

DevOps Engineer interview checklist

DevOps hiring usually runs as a screening call, a hands-on round with a live Linux, Docker or Kubernetes troubleshooting task or a take-home pipeline exercise, a system design round on cloud architecture and reliability, and a final managerial and HR discussion.

10 QUESTIONS TO PRACTISE OUT LOUD

1. Walk me through a CI/CD pipeline you built, stage by stage.

What it checks: Whether you have actually built a pipeline end to end and understand why each stage exists, including quality gates and rollback.

2. Walk me through a production outage you handled while on call.

What it checks: How you act during an incident: restoring service first, communicating clearly and following up with a blameless review and real fixes.

3. This role includes an on-call rotation. How do you feel about that?

What it checks: Whether you understand on-call responsibilities and expectations, and whether you will handle the rotation reliably and sustainably over months.

4. What is the difference between a Docker image and a container, and how do you keep images small?

What it checks: Whether you understand container basics and good image-building practice, which affects build time, security and deployment speed.

5. Tell me about a time you made a mistake that affected infrastructure. What happened next?

What it checks: Honesty, quick recovery and whether you improved the system so others cannot make the same mistake, rather than just being more careful.

6. Why do you want to join our platform team specifically?

What it checks: Whether you have researched their infrastructure and engineering culture and can link your experience to their challenges.

7. A Kubernetes pod is stuck in CrashLoopBackOff. How do you debug it?

What it checks: Your practical Kubernetes troubleshooting method, using the right commands in the right order rather than restarting things at random.

8. How did you convince developers to adopt a new deployment process or tool?

What it checks: Whether you drive change by making developers' work easier and involving them, rather than enforcing tools from the platform team alone.

9. What salary are you expecting for this DevOps role, and when can you join?

What it checks: Whether your expectation is reasonable and clearly explained, and whether your notice period works for the team.

10. Compare rolling, blue-green and canary deployments. When would you use each?

What it checks: Whether you understand release strategies and their trade-offs in risk, cost and rollback speed, and can match them to the service.

TIPS FOR THIS INTERVIEW

- Practise on a real Linux terminal and a local Kubernetes cluster such as kind or minikube, because many interviews include live troubleshooting tasks.
- Be ready to draw your current pipeline and infrastructure on a whiteboard, explaining why each tool was chosen and what you would change.
- Prepare one detailed incident story with timeline, actions, communication and follow-up fixes, as almost every DevOps interview asks for one.
- Revise networking basics such as DNS, TCP, load balancers, subnets and security groups, since many production problems turn out to be networking problems.

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