
Icebreaker interview questions

Icebreaker questions help you open interviews with candidates and naturally transition to the job-specific questions. Before getting down to [core interview questions](#), start off a casual discussion to make candidates feel more comfortable.

Though you likely won't choose your next hires based on how they answer these questions, they're a good starting point for job interviews and they help make a positive first impression.

Here are some questions you can ask candidates at the beginning of interviews:

Sample icebreaker interview questions to ask candidates

- Did you find it easy to get here? Are you familiar with this area?
- Have you ever been a customer of our company? If so, how was your customer experience?
- How did you learn about this position? Do you know anyone who works or has worked with us?
- Why did you decide to apply for this role? Was there anything in particular about our job ad that piqued your interest?
- How is your experience so far as a candidate for our company? Did you face any difficulties with the job application? How was your email or phone communication with our hiring team?
- Why did you pursue this career?
- How did you choose your field of study?
- At the beginning of your academic or professional life, did you picture yourself in this position? If not, what kind of job did you think you'd be doing and what made you change your mind?
- What do you like about your current job that you'd like to find here as well?

How to choose the best icebreaker interview questions

These questions, as their name implies, help break the ice before you start evaluating candidates. Select appropriate icebreaker questions to open interviews, based on the situation:

- **During group interviews:** Ask candidates to briefly introduce themselves. Start by mentioning a few things about your team of interviewers (e.g. names and job titles.)
- **During video interviews with remote candidates:** Ask questions about the weather or the area where candidates live. You could also ask if they have ever visited the location where your offices are and what their impression was.

- **During first onsite interviews:** Since it's the first time candidates visit your offices, consider asking if they had trouble getting there and what do they think about your workspace. You could also ask if they have any previous experience with your company (e.g. as customers.)
- **During second or third-round interviews:** If you've already established a relationship, you could ask about something that came up during previous interview rounds.

What not to ask when opening job interviews

While icebreaker questions are only a small part of the interview, they set the stage for an effective evaluation. That's why you should avoid:

- **Unusual questions.** Good candidates are likely prepared to answer typical interview questions like "*Why did you apply for this position?*" or "*Tell me about your current position.*" Unusual questions that are irrelevant to the job could throw candidates off and make them nervous (e.g. "*If you were a food what kind of food would you be?*")
- **Rude or too-personal questions.** While you might want to sound friendly and approachable, it's best to play it safe. For example, a question like "*How did you spend your weekend?*" could make candidates feel uncomfortable if they were struggling with family or health issues.
- **Abrupt questions.** There's nothing wrong with skipping the small talk and going straight to the point. But, questions like "*What are your salary expectations?*" or "*Are you available to work overtime, if needed?*" don't give the right impression – and should have been addressed in earlier rounds of the hiring process. Get to know candidates with questions like "*Why did you choose this field?*" or "*What do you like about this role?*"
- **Tough questions.** The purpose of icebreaker questions is to ease nervousness. Starting job interviews with [brainteasers](#) or tough questions will probably cause more stress and negatively affect candidates' performance. Leave these interview question types for later or give candidates time to think about and prepare their answers in a quiet room.