Apprentice Interview Questions

These behavior-based interview questions are designed to help identify candidates with the mindset, reliability, and coachability needed to succeed in an automotive service technician apprenticeship, especially for younger candidates who may have limited work experience.

The questions focus on real situations from jobs, school, sports, or everyday life, not technical knowledge. There are no perfect answers. Interviewers should listen for honesty, effort, willingness to learn, and how candidates respond to feedback, structure, and safety expectations.

**A Note About Behavior-Based Questions:** Evidence suggests that past behavior is the best predictor of future behavior, so these questions prompt the candidate to describe how they actually dealt with specific past instances rather than how they might handle hypothetical situations. However, behavior-based interview questions can be challenging to answer. Encourage the candidate to focus on a real, individual example, and allow them time to think about it. Silence is okay. Ask follow-up questions to dig deeper (“What happened next?”   
“What did you learn?”)

1. **Reliability & Showing Up** (Attendance habits, responsibility, follow-through

**Question:** Tell me about something you had to show up for regularly, like work, school, sports, or an activity. How did you make sure you were there when you were supposed   
to be?

**Strong Example Answer:** I worked after school at a grocery store. My shift started right after school, so I had to plan ahead and go straight there. If I thought I might be late,   
I called ahead. I only missed one shift, and I made it up.

**Answer to Probe Further:** I usually made it unless something came up.

1. **Handling Feedback from Adults** (Coachability, emotional maturity)

**Question:** Tell me about a time a supervisor, teacher, or coach corrected something   
you did. What was that like for you?

**Strong Example Answer:** My shop teacher told me I rushed a project and skipped a   
step. I was annoyed at first, but when I fixed it, it came out better. After that, I tried to   
slow down.

**Answer to Probe Further:** They were kind of nitpicking, but I just did it anyway.

1. **Learning Something Hard** (Persistence, frustration tolerance)

**Question:** What’s something that was hard for you to learn at first? How did you   
get better at it?

**Strong Example Answer:** I struggled in algebra. I stayed after school for help   
and watched videos at home. It didn’t click right away, but I eventually passed and  
felt proud of that.

**Answer to Probe Further:** If I don’t get something, I usually just move on.

1. **Safety & Rules** (Respect for rules, judgment)

**Question:** Tell me about a time you had to follow rules that slowed you down. For example, at work, school, or sports.

**Strong Example Answer:** In my current job, we aren’t allowed to use certain tools without permission. It’s frustrating, but I understand it is for safety.

**Answer to Probe Further:** Sometimes rules don’t really matter if you know what you’re doing.

1. **Making a Mistake** (Honesty, accountability)

**Question:** Tell me about a mistake you made while learning something new. What did   
you do after?

**Strong Example Answer:** I messed up a measurement on a project and had to redo it.  
I told my boss right away, so I didn’t make it worse.

**Answer to Probe Further:** I try not to make mistakes.

1. **Asking for Help** (Willingness to speak up)

**Question:** Describe a time you didn’t understand something and had to ask for help.

**Strong Example Answer:** I didn’t understand a lab assignment, so I asked a classmate first, then the teacher. Once it was explained, it made sense.

**Answer to Probe Further:** I usually try to figure it out myself.

1. **Pressure & Speed** (Risk of rushing)

**Question:** Tell me about a time you felt rushed. What did you do?

**Strong Example Answer:** One day at work, we were completely overwhelmed by customers, but I focused on doing things right instead of faster. I didn’t want to mess anything up.

**Answer to Probe Further:** I just try to get it done as fast as possible.

### Other Questions to Gauge Fit, Interest, and Readiness

1. **Following Structure** (Fit for a structured apprenticeship)

**Question:** How do you feel about learning step by step instead of being expected to know things right away?

**Strong Example Answer:** I like knowing what’s expected. I do better when someone shows me first and then lets me try.

**Answer to Probe Further:** I prefer to just jump in.

1. **Interest in the Trade** (Realistic motivation)

**Question:** What made you interested in working on vehicles or learning this trade?

**Strong Example Answer:** I like working with my hands and figuring out how things work.  
I don’t know everything yet, but I want to learn.

**Answer to Probe Further:** I heard it’s an easy job.

1. **Expectation Check (Critical)** (Emotional readiness for apprenticeship reality)

**Question:** Tell me about a time you were learning something new and felt frustrated or behind others. What did you do?

**Strong Example Answer:** In my auto class, some people picked things up faster than I did. At first, it bothered me, but I realized I learned better by slowing down and asking questions. I stayed after class a couple of times until it made sense.

**Answer to Probe Further:** I don’t like feeling behind, so I usually try to catch up on my own or stop doing it.

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