



# Witness Interview Question Bank

Opening scripts, neutral questions, credibility checks, and documentation prompts for defensible investigation interviews.

### WHAT THIS HELPS YOU DO

Use this question bank to run investigation interviews that gather facts instead of confirming assumptions — with a consistent opening script, neutral questioning, credibility checks, and same-day documentation.

## WHEN TO USE THIS DOCUMENT

- Before every interview in a workplace investigation
- When preparing to interview the complainant, witnesses, or the accused
- When an inexperienced manager must conduct interviews
- When accounts conflict and credibility must be assessed
- When interviews must be documented for later scrutiny

## WHAT THIS DOCUMENT HELPS PREVENT

- Leading questions that contaminate testimony
- Interviews that skip the retaliation warning and confidentiality instruction
- Credibility judgments based on demeanor instead of substance
- Notes written days later from memory
- The accused learning details only the complainant could know — from you

*Faulkner HR Solutions focuses on the system behind the people problem. This tool is designed to help employers slow down the decision, identify the risk, and create proof before the issue becomes a claim, complaint, turnover event, or credibility problem.*

## BEFORE YOU START: READINESS CHECKLIST

Gather the following before working through this document. Incomplete inputs are one of the most common reasons employer decisions fail under later scrutiny.

Have it	Input	Notes / location
<input type="checkbox"/>	Employee name and role	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Date of incident, request, or separation	



Have it	Input	Notes / location
<input type="checkbox"/>	Supervisor involved	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Policy or handbook section that applies	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Prior documentation on file	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Pay records, if applicable	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Relevant emails, texts, notes, or complaints	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Decision-maker name	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Deadline, if applicable	

## QUESTION BANK

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Ask open questions, in chronological order, one at a time. Your job is to collect what the witness knows — not to signal what you already believe.

### Section 1 — Opening Script (read to every interviewee)

“Thank you for meeting with me. I'm gathering facts about a workplace concern; no conclusions have been reached. I'll ask questions and take notes. Please answer from your own knowledge — if you don't know or don't remember, say so; don't guess. This conversation should be kept discreet: please don't discuss it with coworkers while the review is open. Information will be shared only with people who need it. Retaliation against anyone who participates in this process is strictly prohibited — if you experience anything you believe is retaliation, report it to me immediately. Do you have any questions before we begin?”

### Section 2 — Neutral Foundation Questions

- What is your role, and how do you work with the people involved?
- Walk me through what you saw or heard, from the beginning.
- When did this happen? Where? Who else was present?
- What happened next? And after that?
- What did you personally observe, versus what someone told you?
- Who told you? When? What exactly did they say?
- Have you seen anything like this before or since?

### Section 3 — Follow-Up Probes

- You said [exact word they used] — tell me more about that.
- What was said, as close to word-for-word as you can recall?
- How did the people involved react in the moment?
- Did you tell anyone at the time? Who, and what did you say?
- Are there messages, photos, schedules, or documents that would show this?
- Is there anything that would help me understand the context?

### Section 4 — Credibility Checks

- How well could you see/hear from where you were?
- What were you doing at the time — could anything have divided your attention?
- Do you have any relationship, conflict, or history with either party I should know about?
- Has anyone talked to you about this interview or suggested what to say?
- Is any part of what you told me something you assumed rather than observed?



- If someone remembers this differently, what might explain the difference?

**Section 5 — Closing Questions (every interview)**

- Is there anything I haven't asked about that you think I should know?
- Is there anyone else I should speak with?
- Are there documents or records I should review?
- Can I follow up with you if new questions come up?
- Do you have any concerns about retaliation? (Repeat the prohibition and how to report.)

**Section 6 — Documentation Prompts**

Done	Documentation step	Notes
<input type="checkbox"/>	Notes taken during the interview, in the witness's words where possible	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Date, time, location, duration, and who was present recorded	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Direct quotes marked as quotes; assumptions marked as assumptions	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Opening script and retaliation warning noted as given	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Notes finalized the same day and stored in the investigation file	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Follow-up items added to the witness list or evidence log	

**Interview Log**

Interviewee	Date / time	Location / method	Key facts learned

**STOP AND REVIEW BEFORE ACTING**

If any statement below is true, pause. Get the decision reviewed by HR, counsel, or Faulkner HR Solutions before you act.

- The employee recently complained about pay, harassment, discrimination, safety, leave, or retaliation.



- The supervisor has no prior documentation.
- The decision is inconsistent with how similar cases were handled.
- The employee is on, or recently requested, protected leave.
- The issue involves pay, deductions, final wages, medical information, disability, pregnancy, injury, or protected activity.
- The decision will be visible to a board, council, funder, auditor, plaintiff attorney, or agency.

### MINIMUM DOCUMENTATION STANDARD

Before this file is closed, the employer should be able to answer every question below and point to where the proof lives.

Question	Your answer / where the proof is stored
What happened?	
When did it happen?	
Who observed or reported it?	
What policy, standard, deadline, or expectation applies?	
What decision was made?	
Who had authority to make the decision?	
What alternatives were considered?	
What risk was reviewed?	
What follow-up is required?	
Where is the proof stored?	

### COMMON MISTAKES

1. Asking 'Did he scream at her?' instead of 'What did you hear?' — leading questions produce leading answers.
2. Revealing the complainant's account to witnesses and contaminating every later interview.
3. Judging credibility on nervousness instead of consistency, detail, and corroboration.
4. Interviewing two witnesses together 'to save time.'
5. Writing up all five interviews on Friday from memory.
6. Skipping the retaliation warning — then learning a witness was pressured and you have no record of instructing otherwise.



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## WHAT TO DO NEXT

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After each interview, finalize notes the same day, update the witness list and evidence log with anything new, and note credibility observations while they are fresh. When all interviews are complete, compare accounts point by point before drafting findings.

**Before you terminate, deduct, discipline, classify, or respond, get the decision reviewed.**

Call 210.446.8730 or email [thomas@faulknerhrsolutions.info](mailto:thomas@faulknerhrsolutions.info).



*Before you process payroll, terminate, classify, deduct, or respond to a claim, get the decision reviewed.*

## Need help applying this to a real workplace decision?

Faulkner HR Solutions helps Texas employers, nonprofits, municipalities, and growing businesses fix the people systems behind recurring workplace problems.

**If this document raised a risk flag, do not guess your way through the next step.**

**Call: 210.446.8730**

**Email: [thomas@faulknerhrsolutions.info](mailto:thomas@faulknerhrsolutions.info)**

**Website: [faulknerhrsolutions.info](http://faulknerhrsolutions.info)**

### DISCLAIMER

This resource is provided for general employer education and planning purposes. It is not legal advice and does not create an attorney-client relationship. Employment laws, agency guidance, and local requirements may change. Employers should review the facts of each situation before acting and consult appropriate HR or legal counsel when needed.