

How To Interview a Domestic Helper

1. **Icebreaker.** Start the interview by helping the other person relax. Tell them three things about yourself (say, your work, family, a typical day at home) and have them to tell you about how and why they became a domestic helper.
2. **What questions they ask can be more revealing than the answers they give to your questions.** So ask them if they have any questions before you start asking them any. A question such as "What would you like to know about this job you are interviewing for?" or "What would you like to know about me, this household or the job so you can perform your best?" should help you understand the candidate's strengths and weaknesses. Often this is the only question you really need to ask to help you structure the rest of the interview. A good candidate will have many probing questions showing alertness and experience. You want to avoid a candidate who will focus almost immediately on pay which shows immaturity and/or desperation. Should your interview still result in a dead end after your main leading question consider the following types of questions broken down according to attributes you would like your helper to possess. You may eliminate/add to according to your needs.

Note: With some of these questions, while they may appear simple to the employer, there may be a need to re-phrase them more simply during an interview depending on the language ability of the candidate. The idea is to convey the meaning to get the best understanding of the person you are meeting, not to stump them. Always bear in mind to keep your candidate at ease.

3. **Give a general rating. Rate the applicant from 1 to 10 (10 the highest) immediately after an interview.** If you are processing several applicants you will tend to forget your impressions over time. Prepare an interview sheet for each applicant so you can jot down their answers in summary. This will help you recall your conversation when you are ready to make a decision. Be prepared to interview your shortlisted candidates even twice.
4. **Check References.** Once you've decided on your shortlist. Check their references by calling their previous employers if they are available. If not, ensure that their papers are in order and have clean references from their previous employers.

Other Sample Questions (in order of descending importance to the position):

Experience

1. Tell me about yourself (ie. your experience).
2. How are you qualified for this job?

Discipline

1. Tell me about your most recent experience in disciplining an infant/toddler/child.
2. What do you find difficult in disciplining infants/toddlers/children?

Pressure

1. What experience have you had in pressure situations? Please share with me one of these pressure situations (e.g. a dinner party preparation, emergency situation, morning routines with children etc).
2. What does it take to get you angry or really irritable?

Working Hours

How flexible are you on working hours? On changing rest days?

Financial

Do you have any financial concerns in your life? Do you carry any debts?

A person with financial problems will usually carry some work baggage and may be prone to a lack of focus at work or may lead to even bigger problems at work that may involve stealing, cheating and lying.

Responsibility

1. Briefly describe the most significant responsibility you have had in your work and what it taught you?
2. How do you handle responsibility?

Teamwork

1. Tell me about an ineffective household (eg. chaotic, disorganized or full of conflict) which you experienced, if any. How did you contribute to make things better?
2. Tell me about an effective household which you experienced. What was the most outstanding characteristic of the household? What/How did you contribute?
3. What are the important qualities a person should have to become an effective helper for the household team?
4. How do you deal with conflict?
5. In what kind of situations do you find it most difficult to deal with employers?
6. What is your idea of a perfect employer?

Service

1. If I ask your previous employer, how would they describe your service to them?
2. How do you handle an angry boss?
3. How do you handle your own mistakes on the job?
4. Name 3 essential attributes (characteristics) to serving a household well?

Problem Solving

1. Tell me a situation of when you did not know something and what you did to solve it?

Judgment

1. Tell me about your morals and integrity (eg. honesty, patience).
2. Describe for me your ethics (eg. hardworking, discipline).
3. Relate to me a confrontation that you've had with any of your previous employers. Who was wrong and why?

Tell me about a time when you tried and failed?

Has this ever happened to you? No one expects perfection actually, we are more interested in their ability to cope, to learn from mistakes, and to deal with others who are less than perfect. (eg. financial problems, learning a language, etc)

Education

1. How does your experience/education qualify you for this job?

Independent/Self-Starter

1. Provide me with an example of your ability to work independently. (e.g planning a dinner party, planning a menu, an emergency situation, work for church/other volunteer organizations)

Confidence

1. How confident are you that you can successfully perform the duties of this position and why?
2. Tell me about a situation that would show your level of confidence in yourself.

Creativity

1. Do you feel you are creative? Give me one example of your creativity. (e.g teaching children their homework, fixing broken things, flower arrangements, creating storage solutions from things around the house)
2. Describe a situation where you came up with a creative solution to a problem.

Outside Involvement

Do you belong to any organizations? (eg. church/school/volunteer). And what roles, if any, do you play?

Future

1. Where do you want to be 5 to 10 years from now in your life?
2. What are your long term goals?

