

Data Analyst interview checklist

Most data analyst hiring includes an online test on SQL, Excel and aptitude, a technical round with live SQL or a case study, sometimes a take-home dataset to analyse and present, and a final HR or hiring-manager round.

10 QUESTIONS TO PRACTISE OUT LOUD

1. What is the difference between WHERE and HAVING in SQL?

What it checks: Whether you understand the order in which SQL clauses run, which decides where a filter must go and prevents wrong totals in reports.

2. Tell me about a time your analysis contradicted what a stakeholder believed.

What it checks: Whether you can hold your ground with evidence, present bad news tactfully and keep the relationship, instead of bending results to please people.

3. What salary are you expecting for this data analyst role?

What it checks: Whether you have a realistic, researched expectation for an entry-level role and can discuss it without appearing inflexible.

4. Explain the different SQL joins. What does a LEFT JOIN return when there is no match?

What it checks: Whether you can combine tables without silently losing or duplicating rows, the most common source of wrong numbers in analyst work.

5. Tell me about a time you found an error in a report you had already shared.

What it checks: Integrity and speed in correcting mistakes, and whether you fixed the process so it cannot recur, rather than hoping nobody noticed.

6. Why do you want to work as an analyst in our industry?

What it checks: Whether you understand the business domain you would analyse, since domain knowledge decides how useful an analyst becomes after the first few months.

7. How would you find the top three products by revenue in each category?

What it checks: Whether you know window functions and the differences between ROW_NUMBER, RANK and DENSE_RANK, which come up in almost every analyst SQL round.

8. Tell me about an analysis from your college project or internship that led to a decision.

What it checks: Whether you can show the full analyst loop, from question to data to recommendation, even without formal job experience.

9. This role supports teams in the US and UK. Are you comfortable with shifted working hours?

What it checks: Whether you can commit to the schedule honestly, and whether you have thought about the practical side of overlap hours with overseas teams.

10. How do you handle missing values and outliers in a dataset?

What it checks: Whether you investigate why data is missing or extreme before changing it, rather than blindly deleting rows or filling with averages.

TIPS FOR THIS INTERVIEW

- Practise SQL daily on joins, GROUP BY, subqueries, CTEs and window functions, and always test your query on a small sample before trusting the result.

- Prepare one portfolio project end to end: a question, a cleaned dataset, the SQL or Python code, a dashboard, and a one-page recommendation.
- For case questions, say your structure aloud: check the data, compare with a baseline, segment, walk the funnel, then look at outside causes.
- Revise basic statistics you will be asked to explain in plain words: mean versus median, standard deviation, p-value, confidence interval and sampling bias.

THE DAY BEFORE

- ☐ Confirm the time, venue or video link and the interviewer's name
- ☐ Plan your route and leave time for traffic, or test your camera, microphone and internet
- ☐ Keep copies of your resume, ID proof, certificates and photographs in a folder
- ☐ Iron your clothes and charge your phone and laptop
- ☐ Do one final run-through of your introduction, then stop and rest

ON THE DAY

- ☐ Arrive 15 minutes early, or log in 5-10 minutes early for a video call
- ☐ Greet everyone politely, including the receptionist or coordinator
- ☐ Listen to the full question, pause, then answer in a clear structure
- ☐ Take brief notes of names and key points
- ☐ Ask your prepared questions and confirm the next steps before you leave