

Lesson Plan 7: Preparing for a Job Interview

Core www.collegeincolorado.org Area:

Job Search

Total Time:

Two 50-55 minute class periods

Target Grades:

Grades 10-12

Suggested Timeline:

Any time during school year; preferably at beginning of school year

ASCA Correlation

(Which of the ASCA Standards does this lesson address?)

A-A	A-B	A-C	C-A	C-B	C-C	PS-A	PS-B	PS-C
		X	X	X	X		X	

Lesson Objectives

Students will be able to:

1. List ways to prepare for a job interview.
2. Develop answers to typical interview questions.

Materials Needed

- (Optional) A copy of the **Job Search Worksheet 1—Interview Questions to Practice** for each student
- A copy of the **Job Search Handout 1—Typical Interview Questions** for each student
- Access to the internet and www.collegeincolorado.org

Advance Preparation

Print copies of the worksheet and handout for each student.

One class activity requires the students to complete a brief company research. To prepare for class, identify at least one local company students could research on the internet.

Activator (Typically 5-10 minutes)

Discuss:

- A time that students have had to “try out” for an activity and connect this to job interviews.
 - Activities may include: Drama, sports, band, or student government.
 - Preparation may include talking to others on the team, learning what to expect at try outs, training, practice or rehearsal.
- A job interview is like a “try out” for a job. Just as in any other type of “try out”, it is important to be prepared. Preparations might include:
 - Know the location and time for the interview
 - Plan how you will get to the interview and how long the trip will take.
 - Make sure you know the interviewer’s job title and how to pronounce his or her name. If you are not sure, call the company’s main number and ask.
 - Plan ahead what to wear to the interview. (Match your clothes to the job. If you can, visit the company beforehand to see what other employees are wearing at work. If not sure, plan to dress a little more formally, yet conservatively.

- Take the time beforehand to take care of your grooming: a hair cut, a shave for gentlemen, trimmed and clean nails, polished shoes, etc.
- Explain that an interview is a meeting between an employer and a job applicant to discuss possible employment. An interview can be formal or informal, long or short. An interview can even take place over the phone. An interview provides a chance for an employer to visit with you as a potential employee; however, it also gives you a chance to see if the company and the job would be a good fit for you.

Core Learning Strategies/Lesson Activities (Typically 30-40 minutes)

Session #	Step #	Responsibility	Action Steps
1	1	School counselor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on today's work: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Distribute the Job Search-Typical Interview Questions handout and the Job Search Worksheet – Interview Questions to Practice (optional) 2. Read and discuss the Typical Interview Questions Handout
	2	Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read and discuss the Typical Interview Questions Handout
	3	Counselor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask students to sign in to www.collegeincolorado.org and click on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Career Planning ○ Get A Job ○ Job Interview Practice • Ask students to choose a set of practice questions and type their answers. They can refer to the Typical Interview Questions Handout for additional assistance
	4	Student	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sign into www.collegeincolorado.org and complete the Job Interview Practice
	5	Counselor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist students with the Job Interview Practice • When students have finished the written Job Interview Practice, ask students to form groups of three for an Interview Role Play with an Interviewer, Interviewee, and Observer <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The interviewer will ask questions from the question set, reading off the computer ○ The interviewee will practice answering the questions (without notes) ○ The observer will provide feedback and suggestions after each question.

Session #	Step #	Responsibility	Action Steps
		Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete the interview role play
	5	Counselor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observe and provide suggestions as students complete the role play • If students need additional practice, ask them to complete the Job Search Interview Questions to Practice Worksheet. This may be assigned for homework • Remind students that their written Job Interview Practice will be saved and stored in their www.collegeincolorado.org Portfolio.

(chart from RI School Counselor Association's Toolkits, found at www.rischoolcounselor.org)

Summarizer/Informal Assessment (Typically 5-10 minutes)

After completing this lesson, the students should be able to:

1. List ways to prepare for a job interview.
2. Develop answers to typical interview questions.

Ask students if they were nervous or anxious about any “try outs” they have had in the past. Ask if they think they would be nervous for a job interview. Ask them how preparing for the job interview would help make them more comfortable. Review the ways to prepare for a job interview by having students mention what was discussed in the lesson.

Follow-Up

Opportunities for additional learning could include the lessons provided related to Job Search project lessons.

If time, you may want to expand upon this lesson. For example, you could provide a display on a bulletin board with various local and/or regional companies that have posted job openings. Have students pretend that they are going to apply for a job at one or more of the companies, and have them research the company they think they would like to work for. Have them list at least five things they learned about the company and five questions they would ask if they were interviewed by someone in a job interview at the company. From the students' research, make a list of the most important things the students in the class would look for in an ideal company, and add the list to the bulletin board.

Name Job Search Handout 1—Typical Interview Questions

Student: _____

1. Tell me about yourself.

Go over this again and again! Briefly describing your education or work history are appropriate responses to this question. Expand briefly on some of your results. This will likely cause the interviewer to select an accomplishment and ask you to tell more about it. This is exactly what you want; you score points every time you discuss results.

2. What is your greatest strength?

The question asks for your number one strength, skill, or asset and requires you to analyze yourself. Going into the interview you should have several strengths in mind. Begin with a brief statement and provide a clear example.

3. What are your three most important career accomplishments?

Choose accomplishments that are related to the job you are interviewing for and ones to which the interviewer can relate. Avoid unnecessary detail.

4. Why should I hire you?

This question is often asked at the end of an interview and allows you to summarize your strengths. Since this is a summary, you can discuss points that you have already covered and mention new points as well. Sell yourself. This may be one of your best opportunities. Try to focus on everything you learned about the job, your future boss, and the needs of the company.

5. How would your supervisor describe you?

This is an opportunity to mention positive qualities that you know or assume would be said about you. Discuss the qualities that you received high ratings on during reviews. Also give quick examples that demonstrate why your boss would see such qualities in you.

6. What is the most difficult situation you have ever faced?

Select an example that will demonstrate your positive qualities and one in which you ultimately came out on top. Tell it concisely to reveal as many qualities as possible. This is an opportunity to sell qualities such as maturity, perseverance, emotional stability, effectiveness under stress, and sound judgment.

7. What would you like to improve about yourself?

This is one of the most-asked questions. When asked this question, it is best to state a weakness that you are improving. You do not need to demonstrate that you have totally dealt with it, but you should indicate that you have made major progress with it. The goal is to provide a short answer which satisfies the interviewer.

8. What are your career goals?

This question tests whether you have established career goals, and whether your goals match what the organization has to offer. Mention goals that you feel the

organization can help you attain. Express them in terms of experience you hope to receive and the expertise you hope to develop. You want to leave the impression that you are a growth-oriented person with realistic expectations regarding promotion opportunities.

9. What have you learned from your past mistakes? What were some of them?

Everybody makes mistakes. Often there are lessons to be learned from these mistakes. The best mistakes to share are those from which you were able to recover. In any event, use your mistakes to show how you have matured and grown from these experiences.

10. Can you work well under stress?

You do not have to say that you like stress, but you need to demonstrate that you can work effectively under stress. Give examples where you have coped well with stress. Most stress comes from deadlines and long hours. You should know in advance if this organization or company typically requires long hours or faces a lot of deadlines.

11. Are you a team player?

This question indicates that the organization is looking for a team-oriented person. Describe how you are committed to working in a team. You need to show that you are flexible and cooperative and when the group makes a decision, you willingly go along with it. Provide examples demonstrating that people enjoy having you on their team and that teamwork was essential to the success of a project on which you worked.

12. What are the things that motivate you?

Challenge, creativity, success, opportunity, and personal growth are most frequently mentioned. You can also mention specific skills that you are motivated to use. These might include problem solving, decision making, listening, writing, speaking, planning, or counseling people.

13. What is the most important thing to you in a job?

What do you value in a job: challenge, good working conditions, friendly coworkers, traveling? Mention one or two items and explain why they are important.

14. Tell me about your duties at your present job.

This question provides an opportunity to really sell yourself. As you describe your major duties, describe an associated accomplishment as well. Be concise. People know their own duties so well that many go on and on adding unnecessary details that bore the interviewer.

15. What is the most important aspect of your job?

This question tests your judgment. Although you may have numerous responsibilities, the interviewer wants to have your view on what you can do to contribute the most to the organization. For each responsibility you need to show that you have been very effective in that area.

16. What duties have you enjoyed most? Least? Why?

Select your favorite and least favorite duties based on what you have learned about the job for which you are interviewing. In general, you should mention major duties to like and minor duties to dislike.

17. What frustrates you about your job?

If you feel strongly about a particular frustration, give concrete examples when answering this question. Describe the situation causing the frustration, and how you deal with it.

18. Why would you like to work for us?

This is your opportunity to describe what you know about the organization. You should mention positive points that you have discovered on your own, as well as some mentioned by the interviewer. You might mention that the job is a factor in your wanting to work for the company.

19. What are some of the characteristics you like or dislike about a supervisor?

List all the qualities you truly like and dislike in a supervisor and then select those that are the most appropriate. Concentrate on strengths rather than weaknesses. You might answer by saying you prefer a supervisor who is fair, open-minded and has high integrity.

20. Tell me about your experience in school.

Be prepared to talk about the courses you liked most (and least), how your schooling prepared you for this job, what kind of grades you had, and your major. It is important to describe how your overall high school/college experience has prepared you for work. You can also describe the skills and experience that you have gained in extracurricular activities and internships.

Job Search Worksheet 1—Interview Questions to Practice

Student Name: _____

Directions: The following are some typical questions you might be asked in a job interview. The whole idea of an interview is to talk about your positive traits. Don't worry if you don't have much job experience. You can simply tie in the answers to experiences at home or school. Employers want to know how you handle problems and if you are a team player. Read the following answers carefully and adapt them to your particular situation. Practice, practice, practice!

1. **Question:** Tell me about yourself.

Typical answer: I was born in Minneapolis, but we moved to Chicago when I was four. I have a dog and like to swim.

(This is one of the most asked questions! Expect it, and plan for it! In fact, you should have a 15-second "commercial" ready to "wow" the interviewer! The answer above doesn't tell the employer anything about you that relates to the job. You want to use every opportunity to show that you are a smart, hard-working potential employee.)

Better Answer: Last year in school, I played on the basketball and soccer team. It kept me busy, but I learned to manage my time. I'm also involved in volunteering with my brother's Boy Scout troop. That's been a great experience in learning how to work as a team with other leaders plus plan activities.

See what you've just done? You've shown the employer you are involved in positive activities, work as a volunteer and know the importance of teamwork. Who wouldn't want to hire you?

2. **Question:** How would your teachers describe you?

Average answer: Oh, I guess they'd say I was an OK student.

Better answer: My teachers would tell you I work hard to get my assignments in on time and I'm not afraid to ask for help if I need it. They'd also tell you I try to be friendly to shy kids in my class.

3. **Question:** Why should I hire you over the other eight students waiting to be interviewed?

Average answer: I really need the money to buy a new CD player and my mom said I have to do something constructive this summer.

Better answer: I'm a reliable person. I'll arrive to work on time and do the best I can on the job. I've done volunteer work, but now I'd like to gain actual work experience. If you hire me, you'll get someone who isn't afraid to learn.

4. **Question:** Tell me about a time you had a problem and how you solved it.

Average answer: My parents and I don't always get along. I usually yell and then go to my room for a few hours.

Better answer: There was a boy at school that really bothered me. He bumped into me and would slam my locker shut when he walked by. He'd also say sarcastic things to me. I talked to a teacher about it and she

offered to be a mediator. She brought both of us into her class and basically let me tell the boy I wanted him to stop being a bully. I confronted him in a strong way. The situation is much better now.

5. **Question:** What do you like best about school?

Average answer: I really like hanging out with my friends.

Better answer: I especially like working on projects together with my friends. I was just in charge of decorating for our school dance. I organized my friends, and we worked together to set up the gym with a jungle theme. I also like participating in school events like sports teams and student government.

YOUR TURN! Try to answer every question with a positive answer. Demonstrate that you are an honest, hard working person. No “average answers” allowed!

6. **Question:** Why do you want this job?

Your Better Answer:

7. **Question:** What are your greatest strengths? Your greatest weaknesses?

Your Better Answer:

8. **Question:** Where do you see yourself in 10 or 15 years?

Your Better Answer:

9. **Question:** Imagine you made a major mistake on the job. What would you do to fix it?

Your Better Answer:

10. **Question:** What are your career goals?



Your Better Answer:
