

Talking about Work Experience & Classic Interview Questions

Clare Howarth, New College Durham


Introduction


Your studies may be nearly finished and you are looking for a full time employment – how prepared are you to attend an interview?

The jobs market is competitive, especially for recent graduates!

You are trying to present yourself as better than the rest.

Employers choose the best on the day.

- 
- Employers generally see a graduate's achievements in their subject as necessary but not sufficient for them to be recruited.
 - Talents and abilities outside the boundaries of the discipline (such as the possession of so-called 'soft skills') are important in the recruitment of graduates

- 
- How many of you currently have a part time job or have undertaken a work placement?
 - In what areas?

Demonstrating employability skills used in work placement and part time jobs

- As students you need to get ready to use real life examples of how you have used employability skills
- Good and thoughtful use of examples can impress an interviewer
- Simply describing what you have done is not enough
- You need to think about what you have learned!!!

Work experience in a department store

- Example might be:
- “I helped tidy the store, put stock on shelves and answer customer queries. I used a till and helped with the stock intake”
- What are your thoughts on this response?

More informative response


- I used my initiative by looking out for customers who needed help. I saw one lady who was in a hurry and could not find the product she wanted. I took her quickly to the right section and once she had made her choice I helped her find a till and wrapped the product for her so she could meet her deadline.
- Another customer was elderly and did not understand the product range so I explained to him and helped him to think about which product was best for his needs. *This showed my communication and problem solving skills.*

Using examples

- This shows how using examples can make your answers more interesting and memorable
- Be confident about talking about your achievements – for example if an employer has asked you back for more work or work experience mention this.

Task

- Work in pairs to identify good examples of your employability skills that you gained from your work experience or part time role?

- 
- Your educational/training background is important too – bring that into interviews!
 - 1. Tell me about an experience in your education/training that led you to pursue this job/career.
 - 2. Describe a challenge you experienced during your most recent education/training. How did you overcome this challenge?

Classic Interview Questions

- Taken from one of the top hotel companies in the world!

Question Types

- Educational background questions
- Work background questions

Behavioural questions looking at:

- Adaptability/Stress tolerance
- Contributing to teams
- Customer relationships
- Problem solving and decision making
- Time Management
- Initiative

Task

- Aim of task – to have some ready prepared answers to possible interview questions.
- Each member of the group select a question from the different packs of questions – spend 5 minutes thinking on your own about possible answers and examples you could use to answer the question. Share the question with the rest of your group and gain their input and suggestions to your responses.
- Do you know which type of question it is relating to? What skills is it trying to examine?