

College Interviews: Practice Questions and Strategies

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An interview is a chance for you to meet with someone who represents the college. It's a great way to show your interest in the college, to start a relationship with people there and to show what you're all about. Here are some types of questions you may encounter and tips for answering them.

Questions about your fit with a college

Interviewers may ask questions like these:

1. Why do you want to attend our college?
2. What can you contribute to our college campus?
3. Why they ask: They want to know that you're really interested in their college. They also want to know what you can bring to the campus.

Your answer strategy: college-fit questions

Talk about what you've learned about the college and why you feel it's the right place for you. (Remember that you have to research a college ahead of time to answer this type of question well.) Discuss your extracurricular activities and achievements that show your character.

Questions about your personality

Interviewers may ask questions like these:

1. What three adjectives best describe you?
2. What are your strengths and weaknesses?
3. Why they ask: They want to see that you can think and speak about yourself.

Your answer strategy: personality questions

Give examples of how your chosen adjectives describe you. Talk about how you've used your strengths to accomplish something. Talk about how you overcome your weaknesses. For example, you can say, "I have a hard time learning new languages, so I set aside more time to study them."

Questions about activities, interests and goals

Interviewers may ask questions like these:

1. What activities do you find most rewarding?
2. What is your favorite book?
3. What do you want to do after graduating from college?
4. Why they ask: They want to get to know you better and learn about what's important to you.

Your answer strategy: interests questions

Think about the why: Why are those activities the most rewarding? Why is a book your favorite? If you have a major in mind, talk about why you're interested in that subject. Discuss how you think college can help you meet your goals. Be sincere and honest in your answer — don't say things just to impress the interviewer.

Wide-ranging questions

Interviewers may ask some broader questions. For example:

1. If you had a thousand dollars to give away, what would you do with it?
2. What's your opinion on the immigration debate (or another topic in the news)?
3. If you could change one thing about your school, what would it be?
4. Why they ask: They want to see that you are informed and curious and a careful thinker.

Your answer strategy: broader questions

Stay up-to-date on news and current events. Do you have strong opinions on certain issues? Can you explain your position? Try to spell out your system of values to yourself and think about how you apply it.