CAREER AND COLLEGE DEVELOPMENT

LESSON 12-14 ▲ PROFESSIONAL INTERVIEWS

**LEARNING GOALS/OUTCOMES**

* Update their personal resume for an imaginary or real job interview.
* Outline the basic stages of a typical job interview.
* Write questions for your interviewer that demonstrate an understanding of the business.
* Provide post-interview feedback for another person following a mock job interview.
* Use feedback to improve personal job interview skills.

**MATERIALS NEEDED**

* **Student Handouts:**
* Interview Worksheet
* Journal Page
* **Handouts from previous lessons, if available:**
* *Resume Worksheet* (from Lesson 11-11)
* **Student Work Samples**
* **Students’ most current resumes**

**CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES**

1. **Students share interview experiences.** Ask for a show of hands: how many students have had to do an interview to get a job? From those who have, ask for several volunteers to share whether the interview was easy or difficult, and whether it helped them get the job they wanted. Ask for several volunteers to share what they did before the interview to prepare and what the interview itself was like. Ask those who have experienced a job interview for any interviewing tips they would provide to others. Note their interview tips on the board.
2. **Students plan for an upcoming interview.** Ask students to imagine that they must be interviewed as part of the application process for a summer job they want. Ask them to quickly jot down a list of five things they think they should do to prepare for that interview. Ask for volunteers to share their lists and note their answers on the board.
3. **Students** **update their personal resume for an imaginary or real job interview.** Have students retrieve their most current resumes. Give students time to make notes on how they would update their resumes to reflect up-to-date credentials, skills, experiences, and accomplishments. If you wish, distribute the *Resume Worksheet* from Lesson 11-11 and have students use the worksheet to jot down information they should add to their resumes. Remind students that it is particularly effective to customize the resume for a specific job, so they should update their resumes keeping in mind the type of job they would like to find. Encourage students to update their resume after this class on a school or home computer. Remind students the resume will be a key part of their Senior Presentation.
4. **Students outline the basic stages of a typical job interview.** Distribute the *Interview Worksheet* and review the five interview stages that are listed on the first page. Make sure students understand that their work in an interview begins before the interview starts and extends after the interview ends.

Divide students into pairs. Ask each pair to conduct a mock job interview, with one student as the job-seeker (“the prospect”) and the other student as the interviewer. Ask the interviewer to use the ten questions on the second page of the handout. Give them a few minutes to conduct the first interview, then have the interviewer give some feedback. Switch places and repeat. Ask for student questions about the interview process after both students have been interviewed.

Tell students that the question, “Why should we hire you for this job?” is a very effective question, and many employers ask it. It tells a lot about the person and their thoughts on why they should be hired for the job. Ask students for some wrong answers to the question. Encourage them to understand that answers such as, “Because I need the money!” or “Because I’m really a nice person,” or “To help me out of a jam,” are not good answers. Good answers show you know about what matters at the organization and that you understand how you would fit with their purpose and initiatives. This requires that you’ve done your homework on the company.

Ask students to turn to the third page of the handout and write a three-sentence example of how well they fit with the imaginary organization, scholarship, or post-secondary institution they might be interviewing for.

1. **Students write questions for an interviewer that demonstrates an understanding of the business.** Ask students if they found it difficult to know what questions to ask the employer. Ask for some examples of good questions students heard as an interviewer. Tell students that the question-asking part of an interview is a great chance to show the kind of person they are. Encourage them to shape their questions around things they want the interviewer to know they care about. Give students a few sample questions to consider, such as, “Are there opportunities to take on additional responsibilities in this job?” or “How much will prior experience in this area factor into your decision?” (if you have prior experience) or “What are the key considerations for job advancement?” It is fine to ask about salary and benefits; however it is best to make that your third or fourth question.

Have students turn to the third page of the handout. Ask each student to think of a potential interview they might have this year for a scholarship, a post-secondary program, or a job. Have students craft three or four questions they could ask an interviewer during an interview.

After students have had a chance to write questions, have them turn back to their partners and practice asking their questions to their partner, just as they would during an interview. Provide enough time for each student to ask questions of their mock interviewer.

1. **Students use feedback to improve personal job interview skills.** Based on the feedback they received from their partner, ask each student to complete the last section of the handout with several things that could be improved prior to a real interview. If you wish, ask for volunteers to share what they would like to improve. Note to everyone that practicing ahead of time is the best way to be comfortable in an interview and to do a good job.
2. **Students identify interviewing strengths and challenges.** Ask students to use their Journal Page to answer the following questions.

* What is my strongest skill in the five steps of a job interview?
* What is my greatest challenge in job interviewing?
* What steps am I taking to overcome my greatest interview challenge?

**STUDENT PRODUCTS**

* **Completed *Interview Worksheet***
* **Completed *Journal Page***

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LESSON 12-14 STUDENT HANDOUT

INTERVIEW WORKSHEET

Over the next several years, you will probably go through a number of interviews: to get a job, to be admitted to a post-secondary program or the military, to apply for scholarships, even for internships or advanced classes. Interviews can be stressful. But if you are well prepared for each of the five stages of an interview, you’ll make a great impression.

**STAGE 1: PRE-INTERVIEW – DO YOUR RESEARCH**

Before your interview, make sure you are well prepared. Update your resume with the job or position in mind. If you haven’t already sent a cover letter, do so, confirming the interview logistics and explaining why you would be a good fit for the job or position. Research the organization and the job. Talk to other people who know about the organization, such as friends who have worked there. Line up a reference or two who is willing to speak on your behalf. Practice your answers to common questions (such as, “Why do you want this job?”). And draft a list of questions you have about the organization or the job.

**STAGE 2: START OF INTERVIEW – MAKE A GOOD FIRST IMPRESSION**

The first few minutes of the interview are the most important: they are your chance to make a good impression. Wear appropriate clothes. Be on time. Greet everyone politely, from the receptionist in the front lobby to the person who will be interviewing you. Introduce yourself. Show your enthusiasm.

**STAGE 3: BODY OF INTERVIEW – ANSWER QUESTIONS CAREFULLY**

If you have done your research and practiced answering basic questions, you should be ready for this part of the interview. Your task during this part of the interview is to answer each of the interviewer’s questions carefully and completely. If you don’t know the answer to a question, write a note and promise to get an answer. Be honest. Don’t be tempted to inflate your credentials or experience.

**STAGE 4: END OF INTERVIEW – ASK QUESTIONS OF YOUR OWN**

Near the end of the interview, you may be asked if you have any questions. This is a good opportunity to show that you have done your research… and to learn more about whether the job is a good fit for you. You might have questions about job responsibilities or schedule or about how the hiring process will be handled. Your questions should be about the specifics of the job you are applying for, and should show that you are enthusiastic and ready to be part of the team.

**STAGE 5: POST-INTERVIEW – SEND A THANK YOU NOTE**

After your interview, take the time to formally thank your interviewer. Even if you have said thanks in person, write a quick note and send it (either on paper or e-mail, depending on how you have been corresponding with your interviewer). That note can also be your chance to answer any remaining questions, to provide references’ names, or to highlight any aspects of your experience that you think would be helpful. Paragraph body.

The mock interview begins with the “prospect” telling the “interviewer” what type of job they are applying for. The interviewer then walks the prospect through the interview stages.

**INTERVIEW SCRIPT**

**1)** “Tell me what you know about our company.”

**2)** “What experience do you have for this job?”

**3)** “Tell me about your educational background.”

**4)** “What would you say are your three greatest strengths?”

**5)** “What is your greatest weakness?”

**6)** “What kind of wage are you expecting?”

**7)** “Give me an example of when you have been responsible for something and been successful.”

**8)** “What activities are you involved in at school or in your community?”

**9)** “Why do you want this job?”

**10)** “Do you have any questions of me about the company or the job?”

**GET READY FOR YOUR INTERVIEW**

Use the space below to prepare for a job or post-secondary interview.

**What is the Position?** (What are you being interviewed for? A job, a scholarship, a place in a post-secondary program? Why would you be a good fit?

**What do you know about the Organization?** (Make notes about what you’ve learned about the organization, your interviewer, and/or the position you’re interviewing for. How do your experiences and credentials make you a good fit?)

**Why You?** (Write a 2-3 sentence speech on why you would be the best person for the position.)

**Questions you might Ask** (What don’t you know? What would you like to learn from the interviewer?)

**What can you do to Improve?** (Based on your practice so far, how can you improve your

interview skills?)

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LESSON 12-14 STUDENT HANDOUT

JOURNAL PAGE

**DATE:**

**Lesson 12-14 | *PROFESSIONAL INTERVIEWS***

***Q1:*** What is my strongest skill in the five steps of a job interview?

***Q2:*** What is my greatest challenge in job interviewing?

***Q3:*** What steps am I taking to overcome my greatest interview challenge?

***Answers:***