

# Five Common Interview Questions (and How to Answer Them)

<http://www.fastweb.com/college-search/articles/40-five-common-interview-questions-and-how-to-answer-them>

By Bridget Kulla

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A college admissions interview doesn't have to be a nerve-wracking experience. You'll make the best impression if you're relaxed. Get comfortable with some typical interview questions before you sit down for a face-to-face with the admissions interviewer and ease your anxiety. Practice what to say to these common interview questions.

## **1. Why Do You Want to Attend this School?**

Colleges look for students who will be a good match for their school. Your interviewer wants to see a genuine interest in the college. "There's always going to be a question 'Why do you want to come to our school?' so you really have to know the school," says Bev Taylor, an independent college counselor and director of the Ivy Coach. Spend time before the interview thinking about why that college would be a good match for you. "It's important to talk about yourself. Students need to do their homework before an interview. Find out what it is about them that can make them happy at that college," Taylor says.

## **2. What book have you read in the last year that has special meaning to you and why?**

This interview question frequently comes up and is an easy one to prepare an answer to. Try not to pick a book that you were assigned to read for class, but if you do, try not to mention that it was an assignment. "Know about a book and don't just stop at the name of the book and the author. Know something about the book and something that you enjoyed about that book ... You have to know the answer to this one," Taylor says. Use this opportunity to share something about yourself. Talk about why the book had special meaning for you and try to reveal your interests and personality in the process.

## **3. How will you contribute to this campus?**

This question comes in different forms including, "In what ways have you contributed to your high school?," "How will you be a valuable addition to the college?" Before the interview, pick a few positive adjectives that describe you and explain why. Then turn that into the answer to any of these questions. For example, "I'm very self-motivated. If I see that something needs to get done, I take it upon myself to do it. In my high school glee club, for instance ..." An answer like this will work for more than one type of question. "Don't just give the three adjectives though.

Pretend you were thrown a ball and now you have to run with the ball. Relax and answer the question, but give more than just the answers,” Taylor says.

#### **4. What are your academic interests?**

You don’t have to know what you’ll major in, but be able to explain your academic interests, why they interest you, and how you can pursue those interests at their college. Colleges are looking for students who are excited about learning, not students who feel they need to get a college degree but aren’t sure why.

#### **5. Do you have any questions?**

“That’s going to come up at the end, guaranteed. Too often students will say, ‘I think you’ve answered them all. That’s probably the worst answer you can give. You need to have some questions,” Taylor says. Asking your interviewer questions shows them that you’ve spent time thinking about their school. It’s okay to bring a list of questions you wrote beforehand.

Ask the right sorts of questions. Don’t ask something that can easily be found on the school’s Web site. Show you’ve done some research. Ask questions that relate to your interests, not just general questions. You also don’t want to ask a question that will put their school in a negative light. Instead of asking a yes or no question like, “Are research opportunities available to freshmen?” ask a more open-ended question like, “How can a freshman get involved in research?”

No matter what questions you’re asked in your interview, think of the interview as a conversation. Relax and act like yourself. It’s important to anticipate what questions you’ll be asked and prepare answers. Don’t just recite the answers you prepare, but take time to think them over and sound natural.