

Sample Interview Questions for Teachers

Below are some sample teacher interview questions. These questions are quite common for high school, middle school, and elementary teacher interviews. The difficulty level of these questions vary from easy to more difficult, but all of which are typical of a standard interview. When given an interview as a teacher, it is important to realize that you can prepare for it just as you would for an important test.

The Introduction Questions

1. Why are you a good fit for this job and our school district?
2. What makes you qualified for this teaching position?
3. Tell us a little about your professional experiences.
4. Do you have a professional portfolio you would like to share with us?
5. Why did you become a teacher?
6. Name three words that describe you.
7. What is your philosophy on teaching?
8. What separates you from other teaching candidates?

Questions about College and Student Teaching

1. How well has your university prepared you for teaching?
2. What was the most useful college course you have taken?
3. What is the most important thing you learned from your cooperating teacher?
4. What was the most important thing you learned from your overall student teaching experience?
5. Describe your student teaching experience.

Personal Information

1. Where do you see yourself in ten years?
2. What are your three greatest strengths?
3. Name three of your weaknesses.
4. What is the most satisfying thing about teaching?
5. What is the biggest challenge in teaching?
6. What is the scariest thing about teaching?
7. What part of teaching do you look the most forward to?
8. What is the last book you read? When did you read it? Tell us about it.
9. Are you interested in extracurricular involvement at our school?
10. What are the important aspects of a good principal?
11. What is your least favorite subject, and age group, to teach?
12. Have you ever been a substitute teacher? Describe that experience.
13. What type of in-service topics would you be most interested in?
14. Do you belong to any professional teaching organizations?
15. What is the difference between a good teacher and an outstanding teacher?
16. Have you ever received an award?

17. What type of student were you in high school?
18. What are your interests outside of teaching?
19. Do you belong to any social networking websites (Facebook, etc.)? Do you mind logging in and showing us your profile right now?
20. What do you feel is wrong with public education?
21. Are you a flexible person?
22. Why do you want to teach in this district?
23. Tell us about your references and what they would say about you if they were here with us today.
24. What would your last boss say about you?
25. How would one of your students describe you?
26. Are you actively involved in any type of community service?
27. Imagine you are at your retirement party at the end of your career. How would people describe you as a teacher?
28. Do you want students to like you? Why or why not?
29. Who do you look up to and want to emulate?

Interview Questions about Teaching Style

1. Would you say that you are a tough teacher?
2. Describe an example of when you used positive reinforcement.
3. How do you integrate technology into your lessons?
4. Are you a team player? Give us an example.
5. How do you allow students to express their creativity in your classroom?
6. Do you have students use higher order thinking in your class? Give an example.
7. How do you develop self-esteem within students?
8. How do you prepare students for standardized testing?
9. How do you make learning fun?
10. Describe a typical lesson.
11. What are techniques you use to teach besides direct instruction?
12. What do you do if the whole class is “not getting it”?
13. How closely do you follow your lesson plan?
14. What do you put in your learning objectives of your lesson plan?
15. How do you incorporate writing into your lessons?
16. Describe the most effective teaching techniques.
17. How do you connect your lessons to the “real world”?
18. Is it ok for a classroom to be noisy?
19. How much homework do you assign and how often do you assign it? How do you know this is a good amount?
20. How do you stay current in your field?

Interview Questions about Teacher Communication

1. Give us examples of how you communicated with other teachers in your department?
2. Give us an example of effective communication with an administrator.
3. Have you ever utilized a class newsletter? What did you include in the letter?
4. How would you deal with an angry parent if they called you?
5. How do you communicate with parents on a regular basis?

6. How do you keep parents aware of their son's or daughter's grades?
7. How would you react if a parent complained about your class?
8. What would you tell a parent if he or she was concerned about their kid's grades?
9. What would you do if you received a note from a parent asking for their son to be excused from last night's homework because the student was too busy with another activity?
10. What course of action would you take if a student says he or she is being abused at home?

Teacher Interview Questions About Differentiating Instruction

1. Give an example of how you differentiated instruction in a lesson.
2. How do you accommodate for a gifted student in your class?
3. How do you manage students with different reading abilities?
4. Explain how you meet IEP needs.
5. How do you feel about inclusive classrooms?
6. What is your experience co-teaching with an inclusion specialist?
7. How do you accommodate for non-English speakers?

Questions about Classroom Management

1. What is your classroom management plan and what do you hope to accomplish with it?
2. What does a model classroom look like to you?
3. How do you avoid misbehavior altogether?
4. What was the most difficult child you have ever dealt with?
5. Would you create a behavior modification plan for ongoing misbehavior?
6. What is the most challenging behavioral situation you have ever dealt with? How did you react?
7. What are your classroom rules?

The Closing Interview Questions

1. Is there anything we have not talked about that you would like to share with us?
2. Do you have any questions for us?

5 Interview Mistakes you don't know you're making

Mistake #1: You didn't speak directly to the school culture and needs. Don't fall into the trap of thinking every school is alike. While the trappings may look similar, schools are as different as the people who work, teach, and learn in them. And, beyond school culture, there are also circumstantial differences—some schools are in growth mode, adding students and grades; others are in turnaround mode—starting over, fixing what's broken. Research the school prior to the interview so you can weave highly relevant thoughts, ideas, and experiences into your answers. For example, talk about how your experience leading a grade-level team through a curriculum overhaul makes you a good choice given this school's adoption of new textbooks next year. Conduct your research by talking to teachers and others familiar with the school, checking out the school's website and social media accounts, and reading the local paper.

Mistake #2: You weren't specific enough about your experiences. In a lot of ways, this one comes down to your storytelling skills. Most teachers, if they've been in the classroom long enough, have made a connection with a hard-to-reach student, dealt with a difficult parent in a tricky situation, and successfully prepared reluctant students for state tests. What makes you and

your experiences different? Take an English teacher's advice and distinguish your stories (and interview!) from others by "showing, not telling." Use students' names (they can be changed), set the stage, build tension, describe emotions, etc. Don't go overboard, but do bring your stories to life for your interviewer. Good, concise storytelling makes you memorable.

Mistake #3: You sidestepped the "failure" question. Everyone fails at some point in their career. You know it and your interviewer knows it. That's why she asks about it. When you respond that you can't think of a time you failed or you describe a team failure that was mostly everyone else's fault, you appear disingenuous. So, be honest, not evasive. Keep in mind the previous point and tell your interviewer about a time you let yourself and others down, and then—most importantly!—tell her what you learned and how you do things differently now. This is not a "gotcha" question—it's designed to reveal your growth mindset and level of self-awareness.

Mistake #4: You appear "distant" during the interview. It happens to the best of us—despite hours of preparation, you flub the answer to a question that just hours earlier you'd delivered flawlessly in front of the mirror. But your biggest mistake isn't the flubbed answer, it's what happens afterward: you re-run your answer through your mind and ever so slightly, you grimace as you do. The problem is two-fold: one, by dwelling on what you've already said, you're taken out of the present moment, causing you to appear distant, even uninterested. Second, your interviewer is perceptive enough to pick up on your pained facial expressions but not so perceptive to know they're directed inward and not at him.

To avoid this problem, practice positive body language. Oh, and give yourself a break if you miss an answer. It'll be OK, you probably did better than you think.

Mistake #5: You didn't speak to results. Numbers matter. They're attention-getters on the resume and deal-cinchers in the interview.

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One last thing about not getting an offer after an interview—it's not always you, sometimes it's them. You might have been fantastic in your interview, but for other reasons (which you may never know), you weren't the right fit. If you are honest with yourself, you probably felt it too. Don't worry, the right fit is out there. Just keep interviewing.