



Top 50 Business Analyst Interview Questions & Responses

GENERAL QUESTIONS:

1. Tell me about yourself

This needs to be short and to the point. Do not tell your life story. Give a [30 second elevator pitch](#).

2. What brought you to apply for this position?

You can name drop here if you heard from (or know) someone that works there. As well, share what grabbed your attention about the position and the company. Be enthusiastic.

3. What do you know about the company?

This is where your [pre-interview research](#) pays off. Tell them what you learned about their goals and mission and how it relates to your skills, experiences, and passions.

4. What would your current (former) boss say are your biggest strengths?

Be credible and share your true strengths. Don't guess at what the employer wants to hear. If you possess a strength that matches to the job posting, be sure to mention it.

5. If I asked your current (former) employer, what would they tell me you need to get better at? (weaknesses)

Be careful! This question is not for you to divulge your deep dark secrets, but to instead determine if you are honest and self-aware. Best to have up to two weaknesses pre-identified and talk about the current steps you are taking to improve upon those deficiencies.

Don't say you don't have any weaknesses. It's a lie. Also, I wouldn't recommend mentioning anything about not getting along with people or not being able to take direction, as that can show concerns with working in a team environment.



6. What are you looking for in a new position? / What is your ideal position?

Be specific and make sure it ties to the job (description) you are applying for. Stating, for example, your real passion is to be in fashion won't bode well for you to land this job.

7. What do you like to do outside of work?

This may seem like an odd question, but they are trying to get to know you a little better, so they can see how you will fit into their culture. Be honest here, but steer clear of non-professional responses on how you love to party, gamble, and sleep all day. Instead, talk about your hobbies and interests.

A great additional thing you can mention is how you love to continuously learn with [online courses](#) to stay up-to-date on trends and enhance your business analysis skills.

8. Has there been a time you disagreed with a decision at work? Tell me about it.

Think of a scenario where you took a disagreement and spun it into a positive situation.

9. What software applications are you familiar with?

Be open and honest here. Don't stretch and talk about software you don't know. If you were not familiar with software that was mentioned in the job description, you should have spent time before the interview to at least get acquainted (many have free trial downloads).

Taking this extra step to familiarize yourself with the software applications they utilize will not only assist you in answering this question but will also show that you have the initiative to research and learn when you don't have the experience or knowledge of something.

10. What have you done to improve your knowledge in the last year?

This question validates you are serious about becoming a Business Analyst. Someone taking their personal time to learn concepts, skills, and techniques shows they are committed. As well, the Business Analyst profession itself is so expansive that even those with 10+ years of experience always have additional topics and techniques they can learn more about.

The most cost effective and time efficient way to keep up on skills (or to learn new ones) is by taking [self-paced online courses](#).

**11. How long can we expect you to work for us? / Where do you see yourself in 5 years?**

Companies don't want to train you and then have you leave. Saying something like, while I can't foresee the future, from everything I'm hearing about the company and the opportunity, I hope to be working here for many years to come. Come up with something along those lines.

12. Tell me a suggestion you have made that was implemented?

This question is looking for a specific example from your professional work history (or time as a student if no work history) where you made a recommendation and it was successfully utilized. Prospective employers are asking this because it shows you can critically think and solve problems- which are both [crucial skills for Business Analysts](#).

13. Explain how you would be an asset to this organization?

Utilize your [pre-interview research](#) to your advantage. Here you should be tying your skills and experience to the needs of the organization (as described in the job posting). If you want to earn some bonus points, tie your skills to something the hiring manager brought up as an organizational issue or deficiency within the interview.

14. Do you prefer to work independently or on a team?

Business Analysts cannot do their job without working on a team, but they also need to be able to accomplish tasks and make decisions independently. While there are many right answers, there is one answer that will almost guarantee you won't get the job, "I like to work by myself."

15. What do you do if you can't complete all your committed/assigned tasks by their due dates?

This will happen. Since Business Analysts are extremely valuable to organizations, they are usually inundated with tasks to complete. The best way to answer this question is to mention how you continually prioritize tasks based on their importance to the organization and as soon as you notice you are at risk of missing your committed date, you make the project team (and the requestor) aware.

You will then give a brief explanation of what happened and commit to a new date. If any concerns would arise with the needed extension, you negotiate to find an agreeable compromise, while also keeping the organizational priorities in mind.



16. How do you rate your communication skills?

Since this is arguably the [most important skill for Business Analysts](#), you should have an example or two prepared about when and how you've shown great communication skills.

17. How do you show leadership without having authority?

Business Analysts need to be able to rally the group behind their mission. The most effective way of doing this is via relationships. It is best if you utilize an example of how you have displayed this in the past. A great example can be how you naturally became the point person (Subject Matter Expert) for a certain project, process, or software.

BUSINESS ANALYST QUESTIONS:

18. Why do you want to become a Business Analyst?

I can't really answer this for you, but you can check out the [top reasons I became a Business Analyst](#) if you are struggling to come up with ideas.

19. What is the purpose of the Business Analyst within an organization?

To enable (and potentially facilitate) change by defining needs, recommending solutions, and assisting with implementation of solutions. Ultimately, the biggest purpose of a Business Analyst is to analyze and solve business problems.

20. What is the number one skill a Business Analyst needs to possess?

You can never go wrong with communication (oral and written). Talk about how Business Analysts interact with people at varying levels of the organization and need the ability to talk with each person with terms and a communication style they can understand. Or you can go with another [Business Analysis skill](#) that matches closely with the job description.

Regardless of what skill you mention, be sure you possess that skill. Even better, have a few examples ready to show how you've utilized these skills successfully in the past.



21. Can you describe the Waterfall / Agile / Iterative project approach methodology?

This is where you need to utilize your [foundational business analysis knowledge](#). You should find clues in the job posting that tell you what methodologies the organization uses, so leverage that to aid in your preparation.

22. What do you do when stakeholders have conflicting requirements?

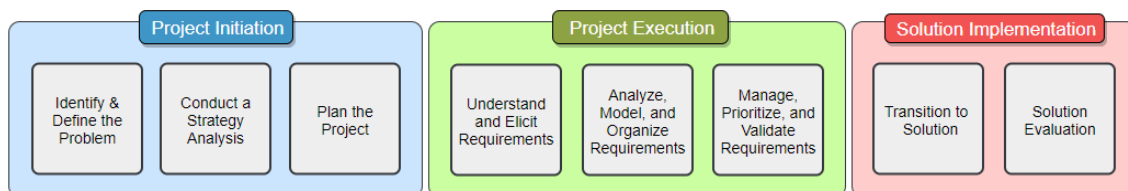
Conflict happens in business. The key here is to talk about how you would facilitate a meeting to work through it. During the meeting you would dig into the reasoning for each requirement and have the various stakeholders understand the other's point of view. After everything has been explained, you will utilize your negotiation skills to facilitate a resolution that is agreeable for all parties.

If they counter and ask what you would do if no resolution can be met, your answer could be along the lines of you working with the project team to decide on which requirement best helps the project meet its end goals.

23. What is your typical approach to a project?

Here is a high-level example, but you should also know more details in case they ask you to drill in and give more information about a specific process step.

NOTE – These steps are not always done in order and some could be skipped or skimmed over in various methodologies.





24. When are user (business) requirements complete?

This is validating you avoid analysis paralysis, where you never complete the requirements phase due to always feeling like you need to learn (elicit) more. The key here is to explain how you have finished gathering requirements when you have clear, concise, and validated requirements that fully encompass the business need.

One thing to recognize, however, is business requirements will often change. Staying aware and cognizant of these changing requirements will make you even more successful.

25. How do you handle changes to (or additional) requirements?

The only constant in business is change. Requirement changes are inevitable.

Here is a typical change process:

1. Scope the impact
2. Understand effect on timeline, budget, and resources (impact analysis)
3. Evaluate if the requirement should be handled now, in the future, or not at all
4. Get agreement of the project sponsor (and potentially the project team)
5. Communicate the decision (and any reasoning) to the original requestor

26. What are some common ways you elicit requirements?

They are ensuring you know the different techniques: documentation review, interviews, requirement workshops, surveys, etc. Best to also have some examples of how you've utilized these types of elicitation techniques in the past (even if you were doing so from a non-Business Analyst role).

[Understanding these techniques](#) are critical if you want to be a successful Business Analyst.

27. What are process flowcharts used for and why are they important?

Process flowcharts are extremely common in business. They help to create a visual depiction of the steps that are taken in a process. Not only do they make it easier to reach and understand the process, they also can highlight inefficiencies and shortcomings.

If you aren't familiar with [how to create process flowcharts](#), it is highly recommended you learn.



28. What is BPMN?

BPMN stands for Business Process Modeling Notation. It is a specific style (syntax) of process flowcharts. While the BPMN follows similar standards to traditional flowcharting, there are many other unique symbols and rules utilized.

Here is a [download for a quick guide](#) if you want to get familiar. It is highly recommended you understand [how to create base process flowcharts](#) before getting to this level of detail.

29. What is UML?

UML stands for Unified Modeling Language. It is a specific style (syntax) utilized to create various models and diagrams. Where BPMN is only utilized to create process flowcharts, UML is a full suite which includes many different types of diagrams and models.

[Here is a resource](#) that gives an overview and examples of the various types of UML diagrams. Again, you are encouraged to understand [how to create base process flowcharts](#) before getting to this level of detail.

30. What is Pareto Analysis?

A Pareto Analysis follows the Pareto Principle (80/20 rule) that 80% of the outcomes come from 20% of your efforts, 80% of your issues come from 20% of the causes, etc. The Pareto Analysis is done to help identify that 20%. Check out our example [HERE](#).

31. What is your requirement elicitation strategy?

Here is the tried and true method used by most Business Analysts.

1. Understand the problem/goal
2. Determine who would have that information
3. Choose the best elicitation technique
4. Prepare for (plan) the elicitation activity
5. Conduct the elicitation
6. Confirm elicitation results
7. Repeat until all necessary requirements have been elicited



32. Could you describe the main qualities of a good requirement?

Clearly and unambiguously defines the need. Follows the SMART philosophy:

- S** - Specific
- M** - Measurable
- A** - Attainable
- R** - Reasonable
- T** – Traceable

33. How do you avoid scope creep?

Scope creep is the concept of the project continually increasing in size, making it much more difficult to deliver successfully (within budget, timeframe, etc.). Here are some tips on how to avoid it:

- Set, and gain agreement on, the project scope before work begins
- Create a change process to understand the impact (additional risk, more cost, extended timeline, etc.) of additional requirements that would change the project scope
- Follow the defined change process and gain proper approvals before considering any change

34. What is the difference between a functional requirement and a non-functional requirement?

Functional requirements describe the capabilities of the solution. Non-functional requirements describe the conditions under which a solution must remain effective or qualities a solution must have.

Functional – System shall allow the user to reset their password

Non-Functional – Password reset email will be sent within two minutes of the reset request being received

35. What is the purpose of requirements traceability?

In short, traceability keeps track of the life-cycle of the requirement and validates it stays aligned with any designs, test cases, etc. This helps to more effectively understand the impact of changes to that requirement, helps to uncover gaps or inconsistencies in requirements, and assists in validating the requirement is accounted for in the final solution.

**36. When do you use a RACI or RASCI model?**

The RACI (responsible, accountable, consulted, informed) matrix is used to understand the roles and responsibility of stakeholders in various processes, tasks, and projects. The RASCI model is extremely similar but includes another responsibility level called supports. These models are normally used near the beginning of projects during stakeholder analysis.

37. Describe the difference between a Waterfall based methodology and an Agile methodology?

The waterfall methodology is more rigid and only allows projects to move forward in phases after the previous phase has been completed (plan, analyze, design, etc.). This forces you to identify all requirements before design would begin. On the other hand, Agile focuses on small iterations, called sprints, to more quickly move through the various steps and repeat at a pre-specified cadence. This allows for the project to move forward and deliver value one what is known while the other details are still being defined.

38. What are some of the challenges faced by a business analyst?

Business analysts are the enablers of change and not everyone likes change. Some may feel threatened, overworked (adding another thing to their task list), and anxious.

Due to that, among other things, the BA faces many different challenges, including:

- Resistance to change (uncooperative stakeholders)
- Conflicting requirements (different needs among various stakeholders)
- Analysis paralysis (knowing when you have enough requirements)
- Changing business needs and requirements (especially if no change control process)

39. Explain the term “push back” in relation to business users and what this means to you?

Push back in this perspective means to challenge or question. In relation to a project, this often means a stakeholder or member of the project team is challenging something. These moments of pushing back could be about anything, but many common topics include estimated release date, cost, solution design, resource availability, and vision of the future state.



40. How do you manage ever changing requirements?

Requirements will change. The key is to [stay organized](#), write good notes, keep documentation up-to-date, and put together and follow a pre-defined change control process.

41. What is the Critical Path?

The critical path is a sequence of activities that must be done for the project to be considered complete. This helps to dictate the minimum time it would take to finish. Any delay to the critical path would delay the full project release.

42. Why do projects fail?

Projects can fail for a significant number of reasons, but here are some common examples:

- Undefined or unclear project objectives or goals
- Mismatch of solution to business goal or organizational need
- Poor change management process / scope creep
- Inadequate planning
- Poor communication

43. How do manage demands on multiple projects/stakeholders?

Continually prioritize projects and tasks based on organizational goals and objectives. Set commitments. If a commitment will be missed, communicate it ahead of time and update your expected completion date. Then over communicate project status and next steps.

44. How do you work with difficult stakeholders?

The best way is to build a relationship with them. Stakeholders are going to be much less difficult to someone they respect and trust.

When that isn't feasible, be overly kind. Provide reasoning and explanations as to why the project is important. Get them involved in making decisions. Ultimately, get them to feel like they both have something to give and something to lose ('skin in the game').

**45. Please define some diagrams most used by business analysts.**

There are a significant number of diagrams that may be used by Business Analysts. Some of the most common include process flowcharts, use cases, RACI matrices, and the wireframing. If you are unfamiliar with these, check out the [Essential Modeling course](#) to learn more.

46. Please describe the Pair-Choice technique and why you might use it.

The Pair-Choice technique is best utilized as a prioritization technique. If stakeholders are having a problem ranking their requirements in priority order, the Pair-Choice technique can be implemented to make it much easier to understand the importance. To use, you compare each requirement against one other and decide as to which one is more important. You repeat this for every requirement. Once complete, you rank the requirements based on the number of 'more important' votes they received.

47. What are some techniques you can utilize to get to the root cause?

Arguably the two most common techniques include the Fishbone Diagram and the Five Whys. The fishbone diagram is a brainstorming tool that assists in breaking down the potential causes of a problem. The [Five Whys technique](#) is the concept of asking a series of whys, to drive into more detail and reasoning, which will eventually get you to the root cause.

48. What is a Project Manager and what do they do?

While responsibilities of the Project Manager (PM) will differ slightly from organization to organization, there are a few constants. The PM oversees the project. They control, account for, and communicate the budget, schedule, risks, and issues. They are responsible for the final project outcome.

WRAP UP QUESTIONS:**49. Why should we hire you?**

Here you should be recapping your key skills that match to the job description. Give examples and tell about how you can help the organization achieve their goals. Show enthusiasm and a desire to be hired.



50. What questions do you have for me?

This is one of the most important questions of the interview. Use your [prepared questions](#) to help solidify your interest in the position and the company.

We wish you the best of luck in your interview!
- The BA Guide Team

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