

Lesson Plan

Career- and Life-management Skills



Preparing for a Job Interview

Objective: Students will prepare for a job interview by defining the characteristics of a successful interviewee, discussing common interview questions and appropriate answers to them, and by participating in a mock interview.

Workplace Readiness Skill: **Demonstrate career- and life-management skills.**

Demonstration includes

- *recognizing the importance of education and career planning (e.g., minimum job qualifications, advancement and professional-development opportunities)*
- *identifying available benefits and professional resources (e.g., labor unions, professional organizations, employee-assistance programs, insurance and retirement benefits)*
- *managing personal growth and wellness (e.g., stress management, self-care, financial planning)*
- *setting goals (e.g., specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, time-bound [SMART] goals).*

Correlations to Other Workplace Readiness Skills:

- Demonstrate creativity and innovation.
- Demonstrate critical thinking and problem solving.
- Demonstrate big-picture thinking.
- Demonstrate continuous learning and adaptability.
- Demonstrate professionalism.

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, 11.6
History and Social Science: CE.1, CE.4, GOVT.1, GOVT.16

Instructional Steps:

1. **Introduce the lesson by showing the YouTube video entitled, “[Soft Skills—Enthusiasm and Attitude](https://youtu.be/-vk-99seC_I)”** (https://youtu.be/-vk-99seC_I). Discuss the examples shown in the video and complete Handout #1: Two Interviews. Follow up by brainstorming positive interview behaviors as a class. Display or distribute Handout #2: Interview Guidelines; discuss.
2. **Ask, “How many of you get nervous before a job interview or think you would get nervous?”** Get a show of hands. Explain that interviewing for a job is stressful to almost everyone, but that stress can be diminished significantly by preparing for the interview. Tell students that today they are going to participate in exercises designed to make them more knowledgeable about, and comfortable with, the interview process.

3. **Discuss the purpose of a job interview.** Just as prospective employees have career goals, organizations and companies have goals to meet. Hiring competent staff members goes a long way toward helping an organization meet its goals. A job interview offers a glimpse into the personality of a prospective employee; it allows the employer to get a sense for which candidate is best suited for the company based upon factors such as skill set, temperament, habits, and more. Explain that well-thought-out, open-ended questions asked during an interview help bring about topics of conversation that allow an employer to learn more about a prospective employee.
4. **Distribute or project sample interview questions.** Explain to students that they'll have the opportunity to preview common types of interview questions, brainstorm appropriate answers, and to ask and answer these questions in a mock interview. Display Teacher Resource #1: Common Interview Questions. Using one of the questions as an example, break it down, asking, "Based on this question, what is the employer trying to learn?" "What are appropriate ways to answer this question?" "What would be an example of something NOT to say in response to this question?"
5. **Ask students to work in pairs to answer interview questions.** This activity provides a valuable opportunity for students to break down each sample interview question and brainstorm:

Why would an employer want to ask this question?

What can the interviewer learn about me based upon my answer to this question?

What are some desirable responses to this question? What are some undesirable responses?

Once students have had an opportunity to jot down ideas and discuss the various interview questions, discuss them as a class.

6. **Conduct mock interviews.** Explain to students that mock interviewing is an effective technique to help prepare for a job interview. Emphasize the importance of approaching the mock interview professionally and seriously so that the exercise has the greatest impact. To demonstrate the process, bring a pair of students up and choose three or four of the interview questions discussed. Assign one student to be the interviewer and the other to be the interviewee. In this example, the teacher may want to act as a second interviewer to keep things on track and set the tone for the mock interviews. Discuss conventions such as hand shaking, the importance of eye contact, and other details that are meaningful in the context of a job interview. Then conduct the sample interview. Ask students to point out constructive pointers for the interviewee, before breaking into groups or pairs* to conduct their own mock interviews. *Note: Ask students to switch roles during the mock interviews so that all students have an opportunity to ask and answer interview questions.
7. **Reflect on the mock interviews.** Once students have had an opportunity to conduct mock interviews in pairs or groups, bring the class back together and discuss. Ask, "How did it feel to be asked the interview questions?" "How aware of your body language were you?" "What tips did you share with your partner(s)?"

Formative Assessment:

- Evaluate student responses as recorded on Handout #1: Two Interviews (sample student responses can be found at the end of this document).
- Assess student understanding as demonstrated in the class and small group discussions.
- Evaluate student understanding of concepts within the lesson as demonstrated by responses to the mock interviews. Teachers may want to consider recording the mock interview sessions so that students have the opportunity to assess their own body language and responses to the interview questions.

Options for Adaptation/Differentiation:

- To complete this activity in a shorter amount of time, simply call a few students up to answer one interview question each, rather than conducting mock interviews for all.
- To extend this activity and provide further enrichment, record the mock interviews and ask students to assess their body language, use of vocabulary, and responses to the interview questions. To encourage continued improvement in interviewing, change groups and give students a second opportunity to ask/answer questions once they've assessed their interview performance.

Suggestions for Follow-up:

- Invite representatives from business and industry to hold mock interviews with students and offer them constructive feedback. Encourage students to dress as if it were not a mock interview but an actual interview.
- Ask students to brainstorm interview questions they could ask a company representative during an interview. Hold a discussion about the importance of researching a company or organization prior to applying for a job and interviewing and about how asking questions during an interview demonstrates not only that an applicant has done his/her homework, but also is interested enough in the organization to want to know more about it.

Teacher Resources:

[Build Your Future](http://www.byf.org/) (<http://www.byf.org/>) (specific to craft/skilled labor professions)

[Bureau of Labor Statistics](https://www.bls.gov/) (<https://www.bls.gov/>), U.S. Department of Labor

[Career OneStop](https://www.careeronestop.org/) (<https://www.careeronestop.org/>), U.S. Department of Labor

[CTE Trailblazers: Labor Market Data and Reports, Trailblazers, Career and Technical Education in Virginia](http://ctetrailblazers.org/) (<http://ctetrailblazers.org/>)

[My Next Move](https://www.mynextmove.org/) (<https://www.mynextmove.org/>), O*Net, U.S. Department of Labor

[O*Net](https://www.onetonline.org/) (<https://www.onetonline.org/>), U.S. Department of Labor

Handout #1

Two Interviews



Watch the video, "[Soft Skills: Enthusiasm and Attitude](https://youtu.be/-vk-99seC_I)" (https://youtu.be/-vk-99seC_I). Pay attention to the details of each interview. Record observations on the chart below, then answer the questions that follow.

Travis Wilson interview #1

Travis Wilson interview #2

Put yourself in the interviewer's shoes. What message did each interview convey to her? If you were Ms. Madison, what would you have liked to see from the job candidates you were interviewing?

At the conclusion, the video points out that a positive attitude makes all the difference. Explain this statement.

What positive behaviors can you demonstrate when it is time for you to interview for a job? List as many as you can. Use the back of this sheet.

Handout #1

Two Interviews

SAMPLE STUDENT RESPONSES



Watch the video, “Soft Skills: Enthusiasm and Attitude” (https://youtu.be/-vk-99seC_I). Pay attention to the details of each interview. Record observations on the chart below, then answer the questions that follow.

Travis Wilson interview #1

Travis is not dressed professionally. He is also wearing headphones and has his phone out.

Travis has instructions for where to go on a crumpled up piece of paper in his pocket.

Travis saunters around the building, peering into people’s offices.

Travis takes a large handful of candy and puts it in his pocket prior to the interview.

Travis uses words such as “like,” “hey,” and “dude” when addressing the interviewer.

Travis arrives late and doesn’t introduce himself.

Travis answers his cell phone during the job interview.

Travis Wilson interview #2

Travis is dressed professionally in a jacket, tie, and dress slacks.

He has instructions for the interview, along with an extra copy of his résumé, in a portfolio.

Travis waits patiently to be called for his interview. He is right on time, shakes the interviewer’s hand, and introduces himself.

Travis uses professional language (he refrains from slang) and makes eye contact with the interviewer.

Travis thanks the interviewer when the interview has concluded.

Put yourself in the interviewer’s shoes. What message did each interview convey to her? If you were Ms. Madison, what would you have liked to see from job candidates you were interviewing? ***The first Travis sent Ms. Madison the message that he didn’t respect her at all—not her time, not her office, not the position he was interviewing for. The second Travis respected Ms. Madison’s time by being on-time, demonstrated through the way he dressed and spoke that he was serious about the job, and was courteous and pleasant. If I were Ms. Madison, I would want to hire a respectful employee who would get along with clients/customers and people in the office.***

At the conclusion, the video points out that a positive attitude makes “all the difference.” Why?

Attitude makes up a huge part of the impression that we leave with others. If an employer walks away from an interview with a person thinking that that person is disrespectful or not focused, that person will not get hired.

What positive behaviors can you demonstrate when it is time for you to interview for a job? List as many as you can. Use the back of this sheet. ***Answers could include: Be on time. Dress professionally. Do not chew gum. Put my phone on silent mode, and put it away. Smile. Make eye contact. Speak clearly. Ask appropriate questions. Think about the interview ahead of time.***

Handout #2: Interview Guidelines



Before the Interview

Remember, first impressions are important.	Be punctual.
Research the company; be sure you know the interviewer's name.	Be neat and clean. Make sure teeth are freshly brushed. Do not wear heavy cologne or perfume.
Review directions to the interview location beforehand; consider parking and other logistical concerns.	Dress professionally. Avoid loud colors and opt for classic styles over trends. Hair should be neatly styled.

During the Interview

Use good posture.	Establish eye contact.
Smile.	Give a firm handshake.
Use the interviewer's last name (Ms. Cordoza, Mr. Jacobs, Dr. Rose).	Be honest and sincere.
Be positive; never speak negatively about a previous employer (or anyone else for that matter).	Elaborate—don't simply say "yes" or "no."
Be succinct; don't share long-winded scenarios or stories.	Take a moment to think about your answers before responding.
Ask questions to clarify information, such as duties, hours, future assignments, possibilities for advancement, and procedures.	Ask when a decision will be made and what the procedures are for notifying applicants.
Finish on a positive note with a thank-you and a handshake.	

After the Interview

Follow up with a thank-you note, either mailed or emailed to the interviewer(s). Have someone you trust proofread your note before you send it.	If you haven't heard anything in the amount of time the company representative indicated, it is alright to contact the company representative by phone to check on the status of the job posting.
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Teacher Resource #1: Common Interview Questions



What are your strengths/weaknesses?

Why should we hire you?

Why are you job searching? Why are you/did you leave your last job?

What are your career goals, and how does this job relate to them?

Where do you see yourself in five years?

What is an accomplishment of which you are proud? Explain.

Describe how you handled a challenging situation at work.

How might you deal with an angry customer/client?

What is an area for improvement for you?

How do you feel about professional development?

What are some strategies you use to stay organized?