

THE ULTIMATE LIST OF COLLEGE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (COURTESY OF CARNEGIE MELLON, YALE, PENN AND DARTMOUTH)

CARNEGIE MELLON'S SUGGESTED ALUMNI INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Senior Year/Academics: This is a good introduction and a way for the student to communicate comfortably about their lives. This is as good way to gauge the student's strengths and weaknesses, likes and dislikes in the classroom.

- What classes are you scheduled to have your senior year?
- What class are you looking forward to most/least and why?
- What have you enjoyed most about your high school?

Extra-Curricular: Carnegie Mellon values how students spend their "free" time and what contributions they make in organizations, their school and community. We are looking for passionate students who show signs of leadership, cooperation and community service.

- What activities are you involved in outside of the classroom?
- Are you involved in these activities equally, or is there one or two that you are most passionate about, and why?

The College Experience: These questions aim to get a sense of fit, while providing the interviewee the opportunity to provide insight into who they are as an individual and what they are interested in. Is the student genuinely interested in Carnegie Mellon, do they know who we are and are we a good fit for what they want out of post-secondary environment?

- What are you looking forward to most about the transition from secondary school to a university?
- What characteristics or qualities are you looking for in a college/university?
- How do you see yourself getting involved in the campus community?

YALE'S SUGGESTED ALUMNI INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Ideally, your interview will glean insights about the following qualities of the applicant: intellectual curiosity, openness to ideas, and concern for others

General

- Reflect either on something that doesn't come as naturally (i.e. English class for the STEM kid) or a particularly difficult experience in the thing you love (i.e. a tough acting role, mastering a new piece, an obstacle in research).
- Tell me about influential person in your lives (teacher, coach, etc.).
- What has made you stick with an interest for years?
- What do you do for fun?
- What do you hope to gain from your undergraduate experience?

The Theater Buff

- What are some of your favorite roles? What is it like for you when you are performing on stage?

- Is there a character you'd really like to play? Is there a show you'd really like to direct?
- What can theater offer that other performance forms don't? What are its possibilities?

The Voracious Reader

- What books do you recommend?
- Can you remember a really great discussion from your English class?

The Writer

- What do you like to write? Fiction, Non-fiction, Poetry?
- Do you have favorite subjects you like to write about? Why?
- Where do you gather your subject matter? What inspires your writing?
- Have you had a chance to share your writing with an audience?

The Politician (MUN, Debate, Campaigns)

- What is it about debating/politics that you enjoy?
- Is there a cause that you feel particularly strong about?
- (MUN) Is it difficult to represent countries or resolutions you don't personally agree with?
- (MUN) What role does the UN play?

The Volunteer

- What kind of community service do you do?
- What is a memorable experience from a community service project?
- How has participating in community service changed your perception of the role of the individual in the community?
- Why do you help others?

Visual Artist

- What is art to you?
- Why does art matter?
- Do you create art for yourself or for an audience? What aspects of your life have influenced your art?
- Is there a particular style that inspires you?

The World Traveler

- Tell me about some interesting places you have visited. Can you talk about cultural differences you observed?
- Has traveling influenced the way you react to your own community/home?

The Mover

- How have your transitions affected you?
- What was it like adjusting to a new community/school?

The Musician

- What kind of role does music play in your life?
- Which composers do you admire? What do you like to play? Sing? Why this instrument?
- Talk about some favorite concerts/performances.
- How do you imagine yourself getting involved with music at Yale?

The Scientist/Mathematician

- Tell me about competitions you've entered. Tell me about your research.
- What type of lab work are you involved in?

- Is there something in current events or the forefront of technology that has caught your attention?
- What aspects of chemistry/biology/physics/etc. are particularly interesting to you?

The Athlete

- What is your role on the team? Any good stories/memories?
- What do you like about individual/team sports?
- Do you like your teammates?

UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA'S SUGGESTED ALUMNI INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

General introduction: What is this student like? Personal Qualities: evident initiative, communication skills, comfort with ideas.

- Can you tell me a little bit about yourself?
- How would your friends describe you?
- What experiences have you had with people who are different from you?
- What would you like the Admissions office to know that might not appear in your application?

Academic and Personal interests: What does this student like?

- What do you most like learning about?
- How do you learn best?
- What is your favorite part of your school experience?
- What topics or assignments have you found particularly intriguing?
- Is there anything that you would change about your high school experience?
- How do you spend your time when you're not in school?
- What's the biggest challenge you've overcome?

Penn's resources: what they know, what they've heard, what they'll love. What would this student be like at Penn?

- Why Penn? How did you first hear about Penn?
- What draws you to the undergraduate school/program to which you've applied?
- What on-campus opportunities are you most excited about?

Share your Penn experience

- What questions do you have?
- What question(s) didn't I ask that you'd like me to answer?

Here are some additional interview questions that we believe can facilitate a great conversation between yourself and the applicant:

- What is interesting to you about the University of Pennsylvania? What led you to apply?
- What is your favorite subject, and why?
- Who is your favorite teacher, and why?
- What is your favorite book? Who is your favorite fictional character from a book? Why?
- What is your favorite activity outside the classroom? It could be an extracurricular, a job, or any other ways you spend your non-school time.
- What is your favorite memory?
- What is your most vivid memory or experience that you have learned from?

- If you had no internet and no phone for an afternoon, what would you do?
- If you had 4 hours to do anything you wanted and did not have to account for it, what would you do, and why?
- What is your favorite place to go to? What has been your favorite place—city, area, landmark, building, or another place of your choice—to visit? Why?
- If you could go to dinner with any historical figure, who would that be, and why?
- How do you respond to challenges? Is there a time that you didn't get what you wanted, but learned a good lesson or came back stronger?
- What's something recently that you tried for the first time, and why? What did you learn?

DARTMOUTH'S SUGGESTED ALUMNI INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

General

- Tell me about your school: courses, teachers, favorite subject, worst subject?
- What are the strengths and weakness of your school?
- What is your overall evaluation of your high school experience?
- If you could change your high school experience, what changes would you make?
- What are your future plans: college, major, career?
- Compare your senior year to the rest of high school. What do you expect of your senior year?
- What is a highlight of your high school experience? Is there something that will stand out; something that you will always remember?
- In high school, what would you like to turn into an independent study? If you could take any subject and expand it, what would that subject be?
- What makes a good teacher?
- What would be your teachers' recollection of you if one of two of them sat down to discuss you a year from now?
- What is your favorite book? Is there a literary character with whom you identify?
- Is there a project, paper, lab, etc. that you were especially proud of when you completed it?
- If you could get a national grant to research something, what would you want to study/research?

Extracurricular

- What school activities are you involved in: which are the most important; to which you have contributed most?
- What are your outside activities: community, hobbies?
- What has being a member of a team taught you?
- (If a student government leader): What was your campaign platform?
- Has there been a hot topic at your school as of late?
- What kinds of activities would you like to pursue in college?

Personal

- What would you do with a free day? Academic or otherwise?
- What did you do this past summer?
- Anything you have done or experienced of which you are most proud or about which we should be aware?
- To date, what have been some of your more important responsibilities?

- What would you do if you did not attend college next year?
- What do you do when you're having trouble solving a problem?
- What qualities would you look for in friends?
- How do you think you can make an impact at college?
- What would you like your college experience to be like?
- How would you want to be remembered?
- How have you left your mark on your community?
- If you could meet anyone, dead or alive, who would it be?
- Do you have a personal hero? This can be anyone, not necessarily someone famous.
- What have been the biggest failures or frustrations in your life?
- What are your best friend's strengths and weaknesses? What would they say are yours?
- If you were to make a list of things that you would like to say that you have done (attempted or completed) before graduating from college, what would be on it?
- Tell me about a person or an event that has markedly changed you.
- What would you change about yourself?
- If we were privy to your peer evaluation right now, what would it say?
- If your application went before the admissions committee, what would you want to tell them to strengthen your case? What makes you unique?
- What is something that you can't stop talking about?
- Have you ever tried something and failed, but were glad you did it? Would you do it again? What did you learn from your experience?
- What are some of the major issues affecting your peer group and what are some possible solutions?
- What have you been waiting for me to ask?