Dentistry Interview Questions — Free Preview (Motivation Section)

A note from Haroon

This is a free preview — the complete Motivation section, pulled directly from the full "Dentistry Interview Questions — Master Bank" guide, exactly as it appears in the real thing. Nothing shortened, nothing watered down. I want you to be able to actually judge the quality before you spend anything, so this is the real section, in full.

The full guide covers 9 sections and 146 questions in total — Motivation, Personal Qualities, NHS/Dental Hot Topics, Uni-Specific, Situational Judgement, Curveballs, Ethics, Professionalism, and Work Experience — built the same way as what you're about to read: every model answer and interviewer note phrased exactly how I actually deliver it, based on my own dentistry-specific research and my tutoring experience with last year's successful cohort, nothing invented.

One thing before you dive in, because it matters more than anything else in this preview or the full guide: reading through questions and model answers is not preparation. Understanding a point on a page is a completely different skill from being able to pull it together and say it out loud, fluently, in your own words, under pressure, with someone sat across from you waiting for an answer. So however much of this you read — in this preview or the full guide — practise it out loud. To a mirror, to your phone, to a friend who'll ask you cold. That's the part that actually gets you ready.

Feel free to share this preview with anyone else prepping for a dentistry interview — I would like to benefit as many people as possible!

— Haroon, founder of Medentia

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General Delivery & Conduct Notes (apply to every question — not repeated below)

- Never sound like you're reciting a memorised, generic answer — interviewers can spot this instantly.
- Hold eye contact and use natural hand movement/gestures throughout — every question, not just some.
- Constantly reflect rather than just describe — don't just say what happened, say how it affected you and why it mattered.
- Show genuine passion and drive — interviewers want to see the grit needed to get through a demanding degree and career, not just a rehearsed motivation.
- If you ever need clarification for a question please ask !!

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1. Motivation

📌 Why do you want to study dentistry?

💬 Model Answer

1. **Initial exposure.** Start with what first sparked your interest in dentistry, and where and when that happened. This is your hook — it needs to be real, not a line you think sounds good.
2. **Building on it.** Explain what you actively did to build on that initial spark: further research, a research project, work experience, or volunteering. Don't just say "I did work experience" — say what you actually saw, what stood out to you about it, how it stood out, and why it triggered further interest.
3. **Reflection.** Reflect on how that experience affected you as a person and how it led you to apply to dentistry. This is the part most students skip — don't just narrate events, explain what changed in you because of them.
4. **Wrap-up.** Close the answer clearly — tie it back to why you're applying today, rather than trailing off after the last example.

Keep reflecting throughout, not just at the end — don't just describe what happened, explain how each part of it affected you and built your interest.

🎯 What The Interviewer Is Looking For

- A clear account of where your interest in dentistry actually started and how you built on it, not a jump straight from "I saw a dentist once" to "so I'm applying to dentistry."
- Genuine exposure that actually triggered real understanding and interest — you can't just "see something and want to apply." You have to actually get proper exposure to the career and understand something real about it that triggered the interest.
- Constant reflection running through the whole answer, not just at the end.
- Genuine passion behind why you're applying, not a rehearsed line.
- Evidence of the grit and drive needed to get through a demanding 5-year degree without dropping out — this is a long, difficult road, and they want to see you understand that and still want it.

⚠️ Common Mistake To Avoid

Giving a vague, generic reason like "I want to help people" with nothing personal behind it. That's exactly the memorised-sounding answer interviewers are trained to spot. You need to demonstrate and show the interviewer that you have that genuine drive.

(See General Delivery & Conduct Notes above for eye contact, reflection, and avoiding a memorised answer — those apply here too.)

📌 Why dentistry and not medicine?

💬 Model Answer

1. **Acknowledge both careers properly first.** Before drawing any distinction, show genuine respect for medicine — talk about how big a role doctors play in society, the impact they have on patients. Don't treat this as a side note before getting to "the real answer."
2. **Name what stood out to you most about dentistry specifically.** For many candidates this is the long-term relationship with patients — seeing, through work experience, how a dentist maintains a good rapport with the same patients over years, addressing not just the physical side of care but the psychological and emotional side too (reassuring an anxious patient, building trust over repeat visits).
3. **Bring in manual dexterity / fine motor skills as something specific to dentistry, not medicine.** Dentistry is simply far more hands-on than medicine on a day-to-day basis — a huge proportion of clinical work is fine, precision craft rather than diagnosis and management alone. Root canal treatment is a good example: working within a tiny, enclosed space inside a tooth, with very little margin for error, demands a level of manual dexterity and steady, controlled hand movement that most of medicine simply doesn't ask for in the same way. Crown and filling preparation, and restorative work generally, sit in the same category — the clinical work itself is the fine-craft skill, not something separate from it.
4. **Mention work-life balance and structure as a genuine, honest difference.** Dentistry tends to offer more predictable hours — closer to a 9-5, without the long or unpredictable on-call hours more common in hospital medicine — and that structure is more compatible with sustaining other things in your life long-term.
5. **Conclude by showing you've genuinely weighed both, not dismissed one.** Say clearly that you've seen how demanding both professions are, which shows you're open-minded rather than having picked dentistry by default — but that the specific combination of long-term patient relationships, the hands-on precision of the work, and the career structure is what's actually pulled you toward dentistry, backed up by what you saw and the skills you've built.

🎯 What The Interviewer Is Looking For

- No put-down of medicine, same rule as the equivalent dentist-vs-dental-team question below — this needs to read as a genuine comparison, not medicine being lesser.
- A real, specific reason dentistry pulled you rather than medicine — not just "I prefer teeth" or a reason that could apply to any healthcare role.
- Specific, accurate knowledge of what the hands-on side of dentistry actually involves (naming a real procedure like root canal treatment, not just asserting "dentistry is hands-on").
- Evidence this distinction is grounded in something you've actually seen (work experience, shadowing), not read off a comparison chart.

- Honesty about dentistry's practical differences (hours, structure) without it sounding like you picked the easier option — frame it as alignment with how you want to build your life and career, not as avoiding medicine's demands.

⚠️ Common Mistake To Avoid

Treating this like "why medicine" with the word swapped — the interviewer specifically wants to see you understand what's genuinely different about dentistry as its own profession, not a lesser version of medicine.

📌 Why do you want to be a dentist rather than a dental hygienist, dental therapist, or other member of the dental team? What's the difference?

💬 Model Answer

1. **Appraise the other roles first.** Before you say anything about dentists, show that you genuinely understand and respect the other roles within the dental team. Go deep on this — don't treat it as a side character. For example: "From my work experience, I saw dentists, dental nurses, and hygienists working closely together. The hygienist carries out a lot of the preventive and routine care — scaling, polishing, oral hygiene advice — and that ongoing relationship with patients is hugely important for keeping their mouths healthy day to day." Make it clear you understand these roles are crucial to patient care, not incidental to it.
2. **Transition into dentistry.** Once you've properly appraised the other roles, pivot: "However, I'm applying to dentistry because…"
3. **Give genuine differences.** Not put-downs — real, factual distinctions: the responsibility of diagnosing a patient and forming the actual treatment plan, carrying out more complex and surgical procedures, and leading and overseeing the dental team who deliver parts of that plan.
4. **Link each difference to your own interests or experience.** Don't just list differences like a textbook — connect them to you personally. Example: "Dentists carry more responsibility because they're the ones diagnosing and planning the whole course of a patient's treatment, and for leading the dental team — deciding what the nurse and hygienist need to focus on for a given patient, for instance. That responsibility aligns with my interests because I was captain of a semi-professional football team, so I know what it feels like to carry that kind of responsibility, and I work well under that pressure. I'm looking for a career that comes with that level of responsibility, and I see it most prominently in dentists compared to other roles within the dental team."

🎯 What The Interviewer Is Looking For

- That you do NOT put down or disparage any other role in the dental team — this is the single biggest red flag on this question. Saying hygienists or nurses "have less responsibility" or are "less than" dentists will cost you badly.
- Genuine appraisal and understanding of what other roles in the dental team actually do day to day and why they matter to patient care.
- A clear, accurate list of real differences between dentists and other dental team roles, stated as plain facts, not comparisons that talk another role down.
- They're not asking you to rank roles — they're asking you to understand the difference between being a dentist and other roles in the dental team, and to show that understanding through your own experiences and how those differences personally appeal to you.

⚠️ Common Mistake To Avoid

Putting another dental team role down — e.g. saying hygienists or nurses “have less responsibility” or are “less than” dentists. That’s the single biggest red flag on this question, it can result in you getting marked down a lot so be very careful with the manner you’re talking about the rest of the dental team in.

📌 If you couldn't study dentistry, what else would you do instead?

💬 Model Answer

1. **Clarify the question if needed.** It's completely fine to ask the interviewer to clarify what they mean — e.g. "Do you mean if there was no chance at all I could ever study dentistry?" This shows genuine engagement with the question rather than firing off a rehearsed answer you prepared in advance.
2. **Give a genuine other interest.** Name a real alternative career or interest — not a throwaway answer picked because it sounds safe.
3. **Draw out the skills that career shares with dentistry.** Identify what that other career actually requires — it could be the responsibility of leading a team (e.g. in engineering), or it could be a different kind of alignment entirely, like precision craftwork, or the satisfaction of solving problems, caring for people, or helping them in some other capacity. Whatever it is, explicitly connect it to the equivalent thing in dentistry — e.g. a dentist leading the dental team, or the precision required in restorative work.
4. **Reaffirm dentistry as the genuine choice.** Make clear dentistry has always been the goal because these skills and values align with it most strongly, and that the alternative career only comes into play in the hypothetical scenario where dentistry is genuinely off the table.

Example logic: "I've seen responsibility in aeronautical engineering, where you need to take responsibility for a team — and I've seen that same kind of responsibility in dentistry, where the dentist leads the dental team. That's why dentistry was always my first choice. But if I truly had no chance at all, that same sense of responsibility is what would draw me to this other career instead."

🎯 What The Interviewer Is Looking For

- Honesty, above all. Claiming "I'd only ever do dentistry, no matter what, there's no other option" doesn't hold up and reads as insincere — a lot of candidates say this, and it doesn't actually make sense as an answer. They want to see you engage properly with the hypothetical instead of dodging it.
- Comfort clarifying the question rather than guessing at what's being asked and answering the wrong thing confidently.
- A genuine, considered alternative career — not a filler answer picked on the spot.
- The ability to identify the underlying skills or values a career requires and explicitly connect them back to dentistry, showing you understand at a skills level — not just a surface level — what draws you to it.

⚠️ Common Mistake To Avoid

Claiming "I'd only ever do dentistry, no matter what". Engage with the hypothetical scenario properly instead of dodging it. Also ensure you're relating skills to dentistry and not picking a career without linking it in some way to dentistry.

📌 What do you think would be the worst/hardest part of a career in dentistry?

💬 Model Answer

1. **Show you understand the whole career, not just the name.** A lot of candidates go for dentistry "for the name" without properly understanding what they're actually signing up for. Demonstrate that you've thought about the long term — not just first year, but placements through the following years, and life afterwards during Dental Foundation Training (DFT) and, for many, Dental Core Training (DCT): the hours, the pressure, the early starts and the physically demanding nature of the work.
2. **Name a real, specific challenge.** For example: the sheer volume of content and the risk of constantly falling behind even though you know it's going to be difficult; struggling with patient communication, especially with anxious patients; the physical strain of precise, repetitive clinical work over a full day of appointments; or the demanding hours and work-life balance once you're qualified.
3. **Always pair the challenge with how you'd tackle it.** Never leave a challenge just sitting there acknowledged with no solution attached — that's an incomplete answer. If it's content volume: talk about starting early, staying consistent, and asking seniors/elders in the field for help rather than struggling alone. If it's communication: talk about actively working on it — using your hands, maintaining eye contact, letting the patient talk more, actively practising rather than assuming it'll come naturally. If it's the physical demands: talk about the passion and drive that would carry you through long clinical days, because that drive is what stops people from dropping out.

🎯 What The Interviewer Is Looking For

- Genuine, realistic understanding of dentistry as a long-term career — through placements, DFT/DCT, and beyond — not just a first-year view of it.
- Honest acknowledgement that dentistry is genuinely difficult and that you personally won't be immune to struggling with it. Nobody is perfect, and everybody who goes into dentistry will hit struggles — pretending otherwise reads as unconvincing.
- Every challenge you raise paired with a real, considered solution. Acknowledging a struggle without a plan to deal with it is only half an answer.
- Overall evidence that you've seriously thought through what a dental career demands across its full length, not chosen it superficially.

⚠️ Common Mistake To Avoid

Naming a challenge and stopping there. A challenge raised with no solution attached is an incomplete answer — always follow through with how you'd handle it.

📌 What part of being a dentist do you think you'll find most emotionally challenging, and why?

(This is subjective and personal — everyone struggles with different things, so don't give a generic, one-size-fits-all answer that could apply to literally any candidate.)

💬 Model Answer

1. **Pick a specific, genuine emotional challenge.** For example: seeing a patient who's genuinely terrified or in pain, especially a child, and having to manage both their fear and the clinical need at the same time; delivering difficult news (needing multiple extractions, or a more extensive treatment plan than expected); or the emotional weight of a physically and mentally demanding job spilling into family life and relationships.
2. **Answer directly and in detail.** Explain specifically why this particular thing would be emotionally hard for you — not the generic "dentistry is emotionally tough" statement that everyone already knows.
3. **Show you understand this is a genuinely emotionally demanding career, long-term.** This ties back into demonstrating real, researched understanding of dentistry as a whole career, not a naive or first-year-only view of it.
4. **Always pair it with how you'd deal with it.** Talk about a real, existing coping strategy or outlet, e.g. "I go to the gym a lot and play football, and I find that really helps me relieve stress." Don't just name the challenge and leave it hanging — the deal-with-it part is the more important half of the answer.

🎯 What The Interviewer Is Looking For

- Realistic expectations of dentistry's emotional demands — that you understand it will take a genuine emotional toll on you, and this isn't a naive or surface-level answer.
- A specific, well-explained answer rather than a vague, generic one — you should be able to clearly articulate why this particular thing, specifically, would be hard for you.
- Explanation of what kind of emotional demands you should realistically expect, and how you'll deal with them — not just an acknowledgement that "dentistry is stressful."
- A genuine, already-existing coping mechanism or solution — hobbies, sport, support networks, whatever is real for you — not just an acknowledgement of the difficulty with no plan attached.

⚠️ Common Mistake To Avoid

Giving the generic, blanket answer "dentistry is emotionally tough" instead of naming something specific and personal to you.

📌 What excites you most about a career in dentistry?

💬 Model Answer

1. **Avoid generic points.** “I’m excited to help people,” “I’m excited to fix teeth,” “I’m excited to learn more” are all too generic and surface-level on their own. Go deeper than the first, obvious version of the point.
2. **Pick something genuinely specific to you.** It can be anything — developing a long-term relationship with patients, applying scientific/biological knowledge practically, the precision and craft of the clinical work itself, placement itself, the people you’ll meet at university, societies you want to join. The specific thing matters far less than it being real to you.
3. **Show it’s about applying knowledge and skill, not just having it.** Dentistry isn’t just about knowledge — it’s about putting that knowledge, and your hands, into play to actually help someone, and your answer should reflect that. Don’t just say “I’m excited to learn more about oral biology” — say how you’d use that knowledge to actually diagnose and treat patients, taking it further than just the academic side.
4. **Tie it to a personal trait or interest.** Explain why this specific thing excites you by connecting it to who you are as a person. Examples: “I’m a very socially outgoing person, and I find dentistry exciting because I’ll be able to put that skill into play when dealing with patients and my peers.” / “I’ve always had a deep interest in precision and craft, and I find dentistry exciting because it’ll offer me the chance to put that into practice directly — treating people, and seeing the tangible result of my own hands’ work.”

🎯 What The Interviewer Is Looking For

- A genuine reason, not a point made up on the spot or picked because it sounds good — this is entirely subjective and personal, so there’s no single “correct” answer as long as it’s real and you can properly expand on it.
- Depth beyond the generic, first-thought version of the point — specificity about exactly what excites you and why, not just that “teeth” or “helping people” excites you in the abstract.
- Understanding that dentistry is about applying knowledge and skill to help people in practice, not just acquiring knowledge for its own sake.

⚠️ Common Mistake To Avoid

Picking a generic, surface-level point (“I want to help people,” “I want to learn more”) instead of something specific and personal that you can actually explain and expand on.

📌 What scares you most about a career in dentistry?

(Same underlying principle as "what excites you" — be genuine. Don't claim you're not scared of anything at all; everyone has a weakness or fear somewhere in their life or career, and pretending otherwise isn't believable.)

💬 Model Answer

1. **Pick a genuine, specific fear or weakness.** For example: struggling to keep up with the sheer volume of content, or being uncomfortable around blood or clinical procedures. It can be anything that's a genuine downside to you personally — this is subjective, so it's fine if your answer is different from someone else's.
2. **Give an example showing it's shown up before.** For example: "I found A-Level Biology quite content-heavy already, and I know dentistry goes into far more depth than that, so I think I might struggle with the sheer volume of content."
3. **Always pair it with a genuine plan to work on it.** Never state a weakness without saying how you're actively addressing it. Content example: staying consistent with flashcards, starting revision early so exams don't become a last-minute scramble. Squeamishness example: making sure you don't panic in front of the patient, because that would put the patient in panic too — and deliberately exposing yourself to it beforehand, e.g. attending workshops involving clinical procedures, so you become more normalised to it ahead of a career where it's genuinely unavoidable.
4. **Tie it back to becoming a better dentist for the patient.** The reason you work on the weakness isn't just for your own sake — it's so patients get the best possible care and don't pick up on you struggling, which could put an already anxious patient into more panic. This links directly into the idea of continuous professional development (CPD): as a dentist, you're always working on something about yourself to keep becoming the best dentist possible.

🎯 What The Interviewer Is Looking For

- Genuine honesty about a real fear or weakness — they are not looking for some human being who claims to be scared of nothing. Everyone is scared of something, especially about a career in dentistry.
- A specific, well-expanded weakness or fear, not a vague or generic one.
- A real, considered plan to work on it — it's useless to have a weakness and not want to work on it or become a better person because of it. As long as you show you're doing something about it, that's what matters.
- Awareness that managing your own weaknesses matters specifically for patient care — you need to work on it to the point where the patient doesn't notice it, because otherwise you risk putting them in more panic, especially when they're already anxious.
- A link, even implicit, to continuous professional development (CPD) — showing you understand that dentists are always working on themselves to keep improving, not treating this as a one-off confession.

⚠️ Common Mistake To Avoid

Claiming you're not scared of anything — that's unrealistic and reads as insincere, and it skips the far more important second half of the answer: what you're actually doing about it.

📌 Tell me about yourself.

💬 Model Answer

A lot of students treat this as some kind of trick question, assuming the examiner is trying to catch them out. It isn't — take it at face value: you're simply introducing yourself to someone who doesn't know you yet.

1. **Give a simple, genuine introduction.** Your name, that you're in Year 13 or on a gap year, that you're applying to dentistry, and a few hobbies or interests you actually enjoy. I wouldn't say memorise it — I'd say know yourself well enough to say this naturally, the way you'd introduce yourself to a random person you just met.
2. **Be genuine, not a sales pitch.** Don't try to be disingenuous by talking yourself up — lines like "I'm so hardworking" or "I'm so intrigued to learn" aren't what they're looking for. They simply want you to become a bit more comfortable with them by answering a very open question.
3. **Don't force a dentistry link.** If you have a genuine, natural reason to bring dentistry into your introduction, that's completely fine — but don't force it just because you happen to be in a dentistry interview. Don't be overly formal either, like "I'm so interested in dentistry" tacked onto everything you say.
4. **Keep it fairly short.** It doesn't need to be long — around a minute to a minute and a half is enough, as long as you come across as comfortable and genuine.

🎯 What The Interviewer Is Looking For

- Genuineness and comfort — this question exists to help you settle in and give them an open, honest sense of who you are as a person, not to trip you up.
- A natural, unforced introduction — not a memorised script or an overly formal pitch.
- No artificially forced link to dentistry — it's fine if one comes up naturally, but it shouldn't be manufactured.
- A good overall image of you as a person for the examiner to work with as they head into the rest of the interview.

⚠️ Common Mistake To Avoid

Treating this as a trick question and forcing a manufactured link to dentistry, or turning it into a self-promotional sales pitch instead of a natural introduction.

📌 Describe a moment or experience that solidified your decision to pursue dentistry.

💬 Model Answer

1. **Pick one solid point, not several.** The question asks for "a moment," not "moments" — you can only pick one, so choose something you're genuinely able to expand on in depth, rather than skimming across several different experiences.
2. **It should be something that genuinely resonated with you.** A personal experience, or something that really touched your heart, which led you to do more research into dentistry, or gave you a new insight into the field that resonated with you as a person and with your future goals.
3. **Don't frame it as the single reason you're applying.** I wouldn't say this is what purely made you want to apply — avoid implying that this one moment alone is the entire reason. It should read as a combination of things overall, but be honest that this particular moment played a big role in that decision — for example, it might be the moment after which you decided to go and get work experience, or the moment you decided "I want to apply to dentistry now."
4. **Reflect deeply on why it resonated with you specifically.** Make it unique to you as a person rather than a generic story — keep reflecting on why it resonated with you, why it mattered, and answer the question directly throughout.

This is entirely subjective, and examples could include: a personal experience with your own dental care, something you saw during your work experience, or a family member's experience with a dentist.

🎯 What The Interviewer Is Looking For

- They are not looking for one single experience presented as "the" reason you applied to dentistry — they're looking for something that has allowed you to develop your passion for the field over time, and genuinely want to apply.
- A real, meaningful experience — not something fake or exaggerated that doesn't actually carry much meaning for you.
- A clear explanation of *why* it mattered to you personally, not just a description of what happened — you need to mention the point and then explain why it has so much meaning to you.
- A personalised, subjective answer — since this is subjective to every person, what matters is why it played a major role in your decision to apply.

⚠️ Common Mistake To Avoid

Presenting this one moment as "the" single reason you're applying to dentistry — it should read as a significant part of the picture, not the whole story.

📌 What do you think is the biggest misconception the public has about dentists?

💬 Model Answer

1. **Pick a misconception you personally held (or a family member did).** This is a stronger answer than describing "the public" in the abstract, because it directly ties the question back to you. For example: you used to think dentistry was mainly about appearance and cosmetics, rather than genuine healthcare that diagnoses and manages disease.
2. **Explain what corrected it.** More research into the field, work experience, or talking to dental professionals in your family — be specific about what you actually did, not just that you "learned more" in a vague sense.
3. **Give a concrete example — don't just assert it.** Don't just say "dentistry is real healthcare, not just cosmetics" and leave it there. Back it up: for example, dentists screen for oral cancer at routine check-ups, and poor oral health is linked to serious systemic conditions like Type 2 diabetes through chronic gum inflammation — this is genuine disease prevention and management, not just appearance.
4. **Reflect on why the misconception was wrong.** Show that you understand the reality now, not just that your opinion flipped at some point.
5. **Bonus.** Mention that, now that you understand this, you'd want to help correct the same misconception in other people who might still hold it — essentially, give them the correct understanding of the field of dentistry.

🎯 What The Interviewer Is Looking For

- They are not looking for you to say dentists have done something wrong, or to criticise the profession — this should be a genuine misunderstanding the public commonly has about dentistry, not a complaint.
- A real point you can trace back to yourself — why you originally held the misconception, and what specifically rewired your understanding.
- Concrete evidence for why the misconception is wrong, not just a bare assertion that it is.
- Reflection on the process of updating your understanding — not just stating the before-and-after opinion, but showing how you got from one to the other.

⚠️ Common Mistake To Avoid

Turning this into criticism of dentists or the profession, or stating the misconception was wrong without any concrete evidence for why.

📌 A lot of people go into dentistry because of family background — is that true for you?

💬 Model Answer

This is subjective — some students have a family connection to dentistry, some don't. Either way, be honest and open about your actual situation.

If you do have a family connection: Don't be scared to say so. A lot of students worry that admitting "my mum's a dentist" or "I have a family member who's a dental professional" will count against them — it won't, as long as you're clear about the next part. You need to make it very clear that there's a distinct line between them being a dentist and you wanting to be one. Maybe you've taken a bit of inspiration from them, maybe you got some type of exposure or experience just because of them — but at the end of the day, this has to be your own life, your own experiences, your own interests, and your own passion, and you need to make that explicit to the interviewer rather than leaving it implied.

If you don't have a family connection: Also be honest — say plainly that you don't have any family members who are dentists or dental professionals, and then pivot straight into your own "why dentistry" answer: your own experiences, your own interests, your own passions, built through your work experience, your volunteering, and your research, and how that has ultimately led you to want to apply.

🎯 What The Interviewer Is Looking For

- Openness and honesty about your actual situation — a lot of people are scared to admit they have a family member who's a dentist or dental professional, but that fear is misplaced.
- A clear line of reasoning that your decision to apply is based on your own passion, your own interest, and your own experiences for this career path — not just because a family member happens to be in dentistry.
- If there is a family connection, definitely talk about the benefits it's had — but be clear that your main interest came from yourself and your own experiences, not from someone else's.
- If there isn't one, a confident pivot into outlining your own genuine interest in the field and how you're taking that further by applying.

⚠️ Common Mistake To Avoid

Hiding or downplaying a genuine family connection to dentistry out of fear it counts against you — it doesn't, as long as you clearly separate their influence from your own reasons.

📌 What would you do if you didn't get a place at dental school this year?

💬 Model Answer

1. **Show genuine persistence.** The mistake a lot of people make here is saying "I'm gonna go for another degree" or "I'm gonna go for nursing, pharmacy, whatever it may be." That signals you don't actually have a genuine drive for dentistry specifically. Show that you have a drive that won't stop at one setback — that you'll persist, reapply, and work harder.
2. **Root it in a genuine reason.** Talk about a specific experience you've been through that shows dentistry is the only thing you can see yourself doing, and that you'd feel you hadn't given it a proper shot if you didn't reapply — taking a gap year and resitting or reapplying if needed.
3. **Talk about how you'd improve your application on a gap year.** This is a crucial point: more work experience, more volunteering, more research into dentistry — concrete steps that make you a genuinely better candidate the second time round, not just "trying again" with nothing changed.
4. **Diagnose exactly what went wrong the first time.** Was it your A-Levels? Your personal statement? Your interview? Find that weakness and explain how you're going to work on it and turn it into a strength — this is crucial, not optional.

🎯 What The Interviewer Is Looking For

- First, whether you're genuinely persistent — that you feel dentistry is for you, and that you won't give up at the first failure or the first setback that comes your way.
- How exactly you'd bounce back from it — what specific things you'd work on, with real examples, not vague statements.
- That you can put it into words: "I'm going to find out what I did wrong the first time, make sure I don't make the same mistake again, and make my application a lot better so I can reapply and actually get in the second time."
- Self-awareness — the ability to identify exactly what likely went wrong the first time (grades, personal statement, or interview) and a clear plan to address that specific weakness.

⚠️ Common Mistake To Avoid

Saying you'd pivot to a different degree or career (nursing, pharmacy, etc.) instead of reapplying — this signals you're not genuinely committed to dentistry.

📌 What do you think is the most important role of a dentist in a patient's care?

💬 Model Answer

This is highly subjective — there are loads of different points you could choose from. One strong example is communication: it's a very important part of patient care because it allows the patient to feel a lot more comfortable (especially an anxious one), it allows the dentist to find out crucial information that can lead to a diagnosis, and eventually it allows the patient to be treated effectively. Essentially, you'll be able to give the best patient-centred care if you're a good communicator.

1. **Pick one point, maybe two at most.** Don't list several points superficially — depth beats breadth on this question.
2. **Explain why it matters.** Don't just name the point and move on — you really need to dive into why you've mentioned it.
3. **Trace it through to real patient benefit.** How would it help reach a diagnosis? How would it make the patient feel more comfortable? How would it benefit the patient in both the short term and the long term? Follow the point all the way through to its actual effect on the patient rather than leaving it as an abstract statement.

🎯 What The Interviewer Is Looking For

- This is genuinely subjective, with loads of different valid points to choose from — don't be scared about picking something "wrong," because it's most likely going to be right, and even if it's slightly unconventional, as long as you prove your point properly, you're fine.
- Depth of explanation on one or two points rather than a shallow list of many — you need to really dive into how the patient's care is affected by the point you've raised.
- A clear line of reasoning connecting the point you've chosen to concrete patient benefit, both immediate and longer-term.
- Justification for why you've chosen this point over other possible answers — you need to justify your point, not just state it.

⚠️ Common Mistake To Avoid

Listing several points superficially instead of picking one or two and genuinely justifying them in depth.

📌 Where do you see yourself in 5/10/20 years?

💬 Model Answer

Give a realistic representation of the actual dental career pathway at each stage, rather than a vague or overly ambitious answer.

1. **5 years.** If you're getting into dentistry, within the next five years you'll likely still be in dental school, or hopefully just starting Dental Foundation Training (DFT) afterwards — talk through the usual route people take.
2. **10 years.** You could talk about a certain area you're interested in going down right now — for example, if you want to stay in general dental practice, you'd be working as a general dentist, getting more experience, dealing with more patients, and so on; or if you're drawn to a specific area like orthodontics or oral surgery, you might be pursuing further training in that direction. Definitely acknowledge that your interest can change quite a lot over the years, and that you don't know for certain — but if this interest stays, that's the direction you'd be heading in.
3. **20 years.** Talk about how you've built on your skills and done something to benefit the wider population, not just the local community you look after — for example, done certain research or audit projects, continuously professionally developed, and tried to become the best dentist possible to give the best help possible.

A very important thing to mention throughout is that dentistry is constantly changing — AI-assisted diagnostic tools (for example, in reading radiographs) are a strong example of an innovation that's starting to change dental practice already, and you should talk about how you'd utilise different innovations like this to give patients the best possible care as they emerge.

🎯 What The Interviewer Is Looking For

- A long-term insight into what you're looking forward to in terms of your life and career, told realistically stage by stage.
- How you think the career of dentistry, or dentistry and healthcare more broadly, will change over the next five, ten, and twenty years — not just how you personally will progress. You need to show you've done research into the field to acknowledge that dentistry will keep changing, most likely for the better.
- Flexibility and honesty — acknowledging that specific interests, like a chosen area of focus, may well shift over time rather than presenting a rigid, over-certain plan.
- Understanding that even after finishing dental school, you're constantly learning — continuous professional development (CPD) and staying up to date with new innovations are a permanent part of being a good dentist, not a box you tick once.

⚠️ Common Mistake To Avoid

Presenting an over-confident, rigid life plan as though your area of focus and path are already fixed — always acknowledge that interests can and do change over time.

📌 Have you thought about what area of dentistry you might want to pursue?

💬 Model Answer

1. **Give a genuine, specific interest.** A lot of candidates already have some idea or representation of an ideal position they want to be in by the end of dental school — general practice, orthodontics, oral surgery, paediatric dentistry, whatever it may be. Give a genuine reason tied to why you're applying to dentistry in the first place, and talk about that specific area.
2. **Justify it with specific skills or traits, not just interest.** Always justify your point — don't just state what area intrigues you without saying why. For example, oral surgery: you have hands-on experience, you're very good with manual dexterity, and you feel like surgery would be the most interesting area to work in and where you could give the most help — you've always been interested in precise, hands-on work. Orthodontics: you're drawn to the long-term, visible transformation you can give a patient over a course of treatment. Paediatric dentistry: you work well with children and want to help shape good habits early. Link the area to something concrete and specific about you, not just "it sounds interesting."
3. **Always reflect, don't just state.** Don't just mention a point about which area intrigues you without explaining why — always justify, reflect, and appraise your point with a real example of why you're interested in it.
4. **Acknowledge this interest may change.** Dentistry is always changing, and you might learn new things over the course of your dental career that shift your interest. Acknowledge this directly and reflect on it within your answer — you're not claiming certainty, you're stating what genuinely interests you right now.

🎯 What The Interviewer Is Looking For

- Genuine passion for dentistry — a lot of candidates want to specialise, and the interviewer wants to see what research you've done into the field and what you think you want to become in the future.
- A clear justification linking your own skills or interests to the area you've named, not just naming one because it sounds impressive.
- Depth of reflection on *why*, not just *what* — you always need to justify and reflect on your point, not just state it.
- Openness and honesty about the fact that dentistry is constantly changing, and that your interest may well change along with it — you'll have to constantly adapt over the course of your dental life, but right now, this is what you're genuinely interested in.

⚠️ Common Mistake To Avoid

Naming an area because it sounds impressive rather than because you can genuinely justify it, or presenting it as a locked-in, permanent decision.
