



Preparing for a Behavior-Based Interview

Based on the premise that an applicant's past behavior will predict how he or she will respond in similar situations in the future, behavior-based interviewing (BBI) focuses on determining how you have actively applied your skills. It's one thing to say you're trustworthy or have good leadership skills; it's another thing to prove it through good, solid examples. The recruiter is looking for proof that you can demonstrate the desired capabilities in the real world. Typically, recruiters ask general questions about previous jobs or activities, future goals, grades, classes, and the like. Although such questions are part of the behavior-based interview, most of the recruiter's questions will be designed to elicit detailed descriptions from you on how you handled yourself in certain situations. BBI challenges you to recall what you did, thought, and felt in key situations. This allows the recruiter to see the whole picture – your thought process, decision-making skills, and emotional state – as well as the results of your actions.

You will be expected to give detailed, but focused, descriptions of actual circumstances. Expect to think under pressure. Take your time in formulating your response. The interviewer will understand and allow you to gather your thoughts. In your response, be thorough, yet direct. Describe an overview of the situation, the action you took, and the results. The best way to prepare for the BBI is to familiarize yourself with the types of questions you may be asked. Below are some questions commonly asked in the BBI:

- Give an example of a time where you were not in a leadership role but had to take the initiative to ensure the project was successful.
- What approaches have you found to be most effective in motivating others to work toward accomplishing objectives?
- What are two effective leadership qualities you think are important? How have you demonstrated these qualities in your past/current situation?
- What would you consider the highest level of responsibility to which you have been assigned at work or appointed in a school organization? For what were you responsible and how did you go about achieving your objectives or accomplishments?
- Describe a creative or innovative idea you produced that greatly contributed to an activity's or project's success.
- What was the most complex assignment or project you have had at work or school? How did you go about completing the assignment and what was the outcome?
- By providing examples, demonstrate that you can adapt to a wide variety of people, situations, or environments.
- Tell me about a suggestion you made to improve the way a job process worked. What was the result?
- Give me an example of a time when you did not meet a deadline. How did you handle the subsequent situation?
- Describe an example of a time that you were faced with multiple tasks, with other people available to assist in their completion. How did you go about delegating and completing these tasks?
- Describe a situation when you had to work in a team environment in which you had to deal with either conflicts or lack of participation by a team member. How did you handle the situation and what was the outcome?
- Think of a situation when you distrusted a co-worker/supervisor, resulting in tension between you. What steps did you take to improve the relationship?
- Provide an example of how you acquired a technical skill and converted it into a practical application.
- Describe a situation in which you found that your results were not up to your professor's or supervisor's expectations. What happened? What action did you take to correct the issue?
- Describe a time when you had to think on your feet to get yourself out of a jam.
- What has been a failure you've faced? How did you handle it and what did you learn?