



JOB INTERVIEW

SAMPLES QUESTIONS + ANSWER TIPS

You have everything you need to succeed on the job. To get the job, you have to succeed in the interview. This requires practice! Practice with your family, friends, and in the mirror. Preparing and practicing for your interview is essential if you want to get the job.

Before you interview for jobs, you must complete the [Video and In-Person Interviews training module](#) in the HBK Skill-Building Portal. Please also review this document to practice your interview skills.

IMPORTANT:

- **Employers are interviewing *many* people.** Because you are competing against many people, preparation and practice are very important!
- Schedule **flexibility is very important**, especially during weekends, early mornings, and evenings.
- Many employers will expect that you are **open to \$15/hour wage**.
- When you interview, you are **telling a STORY** about **WHO** you are and **WHY** someone should hire you.
- You are answering the question **“How will you help our company and why are you the best person for the job?”**
- Every person is different, and every person’s experience is different. Below are suggestions for how to answer these questions. **You should come up with your own answers based on your personal experience.**
- Be specific and **always provide examples** in your answers.
- Employers want to hire someone who is: a good communicator, team player, hard worker, responsible, shows up on time, works quickly, and is able to focus on their own work even in difficult situations. **You have all of these skills!**
- **Be confident and believe in yourself!** We are here to support you and we believe in you.



SAMPLE QUESTIONS AND ANSWER TIPS

1. Tell me about yourself:

a. **DO NOT SAY:**

- i. Your children
- ii. Your home country or where you live

b. **DO SAY:**

- i. Tell a personal story! You can use this formula:
 1. What do you like about working with food? Tell a story about your passion for cooking or baking
 2. If you have work experience, what did you accomplish in your job? If you do not have work experience, what did you learn and do well during Hot Bread Kitchen training?
 3. What are 1-2 *strengths* or characteristics that make you special?
 4. Why will you be great at this job?

2. Why should I hire you?

- a. This question is asking you: What will you do for me/my company if we hire you? What makes you the best person to help us? How will you help us?

b. **DO SAY:**

- i. A characteristic or skill about you that is special. What do your coworkers appreciate about you?
- ii. How will your characteristics and skills help the employer? Why will you be a good member of their team?
 1. For example, if you are always helping your teammates, you can say "I am a great team player, I always help my coworkers and do everything I can when my colleagues need help. I like being part of a team that works together. If you hire me, I will bring those skills to work and be a reliable and proactive member of your team."

3. When are you available?

a. **DO SAY:**

- i. I am flexible!
- ii. I understand that work in food requires that I work weekends, very early mornings or late nights, and I am prepared for that.



4. What is your biggest strength?

a. DO SAY:

- i. **Be specific and give an example!** Think about what makes **you special and unique.**
- ii. **Choose 1 strength:**
 1. What do your coworkers, family, or friends compliment you about?
 2. Why are you a good teammate?
 3. What do you admire about yourself?
- iii. Then, **tell a story** about your strength.
 1. Examples:
 - a. "I am calm under pressure. One day at work we had 200 lunch orders and two of my coworkers did not show up to work. I did not panic. Instead, I stayed calm and worked with my teammates to come up with a plan. We made sure everyone got their food on time."
 - b. Examples of other strengths: team player, hard-working, fast learner/curious, professional and respectful of colleagues, etc.

a. DO NOT SAY:

- i. A hands-on skill. **Most people interviewing for the job have the same hands-on skills, and you want to tell the employer how you are special and different from everyone else.** Employers care about WHO you are and HOW you work.
 1. For example, do NOT SAY "I am good at knife skills," "I practice safety and sanitation," "I am a good baker" because every other person interviewing for the job has those skills.

5. What is your biggest weakness?

a. DO NOT SAY:

- i. Anything negative!
- ii. Anything that can concern an employer
 1. DO NOT SAY "It is hard for me to stay awake," or "I don't get along with people"
- iii. If English is your second language, do NOT say that English is your weakness, because it isn't!

b. DO SAY:

- i. **Choose 1 weakness that can be seen as a positive quality or something that you are currently improving.** Examples:
 1. What has been new to you?
 2. What do you want to improve/get better at?
 3. What do you want to learn more about?
 4. What has been hard for you?
 5. What have you improved upon in your work or during training?
 - a. *Example:* "I am used to working alone. I enjoyed working with other people during training and learning how to be a member of a bigger team."



6. Why did you join Hot Bread Kitchen's training program? What did you learn in training with Hot Bread Kitchen?

- a. **DO SAY:**
 - i. What motivated you to join the program? What was your #1 reason that you applied for the program?
 - ii. Why do you want a job? Why do you want to work?
- b. **DO SAY something new and different that you learned -- examples below:**
 - i. How to succeed on the job
 - ii. How to be part of a team
 1. How to work with people from different countries, backgrounds and cultures
 2. It is important to help my team when they need help
 - iii. How to prioritize my work
 - iv. The importance of communication in the kitchen
 1. I learned to communicate with people who are different from me
 2. I learned to use kitchen language ("knife!" "hot!" "behind!")
 - v. Things change quickly in a kitchen and I have to be comfortable with change.
 - vi. How to work quickly and with urgency
 - vii. Basic kitchen safety and sanitation
 - how to store food properly, the temperature danger zone, FIFO
 - handwashing, how to keep my station clean
 - viii. Different cooking and baking techniques
 - ix. Proper knife skills

7. Why are you interested in working here? What do you know about our company?

- a. Always research the company before you interview (Google or internet search)
 - i. What about them is **special** or different from other companies?
 - ii. Where are they located?
 - iii. What products do they make?

8. Can you tell me about a time in the past year when you have made a mistake and learned from it?

- a. Give a specific example -- you can talk about a mistake you made during training if you don't have job experience
- b. Explain:
 - i. What your mistake was
 - ii. What you learned from that mistake
 - iii. What you will do differently next time

9. Describe a difficult time you have had dealing with an employee, customer, or co-worker. Why was it difficult? How did you handle it? What was the outcome?

- a. Remember to be positive!



10. Can you tell me about a time that you have received great customer service? What happened? What made it a good experience?

- a. Tell a story about an experience you had in a store or a shop when an employee made you feel good or important.

11. Are you comfortable working in hot and cold environments?

a. DO SAY:

- i. Of course! I understand that this work requires that I work in both hot environments (like kitchens with ovens and stoves) and cold environments (like walk-in freezers). I am prepared to work in both hot and cold temperatures.

12. What are your salary expectations?

Unfortunately, there is a lot of competition for work right now. Because of that, people who were making more than \$15/hour before the pandemic must now be open to \$15/hour jobs.

b. DO SAY:

- i. \$15/hour
- ii. If you were paid more than \$15 in your last job in food, you can say "I hope to make around \$[the amount of money you made before] per hour, but I am flexible and am open to \$15/hour."

13. Do you have any questions for me?

- a. You can write these questions in a notebook before your interview and when the interviewer asks you this question, you can get your notebook and ask these questions.
- b. Examples of good questions:
 - i. "What do you like/enjoy about working here?"
 - ii. "What will be expected of me in this role?"
 - iii. "Can you describe what a typical day would be like in this role?"
 - iv. "What has made your employees in this role successful? What kinds of people have done well at this job?"
- c. **IMPORTANT:**
 - i. You must ask 2 other questions before asking about:
 1. Benefits
 2. Wage
 3. Next steps
 - ii. Why? Because if your first and only question is about benefits or money, an employer will think you only care about what they can do for you. Remember that the goal of an interview is to tell an employer what YOU can do for THEM.