



You know enough to bring a list of questions to a job interview. When the interviewer asks you, "So, do you have any questions for me?" the last thing? You want to say is "No." But that could be the best option if you're at a loss for words, because some interview questions are better left unasked.

Here are 10 highly unsuitable [interview](#) questions that should never make an appearance, unless you don't want the job:

1. "What does your company do?"

This was a reasonable interview question in 1950 or in 1980, before the Internet existed. Today, it's your job to research any company you're interviewing with before setting foot in the door. We need to show up for a job interview knowing what the employer does, who its competitors are, and which of its accomplishments (or challenges) have made the news lately.

2. "Are you going to do a background check?"

It is amazing how many job candidates ask this question, which provokes alarm on the part of the interviewer, instead of the more general, "Can you please tell me a little about your selection process, from this point on?" Lots of people have credit issues that cause them worry during a job search, or aren't sure how solid their references from a previous job might be. If you're invited for a second [interview](#), you can broach any sensitive topics from your past then. Asking "Will you do a background check?" makes you look like a person with something to hide.

3. "When will I be eligible for a raise?"

Companies fear underpaying people almost as much as they fear overpaying them, because a person who's underpaid vis-a-vis his counterparts in the job market is a person with one eye on the career sites. Instead of asking about your first raise before you've got the job, you can ask (at a second interview) "Does your organization do a conventional one-year performance and salary review?"

4. "Do you have any other jobs available?"

A [job search](#) requires quick thinking about straight talk, and if a job is far below your abilities, you're better off saying so than beating around the bush with this question. You don't have to take yourself out of the running; you can say, "The job sounds interesting, but frankly I was earning 30% more and supervising people in my last job. Could you help me understand the career path for this role?" That's the cue for the interviewer, if he or she is on the ball, to highlight another job opening that might exist.

5. "How soon can I transfer to another position?"

You're broadcasting "I'm outta here at the first chance" when you ask this question. If you like the job, take the job. If it's not for you, wait for the right opportunity. Almost every employer will keep you in your seat for at least one year before approving an internal transfer, so a job-search bait-and-switch probably won't work out the way you'd hoped.

6. "Can you tell me about bus lines to your facility?"

Get online and research this yourself. It's not your employer's problem to figure out how you get to work.

7. "Do you have smoking breaks?"

If you're working in retail or in a call center, you could ask about breaks. Everyone else, keep mum; if your need to smoke intrudes so much on your work life that you feel the need to ask about it, ask your best friend or significant other for smoking-cessation help as a new-job present. Lots of companies don't permit smoking anywhere on the premises, and some don't like to hire smokers at all. Why give an employer a reason to turn you down?

8. "Is [my medical condition] covered under your insurance?"

This is a bad question on two counts. You don't want to tell a perfect stranger about your medical issues, especially one who's deciding whether or not to hire you. Ask to see a copy of the company's benefits booklet when an offer has been extended. This is also a bad question from a judgment standpoint; no department managers and only a tiny percentage of HR people could be expected to know on a condition-by-condition basis what's covered under the health plan. Anyway, your pre-existing condition won't be covered under most corporate plans for at least a year.

9. "Do you do a drug test?"

If you have a philosophical objection to drug tests, wait until they ask you to take a drug test and tell them about your objection. Otherwise, your question sounds like, "I'd fail a drug test," so don't ask.

10. "If you hire me, can I wait until [more than three weeks from now] to start the job?"

Employers expect you to give two weeks' notice. If you're not working, they'd love to see you more quickly. If you ask for tons of time off before you start working -- unless you have a very good reason -- the employer may think, "How serious is this candidate about working?" In any case, a start-date extension is something to request after you've got the offer in hand, not before.