



# OPERATION PALMETTO EMPLOYMENT

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## PRACTICE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Preparation is the key to a successful interview. Not only must you dress for success, speak clearly and make eye contact, you should also rehearse exactly what to say. To make a good impression, you must be fully prepared to answer behavioral and hypothetical questions and give a brief description of your skills, background and experiences.

These sample questions are not all-inclusive, but widely used by civilian employers and hiring managers. Spend some time thinking about or even writing out your answers, and then ask a trusted family member, friend, mentor or colleague to role-play with you. Being prepared will give you the upper hand!

**Remember: most civilian employers will not understand military jargon or know about your MOS or military experience. Do not speak in acronyms. For each example, take a moment to paint the picture so they understand the situation.**

### **1) Briefly describe your background and professional work experience.**

*Provide a "snapshot" of your background such as where you're from, and your past work experience in both the military and civilian workforce. Your response should be 1-2 minutes and in chronological order, leading into your current assignment/job.*

### **2) Give an example of a stressful challenge or problem you have faced in the past, and explain how you handled it and resolved the situation.**

*Use any example from your past work experience, military or civilian. The key here is to clearly state what the issue is and how you resolved it, so provide a brief background of the situation that led to the problem. Be careful not to badmouth any former employers or supervisors.*

### **3) Briefly describe why you are the ideal candidate for this position.**

*Tailor your past experience to the job you are applying for. What specifically makes you the right man (or woman) for the job?*

### **4) What is your greatest strength? What is your greatest weakness?**

*This is something any self-reflective professional should already know. Don't say "I don't have any" or "I don't know" – we all have strengths and weaknesses, and this will clearly show the interviewer that you don't know yours. For strengths, describe the skills and experience that directly correlate with the job you are applying for. As for your weaknesses, be honest but also explain what you are doing (or have done) to improve in these areas.*

### **5) Describe a difficult project you were in charge of, and how you worked with others to complete it on time and to standard.**

*There will be several variations of this question, so have a few examples of a time you worked with a team to complete a work/school project on time, and possibly dealt with a deadline or other problematic issues throughout the project.*

### **6) Why should we hire you?**

*Give concrete examples of why your skills and accomplishments make you qualified for the job. Be positive and reiterate your interest in the company and position you are applying for. You might want to research the company history and relate how their vision, mission, and values speak to you personally. This is also where you can state how*

*you are not a typical candidate because of your military experience, and the personal values that come with it.*

**7) Describe a time when you were faced with a stressful situation that demonstrated your coping skills.**

**8) Give me a specific example of a time when you used good judgment and logic to solve a problem.**

**9) Provide an example when you were over-tasked and had to many things to do at once. How did you prioritize your tasks and time?**

**10) Tell me of a time when you had to make a split-second decision. How did you react?**

**11) What's the most difficult decision you have made this past year?**

**12) Give an example of when and how you motivated others to get the job done.**

**13) Describe a past situation when you showed initiative and took the lead on a project or mission.**

**14) Provide an example when you anticipated a potential problem and developed preventive measures.**

**15) Tell me about a situation when you had to deal with a very upset customer, employee or coworker. How did you handle this situation, and what was the outcome?**

*Additional questions or concerns?*

*Contact your local OPE Employment Advisor. We're here to help!*