

109 Problem Solving interview questions to hire top talent

Questions

1. If you had a magic wand to fix one problem at your university, what would it be and why?
2. Imagine you're explaining to an alien what a 'problem' is. How would you describe it?
3. If you could invent a new app to solve a daily frustration, what would it do?
4. Let's say a customer is super unhappy with a product. What steps would you take to make them smile again?
5. If your team missed an important deadline, what would you do to figure out what went wrong and how to prevent it in the future?
6. Suppose you and a classmate disagree on how to approach a project. How do you work towards a solution both of you are happy with?
7. You notice a process at your job that seems really inefficient. How do you go about suggesting a better way?
8. If you were building a bridge out of paperclips, what challenges might you face?
9. If you have 1000 lightbulbs, and only one switch to each, but you don't know which switch belongs to each bulb, how do you determine which switch belongs to each bulb?
10. Describe a time when you had to learn something completely new to solve a problem. What was your approach?
11. What if you are stranded on a desert island, with only a spoon, some duct tape, and a pineapple. How do you attract help?
12. Have you ever tried to teach a child a new skill? What challenges did you encounter, and how did you overcome them?
13. Think about a time you had to make a decision without all the information you needed. How did you decide?
14. Let's say you're organizing a surprise party, but the birthday person finds out. How do you handle the situation?
15. You're leading a team, and one member isn't pulling their weight. How do you address the issue?
16. Pretend you are a software developer, and you are tasked to build software for the blind. How would you approach it?
17. What if you found out your manager has been making bad decisions - what do you do?
18. How would you build the best possible mousetrap?
19. When was a time that you failed - and what did you learn?
20. If the world was to end tomorrow, what would you do?
21. How would you describe an efficient system and what are some of the things that can go wrong?
22. Describe a time you made a suggestion, and it was ignored. How did you handle that?
23. What is the toughest decision you have ever had to make?
24. Describe a time that you faced a major setback, and how did you deal with the emotions around that?
25. How do you know when a problem has been solved adequately?
26. If you were asked to clean up all the plastic in the ocean, what kind of approach would you take?
27. Imagine you have a box of crayons, and your friend wants to draw a picture, but all the crayons are mixed up. How do you find the color your friend needs?
28. If you were building a tower of blocks, and it kept falling over, what would you try to do to make it stand tall?
29. Let's say you and a friend both want to play with the same toy. How can you decide who gets to play with it first, and how can you make sure you both get a turn?
30. Suppose you have a puzzle with a missing piece. How would you try to find the right piece or figure out what the missing piece should look like?
31. If you are asked to draw a house, and it needs a roof. How do you decide the roof's shape and what materials would be best to use to keep the house safe and dry?
32. Think about when you tried to learn something new and found it hard. What did you do to help yourself learn it?
33. If you had to explain to someone how to plant a seed, what steps would you tell them to follow?
34. Imagine you're baking cookies, and you run out of sugar. What could you use instead, or what else could you do to still make yummy cookies?
35. Let's say you accidentally broke something. How would you tell someone about it and what would you do to fix it?
36. If you and your friend disagree on what game to play, how would you come to an agreement?
37. What do you do if you can't find an answer by yourself. Where would you go to find the solution?
38. You are at the playground and you see another kid being mean to your friend. What would you do?
39. If you had a magic wand that only worked to solve one problem, what problem would you choose to solve and why?
40. Describe a situation where you had to be patient to reach your goal. How did you stay patient?
41. Have you ever made a mistake and what did you do to make up for it?
42. Tell me about a time you had to share something important to you. How did it make you feel and why?
43. If you had to teach a robot how to make a sandwich, what simple instructions would you give it?
44. Imagine you have a friend who is feeling sad. How would you try to make them feel better?
45. If you are tasked to tidy up your room. Where do you start?
46. Imagine you planned a picnic, but it started raining. What would you do instead to still have fun?
47. If you were asked to organize all the toys in a toy store, how would you group them to make it easy for people to find what they need?
48. If you found a lost puppy, what steps would you take to help it find its way back home?
49. Think about a time you faced a challenge and it did not work out as expected. How did you feel and what did you learn from the experience?
50. Describe a time you had to analyze incomplete data to make a decision. What were the challenges, and how did you overcome them?
51. Tell me about a situation where you identified a problem that others had overlooked. What steps did you take to bring it to their attention and implement a solution?
52. Give an example of when you had to make a difficult decision with limited resources. What was your thought process?
53. Share an experience where you had to simplify a complex problem into smaller, more manageable parts. How did this approach help you find a solution?
54. Describe a time you anticipated a potential problem and took steps to prevent it. What were the early warning signs, and what actions did you take?
55. Tell me about a situation where you had to negotiate with multiple stakeholders who had conflicting priorities to solve a problem.
56. Give an example of a time when you used data analysis to identify the root cause of a problem. What tools or techniques did you use?
57. Share an experience where you had to adapt your problem-solving approach due to unexpected circumstances.
58. Describe a situation where you had to evaluate multiple solutions to a problem and choose the best one. What criteria did you use?
59. Tell me about a time when you had to persuade others to adopt your solution to a problem. What strategies did you use to gain their buy-in?
60. Give an example of a time you solved a problem by thinking outside the box. What was unconventional about your approach?
61. Share an experience where you had to troubleshoot a technical problem under pressure. What steps did you take to diagnose and resolve the issue?
62. Describe a situation where you had to prioritize multiple problems and determine which ones to address first. What factors did you consider?
63. Tell me about a time when you had to learn a new skill or technology quickly to solve a problem. How did you approach the learning process?
64. Give an example of when you used a process improvement methodology (e.g., Lean, Six Sigma) to solve a problem.
65. Share an experience where you had to balance short-term and long-term considerations when solving a problem. What trade-offs did you make?
66. Describe a situation where you had to resolve a conflict between team members to solve a problem effectively.
67. Tell me about a time when you had to make a decision with ethical implications while solving a problem. How did you handle the situation?
68. Give an example of when you used a risk assessment to identify potential problems and develop mitigation strategies.
69. Share an experience where you had to communicate a complex problem and its solution to a non-technical audience.
70. Describe a situation where you had to deal with ambiguity or uncertainty while solving a problem. How did you proceed?
71. Tell me about a time when you had to work with a cross-functional team to solve a problem.
72. Give an example of when you used a decision matrix or other structured tool to evaluate different options for solving a problem.
73. Share an experience where you had to challenge the status quo to solve a problem more effectively.
74. Describe a situation where you had to implement a solution that was unpopular with some stakeholders. How did you manage the resistance?
75. Tell me about a time when you had to make a quick decision under pressure to prevent a problem from escalating.
76. Give an example of when you used a root cause analysis technique (e.g., 5 Whys, Fishbone Diagram) to identify the underlying cause of a problem.
77. Share an experience where you had to learn from a past mistake and apply that learning to solve a new problem.
78. Describe a situation where you had to manage the expectations of stakeholders while solving a complex problem.
79. Tell me about a time when you had to use your creativity to come up with a novel solution to a problem.
80. Describe a time you anticipated a problem before it arose. What steps did you take to prevent it, and what was the outcome?
81. Tell me about a situation where you had to make a difficult decision with incomplete information. How did you weigh the risks and benefits?
82. Share an example of when you had to adapt your problem-solving approach to suit a new or unfamiliar situation. What did you learn from this experience?
83. Describe a time you had to mediate a conflict between team members to resolve a problem. What strategies did you use to facilitate a positive outcome?
84. Tell me about a time you identified a root cause of a recurring problem that others had missed. What was your methodology?
85. Describe a situation where you had to influence stakeholders with differing opinions to agree on a problem-solving strategy. How did you build consensus?
86. Tell me about a time you had to convince your team to adopt a new problem-solving methodology or tool. What were the challenges and how did you overcome them?
87. Share an example of a time when you had to deal with a crisis situation that required immediate problem-solving. How did you prioritize and manage the situation?
88. Tell me about a time you used data analysis to identify the source of a problem. What insights did you gain from the data?
89. Describe a situation where you had to balance short-term solutions with long-term strategic goals when addressing a problem. How did you approach this trade-off?
90. Tell me about a time you failed to solve a problem effectively. What did you learn from that experience, and what would you do differently next time?
91. Describe a time when you had to solve a problem with limited resources. How did you maximize the resources available to you?
92. Share an example of a time you saw a problem as an opportunity for improvement. How did you leverage the situation to create positive change?
93. Tell me about a time you had to simplify a complex problem to make it easier for others to understand and address. What techniques did you use?
94. Describe a situation where you had to troubleshoot a technical issue under pressure. What steps did you take to diagnose and resolve the problem?
95. Tell me about a time you delegated a problem-solving task to a team member. How did you ensure they were successful?
96. Share an example of a time when your problem-solving skills led to a significant cost saving or revenue increase for the company. How did you measure the impact?
97. Describe a situation where you had to make a decision that went against conventional wisdom to solve a problem. What was your reasoning?
98. Tell me about a time you used creative thinking to come up with a novel solution to a challenging problem. What was your inspiration?
99. Describe a situation where you had to deal with a problem that had ethical implications. How did you navigate the ethical considerations?
100. Tell me about a time you used reverse engineering to understand how a system or process worked to solve a problem. What did you discover?
101. Share an example of a time you had to think outside the box to find a solution to a seemingly impossible problem. What made your approach unique?
102. Tell me about a time you identified a problem that no one else had noticed. What made you aware of the problem, and what actions did you take?
103. Describe a situation where you had to manage the expectations of multiple stakeholders while solving a complex problem. How did you balance their needs?
104. Tell me about a time you had to iterate on a solution multiple times before it was successful. What did you learn from each iteration?
105. Share an example of a time you used a specific problem-solving framework (e.g., Six Sigma, Lean) to address a problem. How did the framework help you?
106. Describe a situation where you had to deal with resistance to change while implementing a solution to a problem. How did you overcome this resistance?
107. Tell me about a time you had to make a quick decision under pressure to prevent a problem from escalating. What factors did you consider?
108. Share an example of a time you mentored a junior colleague in problem-solving skills. What advice did you give them?