

Transition to Work and Self Sufficiency Video Series

Instructor's Guide for ***The Interview***

Overview

The interview is the culmination of all of your job search efforts. From the first impression to the follow up, every step of the interview process is important, and every step can be prepared for. Being prepared will help you to be more comfortable, taking away much of the anxiety that comes with interviewing.

An interview is not a trap, and employers are not out to make people uneasy. They simply want to know that the person they hire has the right skills, experience, and personality to do a good job. Your job as the interviewee is to give them every reason to hire you and no reason not to. That means paying attention to the details, from your shoes and your perfume, to your handshake and your small talk. It also means understanding the big picture—knowing that no matter what question you're asked, your overall mission is to sell yourself by providing specific examples of your skills and accomplishments.

This video helps students understand the various parts of the interview process and strategies for succeeding at each. The video tracks the progress of four job seekers—Tanya, Jack, Karen, and Anthony—as they move through these steps, and students should be encouraged to discuss their own experiences with interviewing. Feel free to pause the video for activities and discussion as your own schedule dictates.

Presentation Suggestions

Begin by asking students about their own job interview experiences, both positive and negative. What were the differences between interviews that went well and those that went poorly? In retrospect, are there things students did or didn't do in interviews that they felt cost them job offers? Because students tend to be more afraid of the interview than any other step in the job search process, it can be useful to get at the source of their anxieties. Consider making a list of the things they dread about interviewing on the board or overhead with the promise that the video will provide them with strategies for overcoming those fears.

When you feel students have begun thinking about these issues, give them the **Anticipation Quiz** to complete prior to watching the video. If you wish, allow the students to state their answers and discuss them.

Show the video. Encourage students to take notes or to make changes to the answers they put down for the Anticipation Quiz while watching the video.

At the conclusion of the video, ask students to discuss any changes they made to their answers on the Anticipation Quiz as a result of information they learned. Follow up this discussion with the **Activities**.

Use the **Discussion Questions** to request oral or written responses from students or assign the questions as homework essays.

Give the **Quick Quiz** at the conclusion of class and correct the quizzes as a group. Assign the **Homework Option**, if desired.

Anticipation Quiz

Directions: Answer these questions as completely as possible. You may revise your answers as you watch the video.

1. What are some things you can do to make a good first impression?
2. What can you do to prepare for an interview?
3. What are most interview questions designed to get at?
4. What do you need to do after the interview is over?

Answer Key

1. Answers will vary but may include the following: dress professionally, use appropriate body language, use the interviewer's last name, give a firm handshake, maintain eye contact, and show up on time.
2. Put together your job search tool kit and bring it with you. Practice answering common interview questions. Research the organization and come prepared with questions of your own.
3. If you are dependable, easy to get along with, and a good worker.
4. Follow up with a thank-you note or e-mail.

Activities

Activity #1

Title: First Impression Role-play

Format: Pairs

Time: 20-30 minutes

Materials: Stopwatch

Procedure:

1. The best way to prepare for an interview is to practice. That includes practicing the opening minutes of the interview as well. After all, it is during those crucial first few minutes that impressions are made. For this exercise, break the class into pairs. Assign one member of each pair the role of “Interviewer” and the other the role of “Interviewee.” Ask pairs to agree on a job opening that the interview is for.
2. Ask for volunteers to come to the front of the class and role-play the first two minutes of the interview process. Remind students of all of the details that go into making a positive first impression. Be sure to time each role-play, and give each pair a chance in front of the class. After each role-play, ask students what they noticed, both positive and negative, in the interviewee’s behavior and approach. Have the class offer suggestions for improvement.
3. For more variety, make a list of behaviors, attitudes, or mannerisms that would lead to a less than favorable first impression, such as chewing gum, mumbling, or being overly enthusiastic. As each group comes up to role-play their interview, choose one of these items from the list and whisper it to the interviewee, instructing him or her to incorporate that behavior, attitude, or mannerism into the performance.

Activity #2

Title: Practice Interview Questions

Format: Individual, Pairs

Time: 15-20 minutes

Materials: Worksheet, pen

Procedure:

1. There is no way to prepare for every possible interview question, but you can prepare for the most common ones. Using the worksheet included with this guide, have student pick two or three questions that they have struggled with in the past and draft possible answers in the spaces provided.
2. Now have students form into pairs. Ask each student to pick three questions from the list to ask their partner. Then have students take turns asking and answering the questions they chose. If you’d like, you can structure this as a role-play similar to the one used in Activity #1.
3. When students have finished, come together as a whole class and ask what they felt the most difficult questions on the list were. Then take suggestions for effectively answering those questions.

Discussion Questions

1. One of the difficulties with interviews is that you want to be professional and conservative—to play by the rules—but you also want to stand out from the crowd. What are some things you can do to make yourself stand out without being too unprofessional or jeopardizing your chances of landing the job?
2. In what ways is an interview like a sales pitch? What are you selling? What strategies do you use to sell it? What could you do to “lose the sale?”
3. An interview is an opportunity for you to decide if the company is a good fit for you as well. What kinds of questions can you ask of the interviewer that will not only help you make that decision, but will show that you are interested in the company and the job as well?

Quick Quiz

Note: You may read these questions out loud, allowing time for students to respond, or copy and hand this out as a written exercise.

Directions: Indicate whether each statement is true or false, according to the video.

1. The general rule for interview attire is to dress up, not down.
2. Employers will overlook small details like missing buttons or dirty fingernails.
3. The more you have prepared in advance, the more relaxed you will be.
4. If you are going to be a little late to an interview, it is best to just call and cancel.
5. You should always send a thank you note after an interview.
6. If asked about pay in an interview, you should answer with the lowest possible amount that you would be willing to take.
7. Pausing and responding thoughtfully to a question is much better than rambling without purpose.
8. The most important question to answer is “Why should we hire you?”

Answer Key

- | | |
|----------|----------|
| 1. True | 5. True |
| 2. False | 6. False |
| 3. True | 7. True |
| 4. False | 8. True |

Homework Option

Have each student spend some time before next class thinking of the hardest interview question they've ever been asked or could ever imagine *being* asked. Have students write that question down and bring it to class. Spend some time at the start of next class sharing those questions and coming up with possible answers.

Practice Interview Questions

Though you can't memorize a response to every possible question, you can prepare and practice answers to the most common ones. In addition, you can identify questions that might give you problems and try to prepare effective answers to those ahead of time. Following are some of the most common questions you are likely to be asked in an interview:

- Tell me something about yourself.
- Why are you interested in this job?
- What kind of work have you been doing?
- What would previous employers say about you?
- What are your strongest skills and how have you used them?
- What are your weaknesses? What would you like to improve about yourself?
- What have you learned from previous jobs?
- What is your most significant work experience?
- Why should I hire you for this job?
- What are your plans for the future?
- Why do you think you might like to work for our company?
- How much money do you hope to earn?
- What interests you about our product or service?
- Give me an example of when you did the best work you were capable of.
- Do you have plans for further education?

Circle two or three of the questions above that you think you should prepare an answer for ahead of time. Use the space below and on the back to write out a possible response.

Question: _____

Answer: _____

Question: _____

Answer: _____

Question: _____

Answer: _____
