SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS BASED ON NINE BASIC COMPETENCY AREAS

I. EXPERIENCE AND JOB SKILLS

Purpose: To determine knowledge, skills, and abilities for the specific position being filled.

Sample:
- What are your strengths for this position?
- Everyone has weaknesses; where do you think you could stand some improvements?
- What do you consider as the most significant work accomplishment of your career?
- Describe a typical work day for yourself.

II. INTELLIGENCE

Purpose: To ascertain whether the applicant has the type of intelligence called for in the job.

Sample:
- How would you go about solving this problem? (Describe a short hypothetical problem in the work place.)
- Describe a position which you have held that required you to analyze the facts and prepare a final product, e.g. briefing package, written report, speech, etc.

III. MATURITY AND JUDGEMENT

Purpose: To determine an individual’s maturity level and ability to render seasoned judgments.

Sample:
- What personal goals have you set for yourself?
- What is the most important decision you have made recently?
- If you were to start a career over, what would you do differently?
- If you were given several important tasks to accomplish, how would you go about prioritizing them?
IV. RESPONSIBILITY

Purpose: To determine an applicant’s willingness to accept responsibility and be accountable for his or her actions.

Sample: - Describe a failure in your life and why you think it happened.
- Describe a project or assignment which you were required to complete from start to finish.
- How do you react to criticism?

V. RELATIONSHIPS

Purpose: To determine how well the applicant gets along with and supports others.

Sample: - How do you like working for your current supervisor?
- Tell me about the co-worker you like working with the best. The least.
- Tell me about a recent confrontational work situation and how you handled it.

VI. RESOURCEFULNESS

Purpose: To establish an applicant’s ability to tackle different kinds of challenges.

Sample: - What are the most difficult problems you think you have faced recently and how have you solved them?

VII. WORK ATTITUDE

Purpose: To determine whether an applicant views his or her job as drudgery or as a challenge.

Sample: - What do you like best and least about your current position?
- What do you view as the characteristics of a person best suited for this position?
VIII. ENERGY LEVEL

Purpose: To determine how much energy an applicant would bring to the job.

Sample: - What type of recreational activities do you enjoy?

Hint for applicants: Emphasize action-oriented activities such as aerobics, jogging, or tennis.
Avoid emphasis on passive activities such as t.v., sewing, reading.

IX. LEADERSHIP

Purpose: To determine an applicant’s leadership style and its compatibility with the organization.

Sample: - How do you handle crisis situations?
- What types of personnel problems have you encountered with your subordinates?
- What has been the turnover rate in your own work unit?
- Describe your current supervisor’s management techniques and evaluate them.

OTHER MISCELLANEOUS

• What do you do when you have trouble solving a problem? (To determine the applicant’s dependence or independence on others.)

• What are your reasons for applying for this position? (To determine what motivates the applicant, e.g. prestige, money, career growth, personal challenge.)

• What’s the most monotonous job you ever held? (To determine how well the applicant can handle the routine and monotony inherent to a certain degree in all jobs.)

• How do you react under pressure? (To determine how well the applicant works under pressure, i.e. thrives upon it, rises above it, keels under it.)

• If I were to contact your current supervisor, what would he or she tell me about you? (To elicit free flowing thought.)

Some of this material has been excerpted from an article by Maxine H. Atwater, entitled, The Job Interview: Looking Behind the Questions, published in the January 1986 edition of Federal Career Insights.
TIPS FOR BEING INTERVIEWED BY OTHERS

DO

- Talk about ways you can produce for the organization.
- Communicate your strengths, skills, abilities, knowledge, and personal characteristics.
- Give clear, concise, and direct answers to questions.
- Be cheerful.
- Be straightforward.
- Be assertive.
- Be confident and self-assured.
- Give verbal answers, even if the answer is a simple yes or no.
- Be participative; be interested; ask relevant questions.
- Dress appropriately; be well-groomed.
- Collect your thoughts before answering; speak slowly, clearly, and articulately.
- Respond directly to the interviewer; use direct eye contact.
- Be prompt.

DON’T

- Don’t talk about personal goals, preferences, salary.
- Don’t be modest, meek, or mild.
- Don’t prattle or give unnecessary details.
- Don’t appear to be unhappy or moody.
- Don’t be evasive as if you were hiding something.
- Don’t be arrogant, aggressive, or know-it-all.
- Don’t criticize or belittle yourself.
- Don’t nod your head affirmatively or negatively.
- Don’t be passive or indifferent.
- Don’t be sloppy or ill-groomed.
- Don’t rush your answers; don’t mumble.
- Don’t respond to the wall, floor, or ceiling.
- Don’t arrive late. Late arrivals may be posh for social occasions, but not for an interview.
TIPS FOR CONDUCTING AN INTERVIEW WITH OTHERS

DO

- Be prompt and dress appropriately; you are representing your organization.
- Allow adequate time (usually 1 hour) for the interview, including questions from the interviewees.
- Talk about the organization, its mission, programs, and achievements.
- Talk about the job, its duties, its responsibilities.
- Talk about the individual’s qualifications, abilities, experience, education, training, and interests.
- Talk about career possibilities and opportunities for growth, development, and advancement.
- Be prepared; ask relevant questions; post the same or similar questions to each candidate.
- Be systematic and objective in your interview evaluations.
- Ask open-ended questions.
- Be open-minded.
- Be friendly, but businesslike.
- Be professional.

DON’T

- Don’t appear disorganized and sloppy.
- Don’t act rushed or inpatient; don’t prolong the interview.
- Don’t talk about your own career success.
- Don’t inquire about marital status; number of actual or planned dependents; child care arrangements; spouse’s occupation, salary, or availability for transfer; social, religious, political, or moral values.
- Don’t talk about the qualifications of other applicants.
- Don’t place undue emphasis on conditions of employment, e.g. travel, work hours, job demands, etc. in order to discourage an applicant or solicit a declination.
- Don’t be inconsistent in your line of questioning.
- Don’t rely entirely on intuition.
- Avoid questions which require only a yes or a no answer.
- Don’t prejudge; the person you think may be the best might not be when all the facts are weighed.
- Don’t be condescending, collegial, or patronizing.
- Don’t be funny; save the jokes for a more appropriate occasion.
MOST CITED REASONS FOR NONSELECTION

- Expects too much too soon.
- Too aggressive or too know-it-all.
- Sloppy personal appearance.
- Inarticulate; poor grammar, vocabulary, diction, voice.
- Lack of career direction and planning.
- Lack of enthusiasm or interest; passive and indifferent.
- Lack of confidence; nervous, ill at ease.
- Verbally attacks past employers; may not be supportive of organization.
- Indecisive.
- Unhappy, discontented individual.
- Disorganized, illegible, or incomplete resume.
- Lack of knowledge needed for the position.
- Cynical or sarcastic. “Just looking” attitude.
- Overemphasis on how he or she knows.
- Irritating mannerisms, expression.
- Gum chewing or smoking.
- Lack of direct eye contact.
# RESUME WORD LIST

## ACTION VERBS THAT DESCRIBE YOUR FUNCTIONAL SKILLS

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<thead>
<tr>
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## SKILL VERBS THAT DESCRIBE YOUR FUNCTIONAL SKILLS

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## ADAPTIVE SKILL WORDS THAT DESCRIBE YOUR PERSONAL TRAITS

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From The University of New Mexico, 1988-89 Placement Manual