

Graduate School of Language and Educational Linguistics

**TRICKY QUESTIONS THAT CAN ARISE IN AN INTERVIEW**

1. WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT OUR ORGANIZATION?

Research as much as you possibly can about the mission and philosophy of the organization before going to the interview.

2. WHAT ARE YOUR PERSONAL FIVE-YEAR GOALS?

Relate answer to the organization rather than giving a self-serving reply. "I would like to be a Branch Chief, Division Chief, X-D Program."

3. HOW MUCH DO YOU EXPECT TO BE MAKING FIVE YEARS FROM NOW?

You never know what the value of money is going to be five years from now. Don't fall into the trap of telling them what you are going to make. Don't give a dollar figure. Talk in terms perhaps of being more interested in satisfaction to be derived from the work to be done and the financial rewards will follow.

4. WHAT WOULD YOU DO FOR US?

Don't presume to tell (lecture) the interviewer exactly what you would do since you don't really know their "problems." You better know enough about the organization to relate an experience of yours that represents successful solving of a similar problem.

5. WHAT DID YOU LIKE BEST ABOUT YOUR PREVIOUS JOB?

The interviewer wants to *see* how applicant reacts and expects an honest answer.

6. WHAT ARE TWO OF YOUR STRONG POINTS?

Be sure you can list more than two and relate them to the organization and job, whenever possible.

7. WHAT ARE SOME OF YOUR WEAK POINTS?

Take a weak point and turn it 180 degrees to show you've rectified the situation. The former weakness can now be used as an illustration of personal self-growth and discipline.

"When schedules are pressing, I sometimes get in there myself."

"I am not tolerant of sloppy work."

Give one good one and you probably won't be pressed to give others.

9. WHAT'S YOUR FAMILY'S REACTION TO MOVING?

Better be able to say you have discussed the subject and they are willing.

**THE CLASSIC QUESTION: "Tell Me About Yourself"**

**Use a 60-second guideline when answering this question.**

- Focus on *the first 10 seconds* on any personal information you wish to share (e.g. where you are from)
- Focus *the next 20 seconds* on your academic experience (e.g. what you are studying, any study abroad experience)
- Focus *the next 20 seconds* on your professional experience (e.g. leadership activities, internships)
- Use *the last 10 seconds* to discuss your ideal job/interest in the organization.

I call this the "wrap-up statement". I think about it like this:  
"So, because I've done XXX, I can offer your school XXX."

Remember, this is a short answer. (Avoid falling into the "life story" trap.)  
Give highlights of your experiences and focus your answer. Spend some time writing down the experience you wish to discuss and then practice how you want to answer the question.