



SAMPLE TEACH FAQ

We hope that these questions & answers help clarify the expectations of the interview task.

1. I WANT TO TEACH A TOPIC THAT IS TOO BIG FOR FIFTEEN MINUTES. CAN I HAVE MORE TIME?

No, there is a reason for the time limit. Your GA interview team isn't using the sample teach time to evaluate everything you know about your subject—if you've gotten to the sample teach phase, we are confident that you've proven yourself in your profession. What the sample teach shows us is whether you're capable of communicating something simply, succinctly and well. We'd much rather see that you are capable of choosing a small enough topic to teach a good lesson around (see rubric) than a poor lesson where the you try to cram as many subject-area facts and tangents as possible in 15 minutes.

2. THIS SAMPLE TEACH IS AN INTERVIEW. IF ONE OF THE 'STUDENTS' ASKS A QUESTION AND IT'S NOT IMMEDIATELY RELEVANT, CAN I BYPASS ANSWERING THEIR QUESTION, ESPECIALLY IF I'M RUNNING OUT OF TIME?

Yes, on most occasions. Effective management is an important aspect of being a teacher, so we want to simulate that in the sample teach. Being able to gauge individual student questions while prioritizing getting the whole class to the end goal of the lesson is key to facilitating a large group. If you feel as if the question will be addressed later on in your lesson or at a more relevant time, you can let the 'student' know. For example, you could tell the student that you'll actually answer that soon in the lesson, or acknowledge that it's an interesting question but a bit beyond the scope of the lesson, so you'd be happy to follow up with the student after class. That being said, we are also interested in your ability to answer relevant student questions on the fly.

3. WHAT BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE SHOULD I ASSUME STUDENTS HAVE FOR THIS LESSON?

You can approach this by assigning prior knowledge to the class, and, in most cases, your course-specific Sample Teach prompt, which outlines the topic for the sample teach, outlines what you can expect students to know at the start of the lesson. How to make use of this information? As you frame your lesson, you can just 'tell' the class where the lesson falls by referencing the 'last class's lesson (even though it's a 'fake' last class). For example, you could begin with "During the last class, we introduced variables and how they allow us to do X, Y, and Z. Today, we are going to focus on one small part of Y to help us prepare for the activity later on today." That said, bear in mind that it is normal for students not to have fully learned something even if they've "covered it" before.

4. WHAT SHOULD I COME PREPARED WITH? DO I HAVE TO CREATE OR USE A SLIDE DECK?

You should come prepared to teach your 15-minute lesson using at least one visual aid. This may mean preparing slides or handouts beforehand or planning to write on the white board during your lesson. Using a Powerpoint or Keynote deck isn't required, but they are oftentimes useful in a classroom of visual learners. Note that, as part of your sample teach assignment, you'll be submitting your lesson plan to GA prior to the actual lesson. And, while this means that we will be able to read through the lesson planned, you'll have to imagine that that 'students' will not have any visual cues outside of what you provide in the moment.



5. AM I SUPPOSED TO BE ABLE TO DO EVERY TEACHING TACTIC OUTLINED IN THE SAMPLE TEACH GUIDE DURING MY SAMPLE TEACH?

No - but we'd like you to try! We know that it takes a lot of time and practice to become an excellent instructor (in fact, we are always pushing ourselves to learn and improve as instructors, too). As a new instructor, what matters to us is that you push yourself to try something new in your lesson and move beyond just giving a monologue with an accompanying slide deck. Try incorporating checks for understanding, a pair activity, or an assessment!

6. WHAT MATERIALS WILL BE AVAILABLE TO ME AT GA?

Our classroom walls have been painted to act as whiteboards, so you'll be able to write or sketch on the walls. Our student desks are also whiteboards, so you can ask students to write or sketch on their desks. Aside from whiteboards, markers and a projector, let your interviewer know if you'd like to use additional materials.

7. HOW CLOSELY DO THESE MATERIALS REFLECT WHAT I'LL ACTUALLY BE GIVEN AS AN INSTRUCTOR AT GA?

At GA, we have an Education Product Team dedicated to building out useful curriculum materials for our instructors. That being said, we want all of our instructors to develop the ability to thoughtfully put together a lesson, and of course, to demonstrate industry knowledge and skills. As a GA instructor, you will have access to materials that will help you craft, customize, and deliver your lessons. In effect, then, the sample teach task models the exact process that you'll be asked to perform as an instructor at GA: you'll be given a set of course materials and resources that you'll be able to customize and adapt to your own teaching style. It's important to note that, while some things need to stay the same across courses (syllabus, lesson objectives, assessments, etc), courses are brought to life when you add your personal experience, anecdotes, and own personal style to the GA materials.

8. HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO GIVE AN ASSESSMENT? THE ITEMS IN THE CHECKING FOR UNDERSTANDING DOCUMENT IN THE SAMPLE TEACH MATERIALS DO NOT INCLUDE ANY TESTS OR HOMEWORK. ALSO, WHEN WOULD I CHECK THE TESTS DURING THE SAMPLE TEACH?

Good question! We love how you are thinking about how to measure student learning and progress. However, contrary to popular belief, most assessments used in class at GA are non-graded, informal activities that serve as quick, active ways for instructors and students to get a 'pulse' on their learning. Assessments -- of all kinds -- are really just ways to determine "Are students learning or not?" so that you can adjust your instruction accordingly. For your lesson, the only "assessment" you must do is check for your students' understanding of the lesson as you go along. To do this, you can try one of the techniques listed in the [Checking for Understanding document](#).

9. I HAVEN'T SEEN A LOT OF THESE TACTICS USED WITH ADULT LEARNERS BEFORE. WHY IS GA RECOMMENDING THEM?

GA recommends interactive and practice-based learning approaches in our classrooms because research in many areas of education has proven that these practices enhance student learning. With that in mind, some of the tactics and approaches we recommend may be surprising to candidates who have attended or are used to teaching in lecture-based learning environments. If these practices are new to you, we invite you to try some of these new tactics or sign up for one of our workshops to get a sense of a GA class in action.

10. I SEE THAT WE NOT ONLY HAVE TO GIVE OUR PRACTICE LESSON ONCE FOR 15 MINUTES, BUT WE ALSO HAVE TO DO IT AGAIN FOR ANOTHER 5 MINUTES. WHY IS THIS? HOW WILL I KNOW WHAT TO DO FOR THE SECOND 5-MINUTE LESSON?

One of the best indicators of whether or not a new instructor will grow into a skilled teacher is their willingness to seek out feedback and use it to grow. The purpose of asking interviewees to teach again is that this gives the interview team a chance to see how the candidate responds to feedback and whether they are able to improve given the opportunity to re-teach a portion of the lesson.



11. HOW DO YOU MEASURE A SUCCESSFUL SAMPLE TEACH?

We consider a sample teach successful when:

- › The objectives and assessments are clearly outlined at the beginning
- › The lesson structure is comprised of I Do, We Do, You Do (i.e. you use the Sample Teach Lesson Plan Model)
- › You use questions and other methods to determine if the class understands the lesson
- › You were able to reflect and implement changes in your teaching practice based on feedback from the group

** Please keep in mind that there are other factors that we consider when determining whether we will furnish an offer of employment.

12. DO YOU HAVE ANY TIPS FOR ME?

Just two that we emphasize during this process that are not covered in the Sample Teach Guide:

- Be yourself! Teaching at GA is an opportunity to show not only what you can teach (your content knowledge) but also how you teach (your style, personality, how you foster engagement and buy-in from students).
- Keep time! We will be. You'll want to keep a cell phone or digital clock near you so that you can ensure that you are on track to meet the requirements of the lesson.