information and samples.

You can say "Is there any other information that I can provide that would convince you that I am the right person for this job?"

**State your interest in the position.**

Sound interested in the job, and tell what added value you can bring to the job.

**Example:** "From what you have told me about this position, and from what I know about your company, I know that I have the right mix of experience and education to bring value to this job."

**Ask about the next step in the process.**

Ask for the decision date if possible.

**Example:** "I’m interested in knowing what the next step in the process is and when you will be making a decision so I can follow up."

**Find out how to contact the interviewer.**

**Example:** "I would like to follow up in a week or two to see how the process is going and where I stand. How do you prefer that I communicate with you – e-mail or phone?"