



SWITCH
MENTALITY



Great Questions to Ask at Coffee Chats



Have 5-10 questions prepared for your coffee chat, but also allow for the natural flow of conversation!



The point of the coffee chat is to get information but also to build a connection with the industry insider.



Select questions based on what your goals are and what you want to get out of the coffee chat.

ICEBREAKER QUESTIONS

Ask easy questions at the start to develop trust and rapport.

How is your day going?

Why did this type of work interest you, and how did you get started in this profession?

How did you join the organization?

How did your career path lead you to what you're doing now?

What are you working on right now?

INSIGHT QUESTIONS

Ask questions to gain insight into an industry, company, or role.

What do you find most enjoyable about working in your job/industry/company?
What do you find most challenging?

What essential skills, qualifications and experiences have enabled you to be successful in your line of work/ at this company?
What are the skills that are most important for a position in this industry/role/company?

What is a typical day or week like in your role? What are the duties/responsibilities of your job?
Does your workload and duties vary throughout the year or are they constant?

What did you wish you knew about this role/industry/company when you started?
What surprises you?

How has your job affected your lifestyle?

These are my strongest assets (skills, areas of knowledge, personality traits and values):
_____. Where would they fit in this industry/company?

ETI QUESTIONS

Ask questions to assess your fit with the company culture.

Why did you decide to work for this company? What do you like most about this company?

How does your company differ from its competitors? Why do customers choose this company?

What does the company do to contribute to its employees' professional development?
Work/life balance?

How would you describe the working atmosphere and the people with whom you work?

Is there a basic philosophy of the company and, if so, what is it?

What can you tell me about the corporate culture?

Is there flexibility related to dress, work hours, vacation schedule, place of residence, etc.?

ADVICE QUESTIONS

Ask for general career advice.

What career advice would you give to yourself when you were my age?

What's a career decision that you would make differently?

What's the best piece of career advice you've ever received?

If you were to start in this career again today, what would you do to prepare?

'GETTING STARTED' QUESTIONS

Ask how you can get started in the industry or company.

How do most people get started in this industry/role?

How did you get your job? What jobs and experiences have led you to your present position?

Can you suggest some ways a student could obtain this necessary experience?

What strategies would you recommend I use to break in to this company/industry?

What is the best way to enter this occupation?

What are the major qualifications for success in this occupation?

How important are grades/GPA for obtaining a job in this field?

What abilities or personal qualities contribute most to success in this industry/job?

What are the typical entry-level job titles and functions?
What entry-level jobs are best for learning as much as possible?

NEXT STEPS QUESTIONS

Ask for additional resources you can pursue after the coffee chat.

Who else should I be speaking with?
Do you know of other people whom I might talk to who have similar jobs?

With the information you have about my education, skills, and experience,
what other fields or jobs would you suggest I research further?

Are there any written materials you suggest I read?
Which trade/professional journals and organizations would help me learn more about this field?

Which professional organizations do you belong to? Which publications do you subscribe to?

TRENDS QUESTIONS

Ask questions to learn about current trends in the industry.

**Do some research before your coffee chat to learn about current trends
but DON'T try to 'stump' the other person!*

What is impacting business? How has business changed recently? In the past 5 years?

What trends do you feel will impact the field in the next 5 years?

How much demand is there for people in this occupation? How rapidly is the field growing?
Can you estimate future job openings?

From your perspective, what are the problems people face working in this field?