

Tips for strengths based questioning at interview

What are they?

They are designed to elicit a natural response that you cannot prepare for.

How are they structured?

It is a single question or statement that cannot be rephrased or expanded upon.

How many are there?

It is dependent on the skills required for the role you are applying for. There are 36 skills within the success profiles structure which are aligned to the 9 behaviours (see attached).

How do I respond?

You will have a maximum of 2 minutes to answer. You do not need to use the full 2 mins but you will also be cut off mid-sentence if you exceed the time limit. Use a headline to confirm a confident response before explaining all of things associated in demonstrating that skill and if possible use a specific but short example to confirm.

How is it marked?

You will be asked a baseline/test question so that the assessors can gauge your body language, tone, pitch and level of engagement. It usually takes the form of “tell us about something you really enjoy doing”. This allows them to see you at your most confident when talking about something that you are motivated and passionate about. The scores range from 1-4, 4 being a strong response that demonstrates you are comfortable, confident and experienced in demonstrating that strength.

Examples of strength based questions:

Strength	Question / Statement
Challenger	How do you respond when your decisions are questioned?
Confident	Are you comfortable taking charge during pressure periods?
Inclusive	Team work is recognising the strength of individuals, do you agree?
Problem solver	“I always take a positive approach to tackling problems and finding solutions”, how true is this of you?
Relationship builder	How do you build trust when working with a stakeholder?

Key things to remember:

- Don't pontificate, be confident in responding
- Use honest and positive language
- Be animated and engaging – grab their attention
- Elaborate but not too much, needs to be punchy
- Use a strong headline such as: “ As a confident leader I relish the challenges that come with pressure”
- Use a succinct example, 1-2 sentences to demonstrate when you have used that strength
- Body language – eye contact, open gestures, display approachability, smile