

The Job Interview: Preparing for Common Questions

Lesson by

Julie Kornegay, senior education program manager at the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta, Birmingham Branch

Claire Loup, senior education program manager at the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta, New Orleans Branch

Jackie Morgan, senior education program manager at the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta, Nashville Branch

Lesson description

This activity integrates some common interview questions that teens may be asked during job interviews. Students individually prepare responses and practice verbally responding to the interview questions in a small group setting.

Concepts

Job interview

Careers

Organization of thoughts

Verbal communication

Objectives

Students will be able to:

1. Develop thoughtful talking points to potential job interview questions.
2. Verbally respond to potential job interview questions.

Time required

90 minutes for the entire lesson

Materials

Access to the Internet or a printed copy of the article "[Teen Job Interview Questions and Best Answers](https://www.thebalance.com/teen-job-interview-questions-and-best-answers-2063882)" found at <https://www.thebalance.com/teen-job-interview-questions-and-best-answers-2063882>

Visual 1: "Interview Questions"

Handout 1: "Interview Questions and Individual Responses" (one copy for each student)

Handout 2: “Number Cards” (one set of number cards already cut apart for each group of students) or pairs of dice (one pair of dice for each group of students)

Brown paper bags (one bag per group of students), if using number cards

Procedures

1. Tell students that just like you prepare for a test before you take it, you should also prepare before you go to an interview. Explain to students they are going to learn about the job interview process. Job interviews bring together a number of soft skills, including communication, enthusiasm, and attitude. The ability to communicate clearly how your experiences relate to the position you seek is critical to a successful interview.
2. Tell students they are going to learn more about the questions they might encounter in an interview. Have students read the article [“Teen Job Interview Questions and Best Answers.”](#) After students read the article, debrief and discuss the article’s interview prep tips. Ask students:
“Which question would you find the most difficult to answer? Why?”
“What tip did you find most surprising? Why?” *Possible response: research*
3. Explain to students a job interview can be a stressful event. This activity is designed to take some of the stress out of the process by planning several responses to common interview questions.
4. Distribute Handout 1: “Interview Questions and Individual Responses.” Tell students the questions on this handout are examples of general questions that could be asked by a prospective employer. Having potential answers for these kinds of questions will make preparing for a specific job interview easier. Tell students to complete the handout by reading each question and writing at least three bullet points or notes to help plan a response. *(Optional: Have the students complete the handout as homework.)*
5. After students complete Handout 1, debrief the activity. Ask students whether they found it difficult to respond to the questions and why they did or did not. Also, ask for several volunteers to share something they learned about themselves in the process of answering the questions.
6. Tell the students it takes practice to answer questions confidently during an interview. Taking time to develop and review answers to sample interview questions will help students better communicate their responses during an interview, and practicing verbally is even more important.
7. Tell students now they have had a chance to consider their interview question responses, they will practice putting their thoughts into verbal responses in small groups. Divide the class into small groups of three or four students. Give each group Handout 2: “Number Cards,” which should already be cut apart and placed in a bag, or one pair of dice.



classmate
classroom
students in

Extra Credit

a newsletter for educators



8. Display Visual 1: “Interview Questions.” Explain students will take turns answering questions that are randomly selected by picking a number from the number cards bag, or by rolling the dice. Based on the number students select or roll, they will respond to the corresponding question from Visual 1 to the members in their group. Each response should be no more than a minute in length. If using a number card, place it back in the bag at the end of the response and shake up the bag. The next turn moves to the student on the left. Continue having students take turns until time is called. The amount of time spent on practicing the interview questions can be varied based on the length of your class.
9. When time is called, debrief the activity. Ask students,
 - “What did you find challenging about this exercise?”
 - “What was the hardest question for you to answer?”
 - “Did it get easier to answer the questions as the activity went on? Why or why not?”
10. Tell students they will no doubt have many interviews over their lifetime. Preparation and practice puts them in the best position to make a good first impression.

Alternative strategies

- Use selected Interview Questions from Visual 1 as a bell ringer activity at the start of each class period. Choose a question and write it on the board. Have the students write an answer to the question in a journal or on Handout 1, keeping it for future use until all questions are answered.
- Randomly call on a student or two and ask each student to respond to the daily question in front of the class. This exercise provides practice to build confidence in speaking aloud and thinking quickly. Remind students that sometimes, they may be interviewed by more than one person.
- During the verbal practice group activity, rather than having each group roll dice independently, the teacher would roll the dice to select the question that is answered within each group for each turn. In this way, the teacher can control the timing of the questioning. Ideally, each student should answer two or three questions during the activity.



Visual 1: Interview Questions

Pick or roll a...	Respond to this interview question
2	Tell me about yourself and why I should hire you.
3	Tell me about an accomplishment of which you are most proud.
4	In what extracurricular or volunteer activities are you involved?
5	What educational or career goals do you have for the next three to five years?
6	What is one of your strengths and how would it be a benefit in the workplace?
7	What is one of your weaknesses and how are you working to improve it?
8	Describe a time when you had to come up with a solution to a problem.
9	Describe a time when you worked as a member of a team and how you helped ensure team goals were met.
10	If you had to make a difficult decision, how would you go about it?
11	How would your teacher, coach, or club adviser describe you?
12	Describe your dream job.

Handout 1: Interview Questions and Individual Responses

Directions:

1. Read the article [Teen Job Interview Questions and Best Answers](https://www.thebalance.com/teen-job-interview-questions-and-best-answers-2063882) (<https://www.thebalance.com/teen-job-interview-questions-and-best-answers-2063882>).
2. For each of the below interview questions, write at least three bullet points or notes in the second column that could be used as part of your response to the question.

Interview question	Your individual response bullet points
Tell me about yourself and why I should hire you.	
Tell me about an accomplishment of which you are most proud.	
In what extracurricular or volunteer activities are you involved?	
What educational or career goals do you have for the next three to five years?	
What is one of your strengths and how would it be a benefit in the workplace?	



classmate
classroom
students

Extra Credit

a newsletter for educators



Handout 1: Interview Questions and Individual Responses (Continued)

What is one of your weaknesses and how are you working to improve it?	
Describe a time when you had to come up with a solution to a problem.	
Describe a time when you worked as a member of a team and how you helped ensure team goals were met.	
If you had to make a difficult decision, how would you go about it?	
How would your teacher, coach, or club adviser describe you?	
Describe your dream job.	

Handout 2: Number Cards

Directions:

1. Print and cut apart number cards.
2. Place number cards in a brown paper bag.
3. Each group of students should receive a set of number cards.

Note: One is not included because when two dice are used the lowest possible combination is two.	2	3
4	5	6
7	8	9
10	11	12

Standards addressed

The Common Career Technical Core Standards—Career-Ready Practices (CRP)

4. Communicate clearly, effectively and with reason.

Career-ready individuals communicate thoughts, ideas and action plans with clarity, whether using written, verbal, and/or visual methods. They communicate in the workplace with clarity and purpose to make maximum use of their own and others' time. They are excellent writers; they master conventions, word choice, and organization and use effective tone and presentation skills to articulate ideas. They are skilled at interacting with others; they are active listeners and speak clearly and with purpose. Career-ready individuals think about the audience for their communication and prepare accordingly to ensure the desired outcome.

10. Plan education and career path aligned to personal goals.

Career-ready individuals take personal ownership of their own educational and career goals, and they regularly act on a plan to attain these goals. They understand their own career interests, preferences, goals, and requirements. They have perspective regarding the pathways available to them and the time, effort, experience, and other requirements to pursue each, including a path of entrepreneurship. They recognize the value of each step in the educational and experiential process, and they recognize that nearly all career paths require ongoing education and experience. They seek counselors, mentors, and other experts to assist in the planning and execution of career and personal goals.