Lesson Plan

Career- and Life-management Skills

Preparing for a Job Interview

Objective: Students will prepare for a job interview by defining the characteristics of a successful interviewee, discussing common interview questions and appropriate answers to them, and by participating in a mock interview.

Workplace Readiness Skill: **Demonstrate career- and life-management skills.**

*Demonstration includes*

* *recognizing the importance of education and career planning (e.g., minimum job qualifications, advancement and professional-development opportunities)*
* *identifying available benefits and professional resources (e.g., labor unions, professional organizations, employee-assistance programs, insurance and retirement benefits)*
* *managing personal growth and wellness (e.g., stress management, self-care, financial planning)*
* *setting goals (e.g., specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, time-bound [SMART] goals).*

Correlations to Other Workplace Readiness Skills:

* Demonstrate creativity and innovation.
* Demonstrate critical thinking and problem solving.
* Demonstrate big-picture thinking.
* Demonstrate continuous learning and adaptability.
* Demonstrate professionalism.

Correlations to the Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL):

English: 6.2, 6.7, 7.1, 7.2, 7.7, 8.2, 8.7, 9.1, 9.6, 10.1, 10.6, 11.1, 11.6

History and Social Science: CE.1, CE.4, GOVT.1, GOVT.16

Instructional Steps:

1. ***Introduce the lesson by showing the YouTube video entitled, “***[***Soft Skills—Enthusiasm and Attitude***](https://youtu.be/-vk-99seC_I)***” (***[***https://youtu.be/-vk-99seC\_I***](https://youtu.be/-vk-99seC_I)***).*** Discuss the examples shown in the video and complete Handout #1: Two Interviews. Follow up by brainstorming positive interview behaviors as a class. Display or distribute Handout #2: Interview Guidelines; discuss.
2. ***Ask, “How many of you get nervous before a job interview or think you would get nervous?”*** Get a show of hands. Explain that interviewing for a job is stressful to almost everyone, but that stress can be diminished significantly by preparing for the interview. Tell students that today they are going to participate in exercises designed to make them more knowledgeable about, and comfortable with, the interview process.
3. ***Discuss the purpose of a job interview.*** Just as prospective employees have career goals, organizations and companies have goals to meet. Hiring competent staff members goes a long way toward helping an organization meet its goals. A job interview offers a glimpse into the personality of a prospective employee; it allows the employer to get a sense for which candidate is best suited for the company based upon factors such as skill set, temperament, habits, and more. Explain that well-thought-out, open-ended questions asked during an interview help bring about topics of conversation that allow an employer to learn more about a prospective employee.
4. ***Distribute or project sample interview questions.*** Explain to students that they’ll have the opportunity to preview common types of interview questions, brainstorm appropriate answers, and to ask and answer these questions in a mock interview. Display Teacher Resource #1: Common Interview Questions. Using one of the questions as an example, break it down, asking, “Based on this question, what is the employer trying to learn?” “What are appropriate ways to answer this question?” “What would be an example of something NOT to say in response to this question?”
5. ***Ask students to work in pairs to answer interview questions.*** This activity provides a valuable opportunity for students to break down each sample interview question and brainstorm:

*Why would an employer want to ask this question?*

*What can the interviewer learn about me based upon my answer to this question?*

*What are some desirable responses to this question? What are some undesirable responses?*

Once students have had an opportunity to jot down ideas and discuss the various interview questions, discuss them as a class.

1. ***Conduct mock interviews.*** Explain to students that mock interviewing is an effective technique to help prepare for a job interview. Emphasize the importance of approaching the mock interview professionally and seriously so that the exercise has the greatest impact. To demonstrate the process, bring a pair of students up and choose three or four of the interview questions discussed. Assign one student to be the interviewer and the other to be the interviewee. In this example, the teacher may want to act as a second interviewer to keep things on track and set the tone for the mock interviews. Discuss conventions such as hand shaking, the importance of eye contact, and other details that are meaningful in the context of a job interview. Then conduct the sample interview. Ask students to point out constructive pointers for the interviewee, before breaking into groups or pairs\* to conduct their own mock interviews. \**Note: Ask students to switch roles during the mock interviews so that all students have an opportunity to ask and answer interview questions.*
2. ***Reflect on the mock interviews.*** Once students have had an opportunity to conduct mock interviews in pairs or groups, bring the class back together and discuss. Ask, “How did it feel to be asked the interview questions?” “How aware of your body language were you?” “What tips did you share with your partner(s)?”

Formative Assessment**:**

* Evaluate student responses as recorded on Handout #1: Two Interviews (sample student responses can be found at the end of this document).
* Assess student understanding as demonstrated in the class and small group discussions.
* Evaluate student understanding of concepts within the lesson as demonstrated by responses to the mock interviews. Teachers may want to consider recording the mock interview sessions so that students have the opportunity to assess their own body language and responses to the interview questions.

Options for Adaptation/Differentiation:

* To complete this activity in a shorter amount of time, simply call a few students up to answer one interview question each, rather than conducting mock interviews for all.
* To extend this activity and provide further enrichment, record the mock interviews and ask students to assess their body language, use of vocabulary, and responses to the interview questions. To encourage continued improvement in interviewing, change groups and give students a second opportunity to ask/answer questions once they’ve assessed their interview performance.

Suggestions for Follow-up:

* Invite representatives from business and industry to hold mock interviews with students and offer them constructive feedback. Encourage students to dress as if it were not a mock interview but an actual interview.
* Ask students to brainstorm interview questions they could ask a company representative during an interview. Hold a discussion about the importance of researching a company or organization prior to applying for a job and interviewing and about how asking questions during an interview demonstrates not only that an applicant has done his/her homework, but also is interested enough in the organization to want to know more about it.

Teacher Resources:

[Build Your Future](Build%20Your%20Future) (<http://www.byf.org/>) (specific to craft/skilled labor professions)

[Bureau of Labor Statistics](https://www.bls.gov/) (<https://www.bls.gov/>), U.S. Department of Labor

[Career OneStop](https://www.careeronestop.org/) (<https://www.careeronestop.org/>), U.S. Department of Labor

[CTE Trailblazers: Labor Market Data and Reports, Trailblazers, Career and Technical Education in Virginia](http://ctetrailblazers.org/) (<http://ctetrailblazers.org/>)

[My Next Move](https://www.mynextmove.org/) (<https://www.mynextmove.org/>), O\*Net, U.S. Department of Labor

[O\*Net](https://www.onetonline.org/) (<https://www.onetonline.org/>), U.S. Department of Labor