CANDIDATE GUIDE

48 ways to respond in a pilot interview

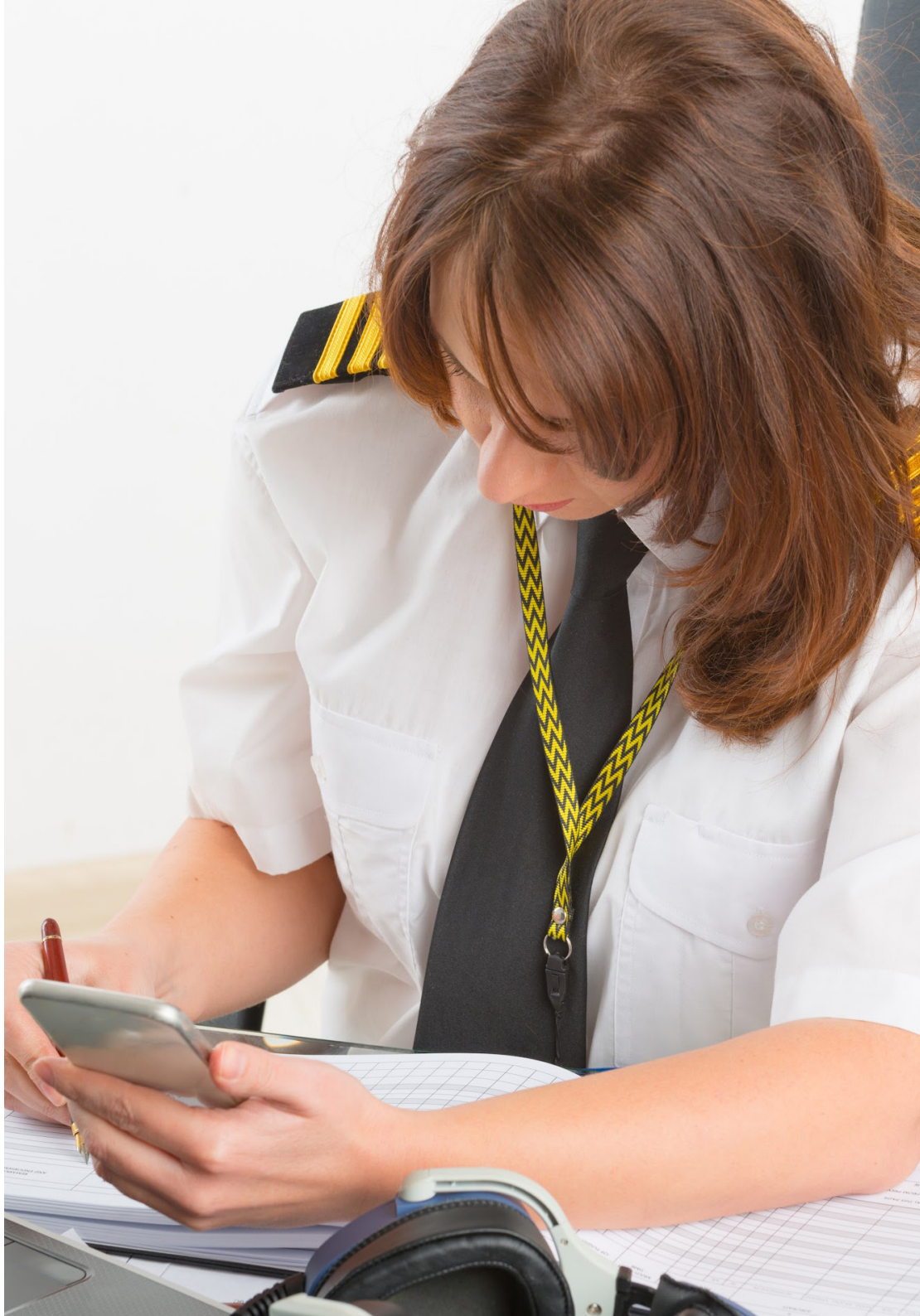


Aviation Job Search

Answering the 48 most important pilot interview quetions

We've compiled a comprehensive list of interview questions for pilots, which jobseekers say they have been asked most frequently by top airlines. Use the below questions (a mixture of common, competency and technical) to practice for your interview ahead of the selection day. For some, we have also provided answers we believe will best match the question.

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1. What do you think defines a professional pilot?

The interviewer wants you to describe the perfect pilot, with the ideal attributes. This is where you can play on each attribute by giving an example of a time where you displayed these skills. Key things to mention for this question include:

- Punctuality
- Excellent communication skills
- Strong leadership
- Willingness to train and develop
- Commitment to company procedures

2. Why is it important for pilots to be proficient in more than one language?

Pilots who fly publicly on a regular basis must be fluent in languages other than English. This is an added benefit for airlines to acquire multilingual individuals. It's particularly beneficial when handling situations with a large crew.

3. What makes you qualified for this position?

This is an opportunity to highlight your skills and knowledge. Start by discussing your most significant qualifications. Think about:

- Why you're different to other candidates
- Something that didn't belong on your resume
- A personal experience
- Something you can show off about

Avoid:

- Exaggerating
- Repeating comments already made on your resume. Highlight your most important qualifications but bring things they didn't see on your resume to the table.
- Typical answers - stand out from the crowd
- Bragging

4. What qualities do you think make a good pilot?

Here, the interviewer is looking for you to reflect on the ideal candidate for the job. So you should make sure you can portray that the right person takes their job seriously and is a good risk evaluator, not a risk taker. You can also give examples of why you think you fit this particular bill to strengthen your points and your potential contribution to the role.

5. Where do you see yourself in five years?

Here the interviewer expects you to have an idea of your future - they will be looking for ambitious individuals striving for success. They will likely be searching for indicators that you are using this role as a stop gap too - some employers expect that pilots use them as a career step and don't intend to stick around for too long.

6. What would be a pilot's role during an emergency?

A good way to begin answering this question is by expressing your feelings first. You should try to cite examples of how you would keep your mental calmness intact throughout a problematic situation, and how with your expertise easily self-control the emergency and begin assigning tasks for crew members if necessary. Your goal should be to reassure the interviewer that you are a person who can work calmly under tremendous pressure.

7. What does success look like to you in this job?

Success in any job should be measured in milestones or goals. Share your 5 year plan, or 10 year plan with your interviewer, and tell them which achievements you would count as successes. E.g. awards, rewards, work anniversaries etc. You could also mention that working for the airline you're interviewing for would be a dream achievement for you.

8. Tell me about the toughest crew you had to deal with?

This question challenges how you dealt with behavioural and performance issues within a large team and how you managed them to avoid any detrimental situations within the operation of the aircraft. Try to give an example, if you have previous experience. If not, you could offer up an example of a predicament you could end up in.

9. Why are you a pilot?

Think about the lifestyle and day-to-day job of a professional pilot that you find attractive. Don't forget to communicate your passion for flying.

10. Pilots are required to take many simultaneous responsibilities during a flight. What's your view on this?

Pilots have a busy workload, and are expected to be able to perform a multitude of duties at once. Multitasking is a big part of this. Pilots have a key responsibility to navigate the flight, monitor and guide their team of crew members, check & maintain the required technical instruments, while also keeping track of the weather conditions, and controlling height and air traffic. So when you answer this question, keep this all in mind when discussing how you would manage your workload.

11. What is a pilot's role during an emergency?

Maintain composure and awareness of the situation so that the pilot can operate within their expertise and knowledge to address the situation and assign tasks to other crew members as needed.

12. For what reason did you leave your last job?

There are many reasons people leave jobs, but never talk negatively about a prior or current employer during an interview. Some common reasons for leaving positions are needing to relocate, personal responsibilities, that you were looking for better opportunities or for options to grow professionally.

13. Have you ever had to deviate from a flight plan or employer instructions?

Pilots will have to divert from plans during the course of their career. The interviewer will be interested to see your thought process behind doing so and that you addressed the deviation according to policy or procedure and in a well organized manner.

14. Why should we hire you?

Show the interviewer that you not only meet their current needs but will also be valuable for the company's future plans or dreams. Do you have experience in something they are planning to get in to and can you provide insight and help on this?

15. How do you define success?

Research the company paying particular attention to their mission statement and values to learn how the company sees success. Blend this with your personality and who you are and emphasize any areas where the company values overlap your own. Practice giving a balanced answer, illustrating how you would seek to improve your own performance while contributing to the companies mission.

16. What is your greatest accomplishment?

This is similar to the 'what is your greatest strength' question and can be addressed in a similar manner. Pick a personal accomplishment that shows you have qualities the company values and that are desirable for the position you are interviewing for. A few tips:

- Show passion when talking about your accomplishment
- Don't believe that your accomplishment is too small. Relating a small accomplishment that lines up with company values may have more impact that bringing up a large accomplishment



17. Name a time when you went out of your way for a customer

Pilots are often on the front line of customer service in aviation and employers want to ensure that passenger service is a priority. The interviewer is looking for a specific example that showcases your ability to deliver excellent customer service..

18. What can we expect from you in your first 90 days?

Indicate that you will take an assertive approach to learning your role and the associated duties without burdening your supervisor. Emphasise your ability to learn quickly and show that you are goal oriented, organised and willing to take on a challenge.

19. What makes a good pilot?

Employers frequently tell us they are searching for pilots with the following qualities:

- Ability to work under pressure
- Knowledge of responsibility
- Self motivation
- Teamwork
- Customer service

20. What lessons have you learned from mistakes in a previous job?

We highly recommend you don't lie. Be straight-forward with this question. It's very common to make mistakes as you learn, particularly in such a demanding role. Find examples where you have learned a positive lesson and have constructively integrated it into your work, or flying.

21. What have you done recently to improve as a pilot?

Interviewers want goal oriented candidates. Bring up activities or education you have done related to self improvement. Show that you are committed to life-long learning, are good at time management, and are highly motivated.

22. What was the most difficult decision you've made?

Showcase how strong your decision making and critical thinking skills are here. Pick a challenge that shows you were successful in addressing a tough problem. Try to choose a challenge that highlights a strength to the role. Discuss your approach in how you would weigh up the options and what choice you made.

23. How do you stay organised?

We all have our own ways of task management - what's important is that it works. Think about how you accomplish your tasks. Your system doesn't need to be complicated - simpler is often better. Describe how you prioritise and then keep track of your to-dos. Interviewers like thoughtful approaches, but they also want to see that your system is flexible and that you are capable of addressing the unexpected.

24. Do you have any flight violations, warnings, citations, accidents, or incidents?

Again, this is a question you should answer honestly. The employer will find out anyway. Mention what happened, the lessons you learned, and what you did to improve.

25. What are your favourite things about your current job?

The interviewer is trying to gauge what you like to see if it's likely that you will enjoy this new position. Work on finding aspects of your current job you enjoy that match up with the position you are applying to.

26. What are your least favourite things about your current job?

Whatever the circumstances, avoid speaking negatively about current or previous jobs, or co-workers during an interview. When answering this question, discuss circumstances or tasks rather than people. An example may be paperwork, and that you would have rather had that time available for interfacing with passengers. Consider mentioning solutions you adopted for dealing with issues you had.

27. What would your leadership style be as a captain?

Think back to a time where you took the lead. How did you do? Note: You don't have to have been a captain, just give an example of your leadership skills in any way possible. Interviewers will often not be seeking specific answers, but rather that you have thought out and follow a system when it comes to leading. Mention a specific example or two of you using your system.

28. Describe a dispute that you had with a colleague?

The interviewer wants to understand your ability to conflict manage, as well as finding out more about your interpersonal skills. We'd recommend not using personal conflict as an example.

Instead, use an example where you had a professional disagreement. Talk about how you communicated your position and opinion, how you listed to your coworker's position, how you resolved the issue, and if appropriate how it impacted your relationship with your coworker. Avoid showing bitterness or resentment.

29. How would your former supervisors describe you?

Be honest! And remember that airlines will contact previous employers. If you're having trouble coming up with positive statements, turn a negative into a positive. For example, if your boss would say you often had late flights, have a more positive outlook in the sense you were more detail oriented in pre-flighting the airplane and flight.

30. Pilots are required to shoulder many responsibilities during the course of a flight. Describe what these are.

The duties of a pilot in command or second in command are key in answering this question. The pilot is responsible for the safety of the airplane and will maintain awareness of navigation, weather, airplane systems, the airplanes status within the air traffic control system, and will guide the other crew members on the flight.

Most pilot jobs will also be customer focused. Interviewers will want to see that you will also be able to recognise and act on the needs of those customers and to represent the employer well.

31. Have you ever failed a check-ride or required additional training?

As with all interview questions, be honest! The employer will see your checkride history. When mentioning failures, bring up what you learned and how you sought to improve going forward.

32. What was the hardest decision you've had to make in your career?

We would recommend using a professional decision as your example. The interviewer will
want to know both what you consider your most difficult decision, and better understand
your approach.

33. Would you help load the airplane if the ground crew is running behind or was short handed?

An employer will want to hear that of course you will be a strong team player should the situation occur. Do what is needed to make the operation run efficiently. But also consider mentioning that you would need to know company procedure before doing so.



34. What are you looking for in an employer?

Focus your answer towards what makes you a good employee, rather than what you want to get from a company. Have a picture of a work environment that you would excel in to help them understand how they can help you thrive.

35. How would your current boss describe you?

Three ideas to consider here, while preparing for this question:

- Quote a performance review
- Start with a story and share takeaways
- Name a few positive traits with examples of each

36. What do you do in your free time?

The interviewer wants to determine if you are a good cultural fit for the company. Will you contribute to improving the company's workplace and culture? You should take a look at their company events and activities ahead of the interview if you want a better idea. You might be able to match those with your hobbies to emphasise how comfortable you'd be.

37. Tell us about a difficult boss you had

Be careful not to place blame with this question. Do not trash talk, or throw your boss under the bus. End examples on a positive note and mention any lessons you learned.

38. What is your past flying experience and history?

Use this question to convey your passion and commitment to flying. Show how you've been mindful in terms of planning your career.

39. What other employers have you applied to? Which have you interviewed with?

The airline industry is highly competitive, so interviewers will be testing you to figure out how serious you are about working as a pilot with them. If you're applying to other pilot employers, mention that you are actively exploring your options, but that you are excited about this position. If you don't have other interviews scheduled,

mention that you're early in your job search. Regardless of where you are in applying to other companies, you want to convey to the interviewers that you are especially interested in their position.

40. Would you fly fatigued?

This answer is very straightforward - never fly fatigued. Discuss the responsibility of being a professional pilot to manage sleep in order to be well rested for duty. You can also mention the event of unforeseen circumstances, making it twice as important to be switched on at work. Use this as an opportunity to ask about their company's fatigue policy too.

41. What defines a professional?

Describe the ideal professional. For example: "A pilot who will be diligent in initial and recurrent training and in adhering to company standards. A person that is punctual, has effective communication skills, takes initiative during critical situations. A person who prioritises knowledge and knows their own limitations."

42. What does your resume not tell us about you?

Communicate your qualities and attributes that would enable you to be a successful employee, and a great addition to the team. A few examples that aren't on your resume might include:

- A strength
- An intangible strength
- Why you want the job
- Sharing something personal

43. What would you do if a crew member had been drinking?

The priority is that the suspected crew member not go flying. Consider your options here. The best approach is to confront the crew member privately. Communicate your suspicion and that you recommend they pull themselves off duty voluntarily. If they will not voluntarily leave duty then it is expected that you report them to the supervisor, in line with company policy. It's important not to cause a scene publicly - particularly in front of passengers.

44. What is the definition of crew resource management (CRM)?

Crew resource management is a system and mode of interaction where you use all resources to increase safety and improve the efficiency of operations. These resources may include procedures, equipment, teamwork and interpersonal communication, and are not limited to the flight deck.

45. What have you done to improve your knowledge of pilots and the industry?

Recruiters want to hire knowledgeable individuals who wish to continue their learning and development. As a pilot, you should already be engaging in the industry, through discussions, seminars etc. with other, more experienced pilots. It will bode really well for you if you mention that you partake in extra learning away from your job e.g. extra qualifications, seminars and workshops.

46. What makes a good First Officer?

A first officer is a professional pilot first and foremost. Aside from a safe and skilled individual, there are other skills that are important. The first officer is a responsible, respectful person, and a big team player. First officers must be willing and able to be assertive, with the bravery to challenge captains to maintain the safety and legal operation of the airplane.

47. What is the importance of checklists and SOP?

Standard operating procedures (SOP) and checklists ensure tasks or operations are completed correctly. SOPs ensure the airplane is flown according to manufacturer guidelines and appropriate regulations. And SOPs backed by proper checklist use allow 2 pilots that haven't met before to fly together on an aircraft and fully understand what the other pilot is doing, and is expected to be doing.

48. Do you have any questions?

This is an opportunity to focus on learning about the company or the challenges of the job. Have a few questions prepared and have at least one of those focused around something you discovered while researching the company.

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