

Common Interview Questions

Teens and young adults are likely to be asked for entry-level jobs in retail, restaurants, grocery stores, offices, healthcare support, recreation, and similar positions.

Interview Question	What the Employer Wants to Know	How You Would Answer This Question
1. Tell me about yourself.	Can you introduce yourself confidently and share relevant information? (self-confidence, communication)	I would briefly share who I am, what I am good at, and why I am interested in the job. For example: "I'm a dependable student who enjoys helping people. I have experience working with others through school projects and volunteering, and I'm excited to learn new skills in this position."
2. Why do you want to work here?	Are you interested in this job and company, or are you just applying anywhere (communication, comment to the job)	I would mention something specific about the workplace and connect it to my interests. For example: "I want to work here because I like the friendly environment and the chance to help customers. I think this would be a good place for me to learn and grow."
3. Why should we hire you?	What strengths, skills, or attitudes make you a good employee? (self-advocacy, communication)	I would explain the qualities I can bring to the job. For example: "You should hire me because I am reliable, respectful, and willing to learn. I follow directions, show up on time, and do my best to help the team."
4. What are your strengths?	What positive qualities will help you succeed at work? (self-confidence, communication)	I would choose two or three strengths and give a simple example. For example: "One of my strengths is being dependable. I also try to stay organized and be kind to others. In school, I make sure my assignments are done on time and I help classmates when I can."
5. Tell me about a time you solved a problem or handled a challenge.	Can you think through problems and stay calm? (problem-solving, communication)	I would use a short example with what happened, what I did, and the result. For example: "During a group project, one person was absent and we were behind. I helped divide the work, checked in with the group, and we finished on time."
6. Describe a time you worked as part of a team.	Can you cooperate and communicate with others (teamwork)	I would describe how I helped the group. For example: "I worked on a team during a class project. I listened to everyone's ideas, completed my part, and helped keep the group focused so we could finish together."

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7. Tell me about a mistake you made and what you learned from it.	Are you honest, responsible, and willing to learn (work ethic, communication)	I would be honest but keep the example appropriate. For example: "Once I forgot an assignment deadline. I told my teacher, completed the work, and started using reminders so I would not miss deadlines again."
8. How would you handle an upset customer or coworker?	Can you stay professional and respectful? (professionalism, enthusiasm, positive attitude)	I would stay calm, listen, and ask for help if needed. For example: "I would listen carefully, speak respectfully, and try to understand the problem. If I did not know what to do, I would ask a manager or supervisor for help."
9. What days and hours are you available to work?	Does your schedule fit the employer's needs? (flexibility, communication, teamwork)	I would answer clearly and honestly. For example: "I am available after school on weekdays and most weekends. I can work evenings, and I will let you know in advance if I have a school or family commitment."
10. Do you have any questions for us?	Are you interested in the job and thinking ahead? (professionalism, communication)	I would ask one or two thoughtful questions. For example: "What training will I receive?" or "What qualities help someone succeed in this job?"

Tips for Teens and Young Adults

- Use examples from **school, volunteering, clubs, sports, family responsibilities, or previous jobs** if you have little work experience.
- Keep answers to **30–90 seconds** when possible.
- Be honest—employers appreciate sincerity more than "perfect" answers.
- Show enthusiasm, reliability, and a willingness to learn.

Good Questions to Ask the Interviewer

At the end of the interview, it's a good idea to ask one or two questions, such as:

- What does a typical day look like?
- What training will I receive?
- What qualities make someone successful in this job?
- What do you enjoy most about working here?
- What are the next steps in the hiring process?