Interview Practice

The BIG Idea

- How can I improve my interviewing skills?

AGENDA

Approx. 45 minutes

I. Warm Up: Interviewing is a Two-Way Street (5 minutes)

II. Model Interview (5 minutes)

III. Mock Interviews & Debriefings (30 minutes)

IV. Wrap Up: How Did I Do? (5 minutes)

MATERIALS

❑ **STUDENT HANDBOOK PAGES:**

- Student Handbook page 92, Good Questions to Ask Interviewers
- Student Handbook page 93, Interview Evaluation Checklist
- Student Handbook page 94, How Did I Do?
- Student Handbook page 89, Typical Interview Questions (from previous lesson)

OBJECTIVES

During this lesson, the student(s) will:

- Generate questions to ask during an interview.
- Use mock interviews to highlight experience and skills.
- Evaluate and critique peer interviews.

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OVERVIEW

The lesson opens with students discovering that a job interview is a two-way street; it's not enough that the employer wants to hire them—they also need to think about whether the job is right for them. To reinforce this idea, students generate a few questions to ask their potential employers during mock interviews. After observing the teacher model an interview, students participate in mock interviews and debrief as a class afterwards. The lesson concludes with students identifying their interviewing strengths, and one area they'd like to improve.

PREPARATION

- ❑ List the **BIG IDEA** and the day's activities on the board.
- ❑ Write the day's vocabulary words and definitions on the board.
- ❑ Make transparencies of the following pages:
  - **Student Handbook page 92, Good Questions to Ask Interviewers**
- ❑ For **Activity III, Mock Interviews,** select a volunteer to play the part of "interviewer" in a model interview with you in which you'll play the interviewee. Prior to class, provide the volunteer with **Student Handbook page 89, Typical Interview Questions** from last week's lesson with three or four questions highlighted that you want him/her to ask you. Add as a final question "What questions do you have for me?" Explain that she/he will ask these questions during the interview and you will answer them.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Regardless of how confident and qualified a job candidate might be, it's essential that he or she knows how to interview. The interview is the critical moment in the job-search process; it's the moment when the candidate can clinch the deal by convincing the employer that he or she is the perfect person for the position. How a candidate performs during an interview—from a firm hand shake to answering questions clearly and succinctly—can make all the difference landing the job. Performing well in an interview requires skill and confidence, and the only way to get better is to practice, practice, practice.

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VOCABULARY

(This vocabulary was previously introduced in Interview Basics.)

Employee: a person who works for and is paid by another person or business.

Employer: a person or business that pays others for work.

Interview: a meeting for a job in which a person is asked questions.

Interviewee: a person interviewing for a job.

IMPLEMENTATION OPTIONS

If you feel students will not be able to handle the paired interviews in **Activity III, Mock Interviews and Debriefings,** invite volunteer pairs to role play two interviews for the whole class. Then, have all students use **Student Handbook page 93, Interview Evaluation Checklist** to evaluate interviewees. If you choose this option, you may omit **Student Handbook page 94, How Did I Do?**

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ACTIVITY STEPS

I. Warm Up: Interviewing is a Two-Way Street (5 minutes)

1. [Welcome students to class, complimenting them on their business attire.]

   SAY SOMETHING LIKE: We're going to spend most of today practicing our interview skills. Each of you will have a chance to play the part of the person looking for a job – the interviewee – as well as the person asking the questions – the interviewer.

   Before we begin, I want you to consider this question. Up until now, we've been thinking about how to convince the interviewer that she should hire you. But interviewing is a two-way street. How do you figure out if the job is a good match for you? You want to find out if the job matches your skills, and if you like the environment where you'll be working. To find out, ask questions.

2. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Near the end of most interviews, the interviewer will probably ask if you have any questions. This is a chance for you to learn more about the job. It is also an opportunity for you to show your interest in and enthusiasm for the position. So, clearly, you should be prepared to ask at least a couple of questions.

3. [Point out that there are certain questions NOT to ask in an interview. Prompt students to brainstorm what these may be. If no one comes up with any, tell students that they should not ask questions like: "How much money will I make?" or "How much vacation time do I get?" or "How long is the lunch break?" Additionally, they shouldn't ask questions that are obvious, or ones that already were answered in the interview. Doing so will make it seem as if they hadn't been listening or paying attention.]

4. [Share with students **Student Handbook page 92, Good Questions to Ask Interviewers** for examples of questions that demonstrate interest in the job and the company. Invite students to think about the job ads they chose in last week's lesson (**Lesson 3: Interview Basics**), and jot down two questions to ask their potential employers.]

II. Model Interview (5 minutes)

1. [Invite your pre-selected volunteer (see **PREPARATION**) to come up front with a copy of **Student Handbook page 89, Typical Interview Questions** from last week's lesson (**Interview Basics**). Tell the class that you (the Facilitator) are a job candidate going on an interview and that (student's name) is the employer who will be interviewing you. Tell them that their job will be to evaluate how well you do.]

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2. [To help them evaluate the interview, and to be aware of what to do and not to do during an interview, have students use **Student Handbook page 93, Interview Evaluation Checklist**. Give them a minute to review it before you begin your interview.]

3. [Have the volunteer sit behind your desk. Leave the room and come back in. Walk up confidently, firmly shake the "employer's" hand, smile, and say, "Good morning, Mr./Ms. (student's last name). I'm looking forward to learning about the job." Be sure to make eye contact.]

4. [Perform the interview, answering each question clearly and succinctly. Maintain eye contact and smile. When the "employer" asks if you have any questions, say, "What are my day-to-day responsibilities in this job?" End the interview at this point.]

5. [Review **Student Handbook page 93, Interview Evaluation Checklist** with students and discuss whether or not you followed each one. This checklist shows how they will be evaluated during their interviews.]

III. Mock Interviews & Debriefings (30 minutes)

1. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** In our last session, you selected a job that interested you and for which you believe you are well-qualified. You identified the skills required for the position, and noted how you have shown some of these skills. Today you and a partner will take turns interviewing each other for these jobs, keeping in mind your skills and strengths. [See **IMPLEMENTATION OPTIONS** if working in pairs is not practical in your classroom.]

2. [Pair up students and assign each student in the pair the letter A or B. Tell the class that the Bs will interview the As for the first round. Encourage students to take a minute or two to review **Student Handbook page 91, Strengths & Skills Checklist** from last week's lesson. Then have them use **Student Handbook page 89, Typical Interview Questions** to conduct the interview. As a last question, direct them to ask, "Do you have any questions?"]

3. [After the interview, allow a couple minutes for the Bs to evaluate the As by completing **Student Handbook page 93, Interview Evaluation Checklist**.]

4. [Debrief as a class (students may remain seated where they are). Have the As share how they felt while they were being interviewed. If they need prompting, ask, "What was the hardest part of the interview?", "What did you find easy?" Then ask the Bs to

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share their critiques. Again, if prompting is necessary, you may ask, "What were your interviewee's strengths?" "What could she/he have improved?"]

5. [Now reverse roles, and have A's interview the B's. Repeat steps 2-4.]

IV. Wrap Up: How Did I Do? (5 minutes)

1. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Remember to follow up all interviews with a thank you note. Thank you notes allow you to reiterate your skills and interest in the position, as well as show off your writing skills. And, you never know, it may be the deciding factor for an employer. To be sure you're using the correct name and title, ask for the interviewer's business card before leaving the interview.

2. [Wrap up the lesson by having students complete **Student Handbook page 94, How Did I Do?** Instruct them to self-evaluate their interviews by responding to both prompts. If your class followed the implementation option for **Activity III, Mock Interviews and Debriefings**, refer to **IMPLEMENTATION OPTIONS** for this activity, too.]

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Good Questions to Ask Interviewers

Interviewing is a two-way street. Both you and the employer need to learn more about each other. Before going into an interview, think of the questions you may ask. Here are some examples.

- Could you describe the ideal candidate for this position?
- What are the day-to-day responsibilities of this job?
- What are some of the skills and abilities necessary for someone to succeed in this job?
- Who is my supervisor and how will he or she give me feedback on my work?
- Will my job responsibilities change over time?
- What are some of the things you like about working for this company?

Write two questions to ask in your interview.

1. _____

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2. _____

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Interview Evaluation Checklist

Check each statement that describes the interviewee's behavior. Add comments on the lines below.

During the interview, did the candidate …

- ❑ Present a professional appearance
- ❑ Give a firm handshake
- ❑ Greet interviewer by title and name (e.g., Mr. Gomez)
- ❑ Make and maintain eye contact
- ❑ Speak clearly
- ❑ Answer all the questions
- ❑ Show confidence (smile)
- ❑ Discuss previous experiences as they relate to the job
- ❑ Describe strengths, skills, and/or achievements
- ❑ Ask good questions about the job
- ❑ Show enthusiasm for the job
- ❑ Say thank you at the end of the interview

Additional Comments:

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How Did I Do?

Complete the self-evaluation by responding to the prompts.

1. Describe one thing you did really well as an interviewee.

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2. Describe one interviewing skill you'd like to improve.

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