

## The Interview

### The **BIG** Idea

- How do I prepare for an interview?

### AGENDA

- I. Warm Up (5 minutes)
- II. Interview Checklists: Before, During, and After the Interview (10 minutes)
- III. Frequently Asked Interview Questions (15 minutes)
- IV. YOU Ask the Questions (10 minutes)
- V. Wrap Up (5 minutes)

### MATERIALS

#### STUDENT HANDBOOK PAGES:

- Student Handbook page 73, Interview Tips
- Student Handbook pages 74-76, Frequently Asked Interview Questions
- Student Handbook page 77, Questions NOT to Ask in an Interview
- Student Handbook page 78, Good Interview Questions

#### FACILITATOR PAGES:

- Facilitator Resource 1, Tip Categories Before, During, and After the Interview
- Facilitator Resource 2, Interview Tips Checklist

#### Overhead projector

#### Chart paper and markers

### OBJECTIVES

During this lesson, the student(s) will:

- Identify what to do before, during, and after an interview.
- Answer commonly asked interview questions.
- Prepare questions for an interviewer.

## OVERVIEW .....

In this lesson, students review the important elements of the job interview, from preparation to follow up. First, students brainstorm tips for before, during, and after the interview. Next, students review frequently asked interview questions and generate responses. Finally, students discuss the importance of asking questions of the employer, review the kinds of questions NOT to ask, and list two questions for an employer they're interested in.

## PREPARATION .....

- List the day's **BIG IDEA** and activities on the board.
- Make the following handouts into overhead transparencies or copy onto chart paper:
  - **Student Handbook page 73, Interview Tips**
  - **Student Handbook pages 74-76, Frequently Asked Interview Questions**
  - **Student Handbook page 77, Questions NOT to Ask in an Interview**
  - **Student Handbook page 78, Good Interview Questions**
  - **Facilitator Resource 1, Tip Categories Before, During, and After the Interview**
  - **Facilitator Resource 2, Interview Tips Checklist**
- Make copies of **Facilitator Resource 2, Interview Tips Checklist**.
- For **Activity I**, consider how you will assign students to the “Before” or “During/After” portion of the Interview Tips.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION .....

The interview is a critical step in the job search process, and often the most intimidating. Therefore, it is important to help students recognize that preparation can give them the confidence they need to succeed. Preparation includes familiarity with common interview questions, generating answers to frequently asked questions, recognizing basic interview etiquette, and knowing about the company where they are interviewing.

Students should also understand that job interviews are an employer's opportunity to find out what kind of employee they would be, including their attitude, work ethic, ability to get along

with others, and strategies for handling different situations and solving problems. Interviews are also an opportunity for students to determine whether the company and job are a good fit for their personality and skills.

## IMPLEMENTATION OPTIONS .....

For **Activity I**, students may work in pairs to brainstorm, with one student assigned “Before Interview Tips” and the other “During/After Interview” tips.

Your students may enjoy a dramatic recreation of someone not-quite-pulled-together for an interview, with a hot-roller still in her hair or papers falling out of a shopping bag.

One facilitator arranged to have her students act as observers during 10th-graders’ mock interviews with community members, providing the following ground rules: dress for an interview, introduce themselves as observers, refrain from comment during the interview, and take notes (including interview questions). Students shared their observations in class the following week.

## ACTIVITY STEPS

### I. Warm Up (5 minutes)

1. [As students enter the classroom, ask them to complete **Student Handbook page 73, Interview Tips**. Place a copy of **Facilitator Resource 1, Tip Categories Before, During, and After the Interview** on the overhead projector to assist them in recalling interview tips discussed in previous years. If necessary, you can describe how the categories can help them. For example, explain that “logistics” has to do with time and place of an interview. So, you can ask the students what tips they can think of that have to do with time and place that can help them prepare for an interview.]
2. [Give students a few minutes to complete the student handbook page.]

### II. Interview Checklists: Before, During, and After the Interview (10 minutes)

1. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** If you’ve landed an interview, then you’ve managed to wow your potential employer with your resume and cover letter. Congratulations! Now you need to make a case for yourself in person during the interview. But an interview involves a lot more than just showing up. This is your chance to show the employer why he or she should hire you, and this comes across not just in what you say, but how you present yourself.

For most people, going on an interview can be nerve-wracking, but there are many things you can do to ease your nerves and give you the confidence you need to succeed.

Let’s see what you already know about this process.

2. [Invite students to share their tips with the class.]

**SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Great job brainstorming tips. Now, let’s see what the experts have to say. [Distribute **Facilitator Resource 2, Interview Tips Checklist**.]

Check off the tips you remembered, and take note of any we didn’t cover. [Discuss new ideas as needed.]

### III. Frequently Asked Interview Questions (15 minutes)

1. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** One of the key tips listed in the “Before the Interview” checklist is to prepare answers for questions that most interviewers will ask. The great

- news is that most employers ask the same questions, no matter what the job, making it possible for you to think about your answers in advance. The other good news about interviews is that there is no one, single right answer. You just need to be clear, honest, and positive.
2. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** There is a difference, however, between a good answer and a bad answer. For example, imagine you're interviewing at the Gap, and the interviewer asks why you want a job as a sales associate. Which of the following are probably the wrong answers? Why? Which is the best answer? Why?
    - a. It has been my lifelong dream to work at the Gap. *(Don't say this unless it is absolutely, positively true. Otherwise, it could come off as sarcastic or disrespectful.)*
    - b. For the employee discount. *(This is not a positive answer. It doesn't show maturity or respect for the company.)*
    - c. I think it will give me a great work experience, and an opportunity to learn about the clothing retail industry. *(This answer is honest, direct, and positive – and it shows maturity and a respect for the employer.)*
  3. [Have students open to **Student Handbook pages 74-76, Frequently Asked Interview Questions** and project a copy of the page on the overhead. Explain that these are examples of frequently asked interview questions. Invite volunteers to read aloud each question and the related tip. Encourage students to discuss why the interviewer would ask this question: What does the interviewer REALLY want to know? Give examples, such as, when an interviewer asks, "Why do you want to work here?" what he/she really wants to know is if you've done your research, and are knowledgeable about the company and how you can contribute to its success. Or, if an interviewer asks you about your weaknesses, he/she does NOT want to hear a list of your problems or that you're perfect. What the employer really wants to know is how you resolve problems or overcome weaknesses.]
  4. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Review the list of questions on the handout. Then select two that you find most challenging to answer. Write your answers in the third column.

[If time permits, invite the class to share their responses and help each other improve responses.]

#### IV. YOU Ask the Questions (10 minutes)

1. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** An interview is a two-way street. Though much of the interview focuses on the employer assessing your qualifications, it is also your opportunity

to find out if the job fits your needs and interests. At the end of most interviews, the employer will ask if you have any questions. You should always prepare a few questions. Asking questions not only helps you find out more about the job and the company, it emphasizes your interest in the position.

2. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** While asking questions is important, equally important is asking the right kinds of questions. What kinds of questions should you NOT ask? [Give students a chance to respond.] Though you might be dying to find out how much the job pays or how much vacation time you get... DON'T ASK! Why do you think these are not good questions to ask? [Give students a chance to respond.] That's right! These kinds of questions do not show your interest in the position, only the benefits. You want to use your questions to your advantage by demonstrating your work ethic and motivation.
3. [Have students open to **Student Handbook page 77, Questions NOT to Ask in an Interview**. Project the page on the overhead. Explain that there are certain kinds of questions candidates should not ask in an interview. Read aloud each kind of question, an example of that type of question, and then open a discussion about why NOT to ask this kind of question. If students need help getting started, give a model. For example, questions in the first category show that you care more about what you can get from the job than what you can contribute. Obviously, the interviewer is more interested in what you can do for the company than what the company can do for you.]
4. [Have students open to **Student Handbook page 78, Good Questions**. Project the page on the overhead.]

**SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Now that we discussed questions NOT to ask, you may be wondering what kinds of questions you CAN ask. [Invite a volunteer to read aloud the questions].

## V. Wrap Up (5 minutes)

1. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** On the last page of **Student Handbook pages 74-76, Frequently Asked Interview Questions**, you'll find space to list two questions for the employer of your choice. These may be from the list on **Student Handbook page 78, Good Questions**, or more specific questions regarding a particular work situation. Take a minute to write these now. When you're done, I'll choose a few students to share their work.

## Tip Categories Before, During, & After the Interview

BEFORE	DURING & AFTER
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Logistics (where, when)</li><li>• Appearance</li><li>• Company research</li><li>• Questions</li><li>• Items to bring with you</li><li>• Practice</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Greeting and good-bye</li><li>• Eye contact</li><li>• Body language/ posture</li><li>• Handling difficult questions</li><li>• Enthusiasm</li><li>• Don'ts</li><li>• Follow up</li></ul>

## Interview Tips Checklist

Before	During	After
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Bring a photo I.D., which may be required by building security.</li> <li>— Drive to your interview location and park to see how long it takes.</li> <li>— Bring change for the parking meter.</li> <li>— Keep an umbrella in your car or briefcase, just in case.</li> <li>— Research the company and the job.</li> <li>— Bring clean copies of your resume.</li> <li>— Bring pad and pen.</li> <li>— Confirm the pronunciation of the interviewer's name.</li> <li>— Plan an appropriate outfit. For example, slacks and tie or skirt and blouse.</li> <li>— Call to confirm the interview time.</li> <li>— Prepare answers for commonly asked interview questions.</li> <li>— Make a list of questions to ask the interviewer.</li> <li>— Get a good night's sleep.</li> <li>— Take a shower and brush teeth.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Arrive at the interview five to 10 minutes early.</li> <li>— Do not chew gum.</li> <li>— Turn off cell phone.</li> <li>— Greet the interviewer with a smile and firm handshake. Use the interviewer's title (Ms., Mr., Dr.) and last name.</li> <li>— Do not just sit down. Wait for interviewer to offer you a seat.</li> <li>— Maintain eye contact during the interview.</li> <li>— Sit straight (don't slouch).</li> <li>— Be enthusiastic about the job and the company.</li> <li>— Speak clearly and strongly.</li> <li>— Emphasize strong points and achievements.</li> <li>— Answer questions honestly.</li> <li>— Avoid answering questions with yes or no.</li> <li>— Give examples to show why you are right for the job.</li> <li>— Show that you know about the company in your answers.</li> <li>— Ask for a business card at the end. (This provides correct spellings and titles for thank-you notes.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Write down notes right after the interview so you do not forget important details.</li> <li>— Within 24 hours, send a written thank-you letter to everyone who interviewed you.</li> </ul>

Sources: Interviewing Prep: Job Interview Checklist; [http://www.quintcareers.com/job\\_interview\\_checklist.html](http://www.quintcareers.com/job_interview_checklist.html)  
 Monster: <http://career-advice.monster.com/job-interview/Interview-Preparation/Interview-Take-Along-Checklist/article.aspx>  
 Localesite.com: <http://localesite.com/my-career/articles/before-during-and-after-an-interview>  
 Acing the Interview: <http://jobsearch.about.com/cs/interviews/a/aceinterview.htm>



## Interview Tips

Congratulations! Your resume and cover letter impressed your potential employer. Now it's time to prepare for an in-person interview. Below, list interview tips to share with your classmates. (You may complete "before" tips, or "during/after" tips.)

Below, list things to do before the interview.

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Below, list things to do during or after the interview.

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## Frequently Asked Interview Questions

Below are 10 common interview questions, along with tips on what the interviewer is really asking. Write your answers in the right-hand column.

Interview	Tips	Your Answer
Tell me something about yourself.	This is often the first question an interviewer asks. This is your chance to shine, but keep your response short and sweet. Highlight two or three interests or skills that show your ability to do the job. Use positive, work-oriented adjectives, like conscientious, hard working, honest, and courteous.	
Why do you want to work here?	Emphasize your value to the employer, not your need for a job. Also, show that you've done your research. Rather than say, "Because it's a great company," show why you think it's a great company.	
Tell me about your work experience.	If you've never held a job, you've likely been part of a club or team at school, or have volunteer experience. Talk about skills you've gained in those activities, especially ones that match the job description. Make it clear that you're eager to learn.	

<p>Why did you leave your last job?</p>	<p>The interviewer may be worried that you'll leave this job, too. Don't complain about your last boss, how hard the work was, or how little money you made. Give a neutral or positive reason for leaving, like returning to school, or looking for a job where you can learn new skills.</p>	
<p>What are your strengths?</p>	<p>Choose skills that show that you can do this job. Be prepared to give examples of your accomplishments. Include compliments you've received from previous jobs or in school.</p>	
<p>What are your weaknesses?</p>	<p>Don't leave the interviewer with the impression that you'll be a terrible employee. Choose a weakness that you've taken steps to overcome. For example, "Math isn't my strongest subject, so I signed up for after-school tutoring. I went from a D in my freshman year to a B in my sophomore year."</p>	
<p>Describe a conflict you've had with an employer or teacher. How did you resolve it?</p>	<p>This is an opportunity to show how you are a problem solver. Describe the conflict without placing blame, and describe how you successfully resolved the conflict.</p>	
<p>Why should I hire you?</p>	<p>Rather than simply say because you are a hard worker, smart, etc., show how you work hard, are smart, etc. by giving a specific example or two.</p>	

What do you like to do in your spare time?	Be honest, but choose an answer that demonstrates that you have a life, and that you'll fit in with your coworkers.	
What are your plans for the future?	Your answer shows how realistic you are, whether you think ahead, and how hard you're willing to work.	

[http://www.quintcareers.com/interview\\_question\\_database/interview\\_questions\\_database.html](http://www.quintcareers.com/interview_question_database/interview_questions_database.html)

[http://teacher.scholastic.com/lessonplans/pdf/march05\\_unit/InterviewQuestions.qxd.pdf](http://teacher.scholastic.com/lessonplans/pdf/march05_unit/InterviewQuestions.qxd.pdf)

### Questions for Your Employer

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## Questions NOT to Ask in an Interview

Most interviewers will ask if you have any questions. Here are the kinds of questions NOT to ask and an example of each. Explain why not to ask each type of question.

Question Category	Sample Questions NOT to Ask	Why Not to Ask
Questions that focus on your needs, rather than your employer's	How much will you pay me? How much vacation do I get?	
Questions that reveal insecurity or weaknesses	How can I be sure I won't lose my job within the year? What happens if I don't complete a task on time?	
Questions that are angry or impolite	So, what will you do to me if I'm late to work?	
Questions that reveal you haven't listened or done your research	What does this company do?	

**Sources:**

[http://www.quintcareers.com/job\\_interviews/no-questions.html](http://www.quintcareers.com/job_interviews/no-questions.html)

<http://jobsearch.about.com/od/interviewquestionsanswers/a/interviewquest2.htm>

## Good Questions

Following are examples of questions you might ask an interviewer. Remember, if the interviewer answered a question earlier in the interview, do not ask it again.

- What are the main responsibilities of the position?
- How would you describe a typical day in this job?
- How do you assess employees' performance? How often?
- To whom does this position report?
- What do you enjoy most about working here?
- What is the company's corporate culture? Is it a formal office, or more casual?
- Does the company offer ongoing education or training?
- What are the company's greatest successes?
- What opportunities is the company looking forward to in the future?
- What are the traits and skills of your most successful employees?

### Sources:

[http://www.quintcareers.com/asking\\_interview\\_questions.html](http://www.quintcareers.com/asking_interview_questions.html)

[http://teacher.scholastic.com/lessonplans/pdf/march05\\_unit/InterviewQuestions.qxd.pdf](http://teacher.scholastic.com/lessonplans/pdf/march05_unit/InterviewQuestions.qxd.pdf)

<http://jobsearch.about.com/od/interviewquestionsanswers/a/interviewquest2.htm>