

Types of Interview Questions

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Interviewing is not a science. Nor is it an art form. It is simply an imperfect form of human communication designed to increase the predictive validity of potential employer-employee relationships. And it is very imperfect.

There are basically eight types of questions you may face during the course of an interview:

Credential verification questions

This type of question includes "What was your GPA?" and "How long were you at . . ." Its purpose is to place objective measurements on features of your background.

Experience verification questions

This type of question includes "What did you learn in that class?" and "What were your responsibilities in that position?" Its purpose is to verify experiential features of your background.

Opinion questions

This type of question includes "What would you do in this situation?" and "What are your strengths and weaknesses?" Its purpose is to subjectively analyze how you would respond to a scenario. The reality is that "Tape #143" in your brain kicks in and plays when you recognize the question and play back the pre-programmed answer.

Dumb questions

This type of question includes "What kind of animal would you like to be?" or "What do you think flubber is made from?" Its purpose is to get past your pre-programmed answers to find out if you are capable of an original thought. There is not necessarily a right or wrong answer, since it is used primarily as a test of your ability to think on your feet.

Math questions

This type of question includes "What is 1000 divided by 73?" to "How many ping pong balls could fit in a Volkswagen?" Its purpose is to evaluate not only your mental math calculation skills, but also your creative ability in formulating the mathematical formula for providing an answer (or estimate, as can often be the case).

Case questions

This type of question includes problem-solving questions ranging from: "How many gas stations are there in the U.S.?" to "What is your estimate of the U.S. online retail market for books?" Its purpose is to evaluate your problem-solving abilities and how you would analyze and work through potential case situations.

Behavioral questions

This type of question includes "Can you give me a specific example of how you did that?" or "What were the steps you followed to accomplish that task?" Its purpose is to anticipate predictable future behaviors based upon past responses.

Competency questions

This type of question includes "Can you give me a specific example of your leadership skills?" or "Explain a way in which you sought a creative solution to a problem." Its purpose is to align your past behaviors with specific competencies which are required for the position.