Lesson Plan

Demonstrating Professionalism
Approaching a Job Interview

Objective: Students will act out interview scenarios demonstrating positive and not-so-positive ways to represent themselves and explore the importance of making good first impressions. Students will identify positive behaviors associated with professionalism and plan for ways to approach a potential employer.

Workplace Readiness Skill: **Demonstrate professionalism.**

*Demonstration includes*

* *defining* ***professionalism***
* *practicing punctuality and attendance*
* *adhering to work-schedule expectations*
* *exercising etiquette (e.g., language, manners, and behaviors suitable for the workplace and online; appropriate verbal and nonverbal communication)*
* *exhibiting professional self-representation (e.g., using a firm handshake, introducing oneself, making eye contact)*
* *maintaining professional appearance (e.g., maintaining personal hygiene, adhering to a dress code).*

Correlations to Other Workplace Readiness Skills:

* Demonstrate work ethic.
* Demonstrate customer service skills.
* Demonstrate big-picture thinking.
* Demonstrate career- and life-management skills.

Correlations to the Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL):

English: 6.2, 6.7, 7.1, 7.2, 7.7, 8.2, 8.7, 9.1, 9.6, 10.1, 10.6, 11.1

History and Social Science: CE.1, CE.4, CE.14, GOVT.1, GOVT.16

Instructional Steps:

1. ***Introduce the lesson by explaining to students that many times, an employer will decide within the first 30 seconds of meeting an applicant whether that person is right for a job.*** Ask, “Why do you think that first 30 seconds is so important? What can you learn about someone in 30 seconds?” Demonstrate by exiting the room, then entering with behaviors and body language (positive or negative) designed to elicit a response from students. What messages are conveyed through things like body language, eye contact (or lack thereof), attire, and greetings (or lack thereof)? Use Handout #1: First Impressions to brainstorm a list of positive and negative impressions and explain why certain behaviors may be seen as negative.
2. ***Explain that, today, the class is going to act out skits to demonstrate positive and negative interview behaviors.*** Use the interview role play scripts on pages 48-52 of the lesson entitled “Believe It or Not: Your Attitude and Enthusiasm Just Might Get You the Job” from [Soft Skills to Pay the Bills — Mastering Soft Skills for Workplace Success](https://www.dol.gov/odep/topics/youth/softskills/) (<https://www.dol.gov/odep/topics/youth/softskills/>), from the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy. Ask student volunteers to play the various roles and use the activity to continue the discussion of positive and negative interview behaviors. What are the takeaways from this activity?
3. ***Reflect in writing.*** Once whole-class and/or small-group discussions have taken place, ask students to reflect in writing on the following prompt:

*We all make assumptions—both positive and negative— about people based upon how they represent themselves. This is true of prospective employers. After participating in the role play activity today, describe three-five things you can do to ensure that you represent yourself in a way that leaves a prospective employer with a positive first impression.*

Formative Assessment**:**

* Assess student understanding as demonstrated in the class and small group discussions, as well as during the role play activity.
* Evaluate student understanding of concepts within the lesson as demonstrated by responses to the journal prompt. Use the Journal Assessment Rubric to evaluate student writing.

Options for Adaptation/Differentiation:

* To complete this activity in a shorter amount of time, use the video from the U.S. Department of Labor entitled [“Soft Skills: Enthusiasm and Attitude”](https://youtu.be/-vk-99seC_I) (<https://youtu.be/-vk-99seC_I>) in lieu of the student role play activity.
* To extend this activity and provide further enrichment, ask students to conduct an Internet search for articles that offer tips on making positive impressions during a job interview. Complete a research activity where groups of students research various articles and report their findings, or tips, to the class.

Suggestions for Follow-up:

* Invite a manager or a human resources professional from business and industry to discuss what his/her company looks for when interviewing prospective employees.
* Ask students to choose one or two of the behaviors that demonstrate professionalism and use them at school, home, or work. Follow up after a week and hold a class discussion about the experiment. Ask, “What reaction did that behavior elicit in others? Did people notice?”