

# The 3 Questions Recruiters Expect You to Answer During a Phone Interview

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Even though the [phone interview](#) should be the least nerve-wracking part of the interview process, I *do* know quite a few folks who find it to be one of the toughest parts. And even though I've conducted my share of them as both a candidate and a recruiter, I still count myself as one of those people. In fact, I got so nervous before my phone screen for this job at The Muse that I was sweating bullets a few minutes before it was scheduled to begin.

But the truth is that when I was a recruiter, I only had three questions I needed answered during this part of the process. Spoiler alert: I didn't expect anyone to have a solution that would solve our company's problems ready to go.

## 1. Did This Person Do at Least a Little Homework?

It's probably no surprise to you that at this point, [researching the company](#) before the interview is one of the first things you should do. And sure, later on in the process, you should have a firm understanding on the company's history and what they're trying to accomplish. But when it comes to the initial conversation, the company's just trying to ensure that the candidate had at least *started* doing their homework.

There's a huge difference between talking to someone who's taken a day or two to prepare themselves versus talking to someone who's trying to wing it over the phone. And recruiters can hear the difference.

One of the most extreme examples? One applicant tried to read the "About Us" section on our website back to me. So while you don't need to know the founder's entire backstory, make sure you can tell the recruiter about the company's mission statement, a recent product announcement, or how the company's work has affected or inspired you.

## 2. Is This Person Willing to Discuss Salary?

Ah, the tricky question about money. I know how hard it is to [discuss salary](#) because you don't want to lowball yourself, but you also don't want to take yourself out of the running by asking for too much. It's a hard question, but the truth is that most recruiters know that.

While I can't speak for every recruiter on the planet, my motivation for asking this question was to make sure I wasn't wasting a candidate's time. If someone

asked for a dollar amount I knew we couldn't touch, I'd tell that person. And in many cases, it broke my heart to do it because I wanted to advance those candidates to the next round.

But what really turned me off was when people tried to dance around the question. Why? The worst thing that I felt I could do was put a great contender through a long interview process, only to find out at the end that we couldn't pay them what they needed to make.

Trust me: While you might be disappointed to learn your dream job can't pay you what you deserve, it's much better to find out early in the process—so meet the recruiter in the middle and be open about what you're hoping to earn.



### 3. Does the Candidate Show a Sincere Interest in Our Company?

Again with the common interview advice, right? Well, not exactly. Most people know that recruiters want to hear about why you're interested in the job. But what many people in my network tend to ignore is the fact that most recruiters have heard just about everything—and a canned answer about how you know the

organization is going to change the world isn't going to move the needle in your favor.

A lot of the candidates I spoke to overthought their answer to this question. And often times, I'd wait patiently for them to wax poetic about how they couldn't imagine a more perfect job for them at this point in their careers.

Instead of making this answer *about you*, make it about your genuine interest in the job. If you have specific reasons for being excited about the role, share them! You'll stand out for your honest, candid answers.

No matter how you slice it, phone interviews are a tough part of the interview process. And while getting comfortable with them requires some practice, it's also important to understand the that you're probably overthinking it.

Knowing that recruiters aren't expecting world-changing answers should help you relax, be yourself, and answer the questions as well as possible. Just being confident in yourself and in your reasons why you'd like this job is more than enough at this stage.

Source: <https://www.themuse.com/advice/the-3-questions-recruiters-expect-you-to-answer-during-a-phone-interview>