Welcome to Spotlight. I’m Bruce Gulland. And I’m Christy VanArragon. Spotlight uses a special English method of broadcasting. It is easier for people to understand, no matter where in the world they live. Imagine you are looking for a job. You worked hard applying for jobs. And now you have a job interview. You celebrate. But you do not yet have a job offer. First, you must perform well in the interview meeting - you must perform better than the other job candidates! What can you do to improve your chances of getting a job offer? To get any job you have to perform well at a job interview. At an interview meeting the employer will ask the job candidate many questions. Some people say that a job interview is like selling something. In a job interview, the job candidate is selling himself! He is selling the idea that he can do this job better than anyone else. He wants the employer to believe this too. This makes many people worry. Today’s Spotlight is on job interview skills. Many organisations around the world make suggestions about what to do before an interview. They all agree that you must prepare well for your job interview. The Connecticut Department of Labor is a government agency in the United States. It helps people to get jobs. On its website, it advises, ‘Prepare early. If you are better prepared you will worry less. And your chances of success will be greater.’ There are some common questions that employers often ask in interviews. You can prepare answers for these questions before your interview. Do some research about the company. Find out about its size, products, and profits. Learn about the industry. You can then show your knowledge and understanding of the company in your answers. When you have prepared your answers, practice them. Ask a friend or family member to ask you questions. Then, you can say your answers again and again. Then you will remember the information well. Let’s look at some of the most common questions. Tell me about yourself. An employer will often start an interview with a question like this. But employers do not want to hear your whole life history. Talk about the parts of your life that prepare you for this particular job. You should talk about what you studied at college or university, your past jobs and your interest in the area of work. Remember to explain why your past experience has led you to want this particular job. What are your strengths and weaknesses? Give three examples of your strong qualities or skills. Choose qualities that are important for the particular job. Then give some real examples of when you have used them. Many people find it difficult to answer the question about their areas of weakness. But you must not say that you have no weaknesses. The National Careers Service in the UK advises, ‘Do not list many weaknesses if you are asked about them. Only state one! Choose a minor failing that is not necessary to the job. Turn it into a positive, such as how you have worked on the weakness. Or you could present it as a chance for development.’ Why should we employ you? Why do you want to work here? The employer wants to know that you understand what the job is about. Your answer should show how and why you would be perfect for the job. Again, remember that you are selling yourself. Explain what you can do for the company. Your research about the company will help you create a good answer. You will be able to explain how your goals relate to what the company wants. Where do you see yourself in five years’ time? The employer wants to see that you have considered your future. You should show your excitement about the job and the industry. You should also explain how you plan to progress. This will show the employer that you will try hard to move forward. Do you have any questions? You must always have one or two questions to ask. This shows your real interest in the job. Prepare a few questions about the job or company, so that you are ready. Employers will also ask other questions. They often ask you to give real examples of how you behaved in particular situations. For example, how you dealt with conflict, or how you provided leadership. Bob Lotich wrote about his experience of job interviews. He found it difficult to think of examples during the interview. But he solved this problem, ‘Next time I had an interview I decided to spend a few hours thinking about stories of achievement, conflict resolution, and other answers to interview questions. Three of the most common ones that I saw in my job interviews were: How I helped solve a problem at work A time when I made a mistake and how I fixed it How I dealt with an unpleasant worker I would go into the interview with examples from my past. The questions were often a little different. But most of the time I could find a way to use that story in an answer to their questions. I did not have the pressure or difficulty of trying to think about it quickly.’ Like Lotich, you can prepare stories of your experience to share. Work on these stories in the same way that you work on your answers to the other questions. Then you will feel prepared for your job interview. When you walk into the interview, greet the interviewers. In the UK and USA you will be expected to shake the employer’s hand. And during the interview you will be expected to look the employer in the eye. The employer will consider this behaviour as a sign of honesty and respect for what is being said. People in other countries and cultures may expect different behaviour. For example, in many Latin American and Asian countries the employer will consider it disrespectful to look him in the eye. You must make sure that you understand the culture of the employer. Stay calm during the interview. Do not worry if you do not understand a question. Do not be afraid to ask the employer if he could explain the question further. Be positive and be confident. The interview will soon be over. Then you can rest! If you are offered the job you can celebrate. But what if you are not offered the job? You may ask the employer to comment on your interview performance. You should think about your interview experience. This will help you improve for the next time. The writer of this programme was Katy Blake. The producer was Bruce Gulland. The voices you heard were from the United Kingdom and the United States. All quotes were adapted for this programme and voiced by Spotlight. You can listen to this programme again, and read it, on the internet at www.radioenglish.net. This programme is called, ‘Job Interview Skills’. We hope you can join us again for the next Spotlight programme. Goodbye.