

*From About.com: College Admissions

Interview for College

Practice These 20 Questions Before You Interview for College

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The majority of college interviewers aren't looking to trick you or put you on the spot. The interview is a way for you and a representative from the college to get to know each other. The interview helps you and the college figure out if you're a good match. Try to relax and be yourself, and the interview should be a pleasant experience.

1. What did you do this summer?

This is an easy question that an interviewer might use to get the conversation rolling. The biggest danger here is if you haven't done anything productive in the summer. "I played a lot of video games" isn't a good answer. Even if you didn't have a job or take classes, try to think of something you have done that was a learning experience.

2. What do you do best?

There are lots of ways to ask this question, but the bottom line is that the interviewer wants you to identify what you see as your greatest talent. There's nothing wrong with identifying something that isn't central to your college application. Even if you were first violin in the all-state orchestra or the starting quarterback, you can identify your best talent as making a mean cherry pie or carving animal figurines out of soap. The interview can be an opportunity to show a side of yourself that isn't obvious on the written application.

3. What do you hope to do after graduation?

Lots of high school students have no idea what they want to do in the future, and that's okay. Still, you should formulate an answer to this question. If you're not sure what your career goals are, say so, but provide a few possibilities.

4. Why do you want to go to college?

This question is so broad and seemingly obvious that it can catch you by surprise. Why college? Steer clear of materialistic responses ("I want to get a good job and make a lot of money"). Instead, focus on what it is that you plan to study. Chances are your particular career goals aren't possible without a college education.

5. How do you define success?

Here again you want to avoid sounding too materialistic. Hopefully success means making a contribution to the world, not just your wallet.

6. Who do you most admire?

This question really isn't so much about *who* you admire but *why* you admire someone. The interviewer wants to see what character traits you most value in other people.

7. What is your biggest weakness?

This is a common question, and it's always a tough one to answer. It can be dangerous to be too honest ("I put off all my papers until an hour before they are due"), but evasive answers that actually present a strength often won't satisfy the interviewer ("My greatest weakness is that I have too many interests and I work too hard"). Try to be honest here without damning yourself. The interviewer is trying to see how self-aware you are.

8. Tell me about your family.

When you interview for college, an easy question like this can help get the conversation rolling. Try to be specific in your description of your family. Identify some of their funny quirks

or obsessions. In general, however, keep the representation positive -- you want to present yourself as a generous person, not someone who is hyper-critical.

9. What makes you special?

Or the interview might ask, "What makes you unique?" It's a more difficult question than it might at first appear. Playing a sport or getting good grades is something that many students do, so such accomplishments aren't necessarily "special" or "unique." Try to get beyond your accomplishments and think about what really makes you you.

10. What can our college offer you that another college can't?

This question is a little different than one asking why you want to go to a specific college. Do your research and look for the truly unique features of the college for which you are interviewing. Does it have unusual academic offerings? Does it have a distinctive first-year program? Are there co-curricular or internship opportunities that can't be found at other schools?

11. In college, what do you plan to do outside of the classroom?

This is a fairly simple question, but you need to know what extracurricular opportunities exist at the college. You'll look foolish saying you want to host a college radio show if the school doesn't have a radio station. The bottom line here is that the interviewer is trying to see what you will contribute to the campus community.

12. What three adjectives best describe you?

Avoid bland and predictable words like "intelligent," "creative" and "studious." The interviewer is more likely to remember a student who is "clumsy," "obsessive" and "metaphysical." Be honest with your word choices, but try to find words that thousands of other applicants won't choose.

13. What do you think about the latest news headline?

With this question the interviewer is seeing if you are aware of major events going on in the world, and if you have thought about those events. What your exact position is on an issue isn't as important as the fact that you know the issues and have thought about them.

14. Who is your hero?

A lot of interviews include some variation of this question. Your hero doesn't have to be someone obvious like a parent, a president or a sports star. Before the interview, spend a few minutes thinking about who you most admire and why you admire that person.

15. What historical figure do you most admire?

Here, as with the "hero" question above, you don't need to go with an obvious choice like Abraham Lincoln or Gandhi. If you go with a more obscure figure, you just might be able to teach your interviewer something.

16. What high school experience was most important to you?

With this question the interviewer is looking to find out what experiences you most value and how well you can reflect back on high school. Be sure you are able to articulate *why* the experience was important.

17. Who most helped you get to where you are today?

This question is a little different than the one about a "hero" or the "person you most admire." The interviewer is looking to see how well you can think outside of yourself and acknowledge those to whom you owe a debt of gratitude.

18. Tell me about your community service.

Many strong college applicants have done some form of community service. Many, however, simply do it so that they can list it on their college applications. If the interviewer asks you about your community service, it's to see why you served and what the service means to you. Think about how your service benefited your community, and also what you learned from your community service and how it helped you grow as a person.

19. If you had a thousand dollars to give away, what would you do with it?

This question is a roundabout way to see what your passions are. Whatever you identify as a charity says a lot about what you most value.

20. What subject in high school did you find the most challenging?

Even if you're a straight "A" student, chances are some subjects were more difficult than others. The interviewer is interested in learning about your challenges and how you tackled those challenges.