# 101+ Commonly Asked Interview Questions

These interview questions are taken from sheets I picked up at an Illinois Library Association conference session. And a few others which I've heard about. They are in no particular order.

1. Why did you decide to enter the field of library and information science? OR What motivated you to seek a library degree?

2. What kind of position are you looking for when you graduate?

3. Why did you decide to apply for this position?

4. What are your strengths and weaknesses?

5. List three of your most important/proudest accomplishments.

6. What kind of work environment do you prefer?

7. What motivates you? ALSO Have you used these motivators with others?

8. How are you qualified for this job? OR What qualifications do you have that make you think you will be a success at this job?

9. What supervisory experience have you had?

10. How would you characterize your supervisory style?

11. What would you do about implementing the provisions of the American with Disabilities Act (or some other new policy) in our library, and how would you prioritize this among your other duties?

12. The person in this position needs to be innovative and proactive. Can you describe some things you have done to demonstrate these qualities?

13. How would you rate your communication skills and what have you done to improve them?

14. What do you feel is the place of bibliographic instruction in the library? Have you ever taught in a classroom setting? Would you be comfortable teaching BI courses?

15. What else besides your school and job experience qualifies you for this job?

16. What is your experience with collection development?

17. What experience do you have dealing with academic scholars?

18. What is your experience with automated systems and with computers in general?

19. What have you read lately, and what are you reading now?

20. While this position involves some specific skills (language, computer, cataloging, etc.), it is more of a generalist position. How do you feel that your background fits into this?

21. What are the personal characteristics and qualities that you would bring to this position that would be particularly helpful in fulfilling the responsibilities of this position?

22. Why did you choose X University for your graduate education in library and information science?

23. Tell us about yourself. ALSO Tell me about yourself -- why did you choose this type of work?

24. Tell us about X University's online catalog.

25. What professional groups are you a member of, and how active have you been in those groups?

26. You have just had a short tour of this library. Did any aspect or anything you saw or heard about this library surprise you? Would you change anything about this library?

27. Why do you think more students are going into public services than technical services?

28. Tell us about your experience with online searching.

29. How do you work in groups, and what experience have you had working in groups?

30. What appeals to you about this position?

31. Why do you want to move to this area?

32. How do you feel about providing general reference services for undergraduates or for high school or junior high school students?

33. What are some aspects of your present position that you like?

34. What are some aspects of your present position that you dislike?

35. What do you see yourself doing five or ten years from now? OR Where do you see yourself going from here?

36. What is your cataloging experience?

37. What do you think a reference librarian's duties should be?

38. Tell us about your subject background and about your coursework outside of library science.

39. How will your other experiences outside of librarianship aid you in this position?

40. What is your opinion of X University's approach to holisitic librarianship? How well is the system functioning?

41. How are governement documents handled at X University?

42. What is your interlibrary loan experience?

43. What experience have you had using the Internet?

44. Do you have the skills necessary to create and maintain our WWW home pages?

45. What do you see as the future of the Internet as a reference tool?

46. How will libraries mesh use of print and electronic resources?

47. What do you see as the budget implications of increasing use of electronic resources in libraries?

48. Can you install software on computers and perform basic maintenance on them?

49. What courses (college/graduate school) did you find most satisfying? Least satisfying? Why?

50. What would you say you learned from your college/graduate school experiences that you see being carried over to your life today?

51. Do you plan to continue your education?

52. What kind of people do you like to work with?

53. What kind of people do you find it most difficult to work with? What do you do to improve the situation?

54. Do you prefer working alone or in groups?

55. Starting with your last job, would you tell me about some of your achievements that were recognized by your superiors?

56. What are some things you would like to avoid in a job? Why?

57. What are some of the things on your jobs that you feel you have done particularly well?

58. What does success mean to you? How do you judge it?

59. What are some of the things about your last job that you found difficult to do?

60. What are some of the problems you encounter in doing your job? Which one frustrates you the most? What do you usually do about it?

61. How has your present job developed you to take on even greater responsibilities?

62. What do you have going for you that might make you successful in such a job?

63. Who or what in your life would you say influenced you most with regard to your career objectives?

64. What would you say there is about you that has accounted for your fine progress to date?

65. What traits or qualities do you feel could be strengthened or improved?

66. What motivates you to put forth your best effort?

67. What kinds of things do you feel most confident in doing? Somewhat less confident in doing?

68. What are some of the thing you are either doing now or have thought about doing that are self-development activities?

69. Tell me about a time when you had work problems or stresses that were difficult for you.

70. Customers frequently create a great deal of pressure. What has been your experience in this area?

71. What types of pressures do you experience on your current job? How do you cope with these pressures?

72. Describe a time when you were under pressure to make a decision. Did you react immediately or take time in deciding what to do?

73. What types of things make you angry? How do you react?

74. How do you react when you see co-workers disagreeing? Do you become involved or hold back?

75. Do you prefer to have a job in which you have well laidout tasks and responsibilities, or one in which your work changes on a frequent basis?

76. In your current position what types of decisions do you make without consulting your immediate supervisor?

77. What types of experiences have you had in dealing with difficult customers?

78. Describe a problem person you have had to deal with. What did you say or do?

79. What have been your experiences in dealing with the general public? When have people really tried your patience?

80. What important goals have you set in the past, and how successful have you been in working toward their accomplishment?

81. Do you do personal planning? If so, what are your goals?

82. What things give you the greatest satisfaction?

83. How would you describe yourself?

84. In what ways do you think you can make a contribution to our department?

85. What two or three accomplishments have given you the most satisfaction? Why?

86. Describe your most rewarding experience.

87. In what kind of work environment are you most comfortable?

88. What do you know about our library? university? community? company?

89. You mentioned you enjoyed your last job. What did you enjoy most? Least?

90. Why do you think this library should hire you?

91. What will your last supervisor tell me are your two weakest areas?

92. If you were hiring someone for this job, what qualities would you look for?

93. How do you feel about your ability to write, spell, and communicate? What kind of feedback have you received about your writing ability?

94. Describe your experience in creating documents, proposals, research findings, or any other form of written copy.

95. What does the term two-way communication mean to you? When have you successfully used two-way communication?

96. Some people get to know strangers quickly, while others prefer to take their time letting people get to know them. Describe how you entered relationships when you were "new" on a job.

97. Some people have the ability to "step into another's shoes." When has this skill been required of you?

98. How did you organize your work in your last position? What happened to your plan when emergencies came up?

99. Describe how you determined your priorities on your last job.

100. Describe how you schedule your time on an unusually hectic day. Give a specific example.

101. Are you a person who likes to "try new things," or "stay with regular routines"? Give an example.

102. What is your philosophy of reference?

103. What are your 3 (or 5) favorite reference books? OR If you were on a desert idland, which 3 (or 5) reference books would you want to have?

---

Last updated: *October 11, 1999*