

Module: Job Search
Topic: Preparing for a Successful Job Interview
Competency: The student will demonstrate skills essential for a job interview.
Length: Two class periods
Objective: Students will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain the purpose for an interview • Identify the do's and don'ts for job interviewing • Practice good job interview skills
Materials: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interview Checklist (for evaluating interview) • Interview Questions (tips for answering and blank form) • Grab Bag with props to explain "Do's and Don'ts" of interviewing (gaudy flashy dress, jewelry, towels/soap, gum cell phone, tie, tee shirt with inappropriate slang, deodorant, brush/comb, cap, dirty and wrinkled clothes, watch or some other time piece, etc.) • Do's and Don'ts of Job Interviewing
Description of Activity: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explain to students that an interview is a meeting between a job applicant and a representative of the company. The meeting comes about because the company has a job opening. The company may advertise the job on the Internet, newspaper, job hotline, or other methods. A person applies for the job and then the company decides who gets the job. The interview is also the job applicant's opportunity to learn more about the company's business. 2. Ask students why they think companies use the interview process. The company wants a chance to get to know you, learn about your work experience, and to see if they think you would fit in with their other employees. Companies do not interview every applicant. They prescreen the applications. Some may give a skills assessment or even a pre-employment drug screen. If you do not meet the minimum requirements, you are not interviewed.

3. Not all jobs require an interview. Some examples might be digging ditches or graves, trimming trees or other yard maintenance, trash collection, etc. In other words, if a special skill is not needed, but just involves manual work, an interview may not be required. If a special skill is required, companies want to learn more about the skills you possess. What is your skill level in reading, writing, and doing math? Do you get along with others? Do you have good communication skills? Discuss with students job interview skills that include preparation, attitude, and personal appearance.
4. Invite a human resources manager from a business such as a bank or other company that hires a number of employees to discuss job interview skills and employer expectations.
5. Each student should get a copy of the Do's and Don'ts on Job Interviewing. Go over the Do's and Don'ts. Put a variety of props in a grab bag and have students pull out an item and explain how it relates to a job interview. Some examples are provided but use different props to ask student what it means in a job interview. After this presentation, students will role play job interviewer/interviewee. Students should dress appropriately. If possible video-tape the interview. Students will critique and make suggestions for improvement. See Interview Checklist. The teacher could use the checklist or have students use it to evaluate the participants in the interview.

Evaluation:

Students will demonstrate skills in preparing for an interview and using appropriate interview strategies.

INTERVIEW CHECKLIST

Once students are doing the role-play of interviews, the instructor or class could observe the interview and rate the following:

1. Opened the interview appropriately. (shook hands while stating employer's name, own name, and why he or she is there)	
2. Appeared friendly and courteous.	
3. Answered questions by using success stories or examples (proof) of skills for the job.	
4. Maintained good eye contact and good posture.	
5. Avoided using "I just..." and "I only..."	
6. Avoided "annoying" mannerisms (biting nails, fidgeting in seat, twisting hair, jingling coins or keys in pocket).	
7. Spoke clearly and avoided slang or "fillers" (umm...like....you know.)	
8. Asked the employer questions about the job.	
9. Concluded the interview with a summary of key points.	
10. Shook hands and thanked the person for his or her time.	
11. Asked when to call to learn of the employer's decision.	

PRACTICE INTERVIEW SCRIPT FOR AN EMPLOYER/JOB APPLICANT

Give each student a copy of the 10 questions that employers typically ask. They can review the tips for answering the questions and then complete the handout with the questions on how they would answer for the interview. Ask a student to play the role of the employer and the instructor plays the applicant. Demonstrate with the students how to give a firm handshake. Have them practice with a classmate.

On the first interview, model inappropriate responses such as complaining about the directions or other things about how your day is going. Refer to the Don'ts in an interview and use those as well. You may even want to wear some "inappropriate" clothes for the interview. Students will see visually how a "bad" interview looks. On the second interview, model good interview skills. Next let the students role-play the role of employer and applicant until all students have a chance to practice an interview.

Begin the interview by saying:

Employer: **Hello, can I help you?**

Applicant: **Mr. /Ms. _____, my name is _____ and I am here to interview for the position of _____.**

Employer: **Yes, (applicant's name), please have a seat at the table. Did you have any trouble finding the office or parking?**

Applicant responds.

Employer: **Why are you interested in working for our company?**

Select 5 questions from Interview Questions.

Employer: **Well, (applicant's name), I believe I have all the information I need unless you have some questions. Thank you for coming to see me.**

Applicant

If you are applying for a job where uniforms are worn, you may ask the following.

Are uniforms required (the type of business such as a fast food restaurant would prompt this question)? If so, does the employee pay for them or are they provided? What are the work hours? Do you work on weekends?

Stop here to see how the applicant uses his or her skills to close the interview.

Ten Commonly Asked Interview Questions and Tips on How to Answer

1. Tell me about yourself. Tip -Talk about a couple of your key achievements and the interviewer will likely select an accomplishment and ask you to tell more about it.
2. What is your greatest strength? Tip - Figure out what your number one strength or skill is, then talk briefly about it and provide a good example. Before going into an interview, write down several of your top strengths and examples of each.
3. Can you describe a situation in your past where you learned from a mistake? Tip - The best mistakes to share are those from which you learned something. Use your mistakes to show how you have matured and grown.
4. What is the most difficult situation you have ever faced? Tip - Pick an example in which you successfully resolved a tough situation. Tell your story briefly but try to reveal as many good qualities as possible. Your interviewer wants to hear about qualities such as perseverance, good judgment and maturity.
5. Is there anything you would like to improve about yourself? Tip - Pick a weakness (for example, not being comfortable with public speaking or even oral presentations in the class), then show how you're working to improve it (being part of a debating team). Your goal here is to provide a short answer that satisfies the interviewer.
6. What is the most important thing you are looking for in a job? Tip - Figure out what you want most in a job. You might value challenge, good working conditions, or friendly co-workers. Talk about one or two items and explain why they are important to you.
7. What are your career goals? Tip - The interviewer likes to see if you are a person that plans your future and if you might be someone that would meet the company's needs after you finish school. Your task is to talk about the goals that you think the company can help you achieve. You score points if you leave the impression you are a growth-oriented person with realistic expectations. As a teenager, you may be working to earn spending money or to pay for a car and gas. That shows initiative and planning.

8. What motivates you? Tip - Challenge, creativity, success, opportunity and personal growth are most frequently mentioned. You can also mention specific skills that you are motivated to use, such as problem solving, decision making, listening, writing, speaking, planning or counseling people.
9. Why would you like to work for us? Tip - This is a great opportunity to impress the interviewer with what you know about their organization. Talk about the positives of their organization.
10. Why should I hire you? Tip - This is a great opportunity to sell you. Talk about your strengths and how they fit the needs of the company. You can briefly talk about skills or strengths that haven't already been discussed.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Answer each of the following questions and prepare for a “mock” interview.

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. What is your greatest strength?
3. Can you describe a situation in your past where you learned from a mistake?
4. What is the most difficult situation you have ever faced?
5. Is there anything you would like to improve about yourself?
6. What is the most important thing you are looking for in a job?
7. What are your career goals?
8. What motivates you?
9. Why would you like to work for us?
10. Why should I hire you?

DO'S AND DON'TS OF JOB INTERVIEWING

DO's

1. Wear dress pants or skirt that reaches your knees. (Girls)
2. Pay attention to your personal grooming and cleanliness.
3. Know the exact time and location for your interview.
4. Arrive early; at least 10 minutes prior to the interview start time.
5. Treat all people you encounter with courtesy and respect. Secretaries and receptionists also have first impressions and frequently share their opinions with the interviewers.
6. Offer a firm handshake.
7. Show a positive attitude during the interview.
8. Maintain good eye contact during the interview.
9. Respond to questions and back up your statements about yourself with specific examples whenever possible. Ask for clarification if you don't understand a question.
10. Be thorough in your responses but don't ramble on forever. Be concise in your wording.
11. Be honest and be yourself. Dishonesty gets discovered.
12. Exhibit a positive attitude. The interviewer is evaluating you as a potential co-worker.
13. Have intelligent questions prepared to ask the interviewer. The interview can be a two-way street. You can ask what kind of employee they are looking for and return with an explanation of how you fit that description.

DO'S AND DON'TS OF JOB INTERVIEWING

DON'Ts

1. Don't wear a blouse or dress too revealing. (girls)
2. Don't wear lots of jewelry.
3. Don't wear clothing with sequins, etc. Better to be conservative. (girls)
4. Don't make negative comments about previous employers or others.
5. Don't falsify application materials or answers to interview questions.
6. Don't arrive late.
7. Don't give the impression you are only interested in salary; don't ask about salary and benefit issues until your interviewer brings up the subject.
8. Don't act as though you would take any job or are desperate for employment.
9. Don't be unprepared for typical interview questions. You may not be asked all of them in every interview, but being unprepared looks foolish.
10. Don't refer to the interviewer as "Dude."
11. Don't go to extremes with your posture; don't slouch, and don't sit rigidly on the edge of your chair.
12. Don't chew gum.
13. Don't smoke even if you are offered the opportunity. Most work places are smoke free environments.