

MOCK JOB INTERVIEW ACTIVITY

This interview activity will help students understand common behaviors and skills that will help them be successful at getting a job, communicating ideas and thoughts, and in life itself.



Good interviewing skills are probably one of the best skills a person can have. All too often qualified, capable people are unable to get work or change to a better job because they don't have good interview skills. Interviewing skills, like all skills, are transferrable. For example, good interviewing skills include the ability to appropriately respond in a stressful situation, present themselves appropriately for the situation, communicate effectively, and demonstrate appropriate manners. All of these skills will help a person be successful in social situations, work situations, and school.

RESOURCES NEEDED:

- 3 actors/actresses. One plays the role of the interviewer, one the role of a good job applicant, and one the role of the bad job applicant. You can use other teachers or students as the actors.
- The person playing the bad applicant will need props like chewing gum, sunglasses, etc. (we used tattoo sleeves found at Wal-Mart during Halloween to add to the drama). Any props that will make the bad applicant look unprofessional will work.
- Scripts. There are two options. One of the options has the bad candidate discuss a criminal record. The other option neither person has a criminal record. Adjustments can be made to the script as needed.
- Copies of the Interview Tip Sheet (p. 7) for each student.
- Points to Consider worksheet. Students will need a worksheet for each interview so copy front and back of one piece of paper will minimize costs.

THE PROCESS:

- Break students into interview teams. Each team picks a spokesperson who relays the team's decision on who to hire.
- Before doing the mock interviews, hand each student the Interview Tip Sheet and the Points to Consider worksheet. The teacher goes over the Interview Tip Sheet with the class, explaining the different tips.
- Using the Points to Consider worksheet, team members take notes while listening to both interviews. From these notes the team decides which candidate gets hired.
- The spokesperson tells the entire class who they want to hire and why. They also tell the class why they won't hire the other candidate.
- The interview team that does the best job explaining the reasons for hiring/not hiring wins.

This activity meets the following Montana K-12 Content Standards:

	Introduction	Activity	Student Interviews
Writing		1 & 6	
Reading	1	1, 4, 5	
Speaking & Listening		1, 2, 3, 4	1, 2, 3, 4
Career & Vocational	3	1, 3, 5	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
Social Studies		1 & 6	
Workplace Competencies	2, 3	2, 3, 4, 6	2, 3, 4, 6

INTERVIEW ACTIVITY HANDOUT

POINTS TO CONSIDER	NOTES ON _____ INTERVIEW
Did they research the firm? How do you know?	
Did they look their best? Explain.	
Were they prepared? How do you know?	
What did their body language say?	
Were they enthusiastic?	
Did they use discretion? Give an example.	
Did they ask questions? Were they appropriate?	
Did they thank the interviewer?	
<i>How did they do on the following interview questions? Explain.</i>	
Tell me a little about yourself.	
What are your strengths?	
What are your weaknesses?	
Why do you want to work here?	
Tell me about your most recent job.	
Why did you leave your last job?	

INTERVIEWER'S SCRIPT

"Good morning, my name is _____ and I will be conducting your interview this morning." (Shake hand) "Please have a seat."

"We are interviewing you for the position of restaurant host. We are looking for someone with good customer service and communication skills. We are looking for someone who is dependable and gets along with others. This person is the first person to greet our guests when coming to our restaurant, so it is very important that the host makes a good first impression."

Questions:

Did you bring a copy of your resume?

Tell me a little about yourself.

What are your strengths?

What are your weaknesses?

Why do you want to work here?

I noticed that you checked that you have a criminal record on your application. Can you explain a little bit about that? (*only for the bad candidate if you choose to use this option*)

Tell me about your most recent job.

Why did you leave your last job?

Do you have any questions for me?

The question from the good candidate is:

"Your staff has such a good reputation for customer service, so I thought perhaps I'd ask if you have a training program you put your staff through to achieve that."

Your answer can be something like: "Yes we do. We also try to hire people who are customer-focused to begin with, but we feel it is important to train our staff on what that means for our restaurant. You'd be surprised at how many other businesses try to lure our staff to their businesses. They know how well we train them in customer service."

The good candidate will hand you their references and then stand up and shake your hand.

The question from the bad candidate is:

"Do your employees get free meals?"

Your answer can be something like:
"They get their meals for half price."

You can then tell them you'll be contacting them in the next few days.

The bad candidate won't hand you any references or thank you for the interview or shake your hand.

INTERVIEW SCRIPT (GOOD CANDIDATE)

Q: "Tell me a little about yourself."

I have lived in Montana all of my life, I love being around people, and I love learning new things. I'm currently learning Spanish because I think it is important to be able to communicate with a variety of people. I'd love to be able to travel someday to a Spanish speaking country. I also like doing physical work, to me it's therapeutic. Gardening and landscaping are two of my passions. I have the best looking yard in my neighborhood!

Q: "What are your strengths?"

I'm a great listener. Don't get me wrong, I'm a good talker too, but I think listening skills are even more important. I'm a good organizer too. It doesn't make any difference if it is organizing closets or a family vacation, I love all the planning and organizing that goes into it.

Q: "What are your weaknesses?"

I like things to go according to my plans so when something comes up that may make my plans go off schedule it stresses me out a bit. But what I have learned about myself is that coming up with a plan B helps alleviate some of that. If I plan ahead for potential problems, then I don't stress out at all because I know what to do next.

Q: "Why do you want to work here?"

As I said earlier, I love being around people and in this job I'd get to meet every person that walks through the door. Your restaurant has a good reputation for quality food and service and that's the type of restaurant I'd be proud to work in. I think my qualities will fit nicely with this restaurant.

Q: "Tell me about your most recent job."

I worked in a cafeteria serving food. Sometimes I worked in the kitchen but I really loved working as a server. I got to meet a lot of people. Some days were easier than others. I set a goal for myself to smile at everyone I served, especially those people who always seemed depressed. It may seem like a boring job to some people but not me.

Q: "Why did you leave your last job?"

I left because I had started school and couldn't do both school and work at the same time.

Q: "Do you have any questions for me?"

Your staff has such a good reputation for customer service, so I thought perhaps I'd ask if you have a training program you put your staff through to achieve that.

Before you leave:

I also have a list of references to give you. Thank you for the interview, it was a pleasure to meet you.

INTERVIEW SCRIPT (BAD CANDIDATE)

This version of the interview should be over-the-top bad. This candidate should be dressed inappropriately, wearing sunglasses, showing bare arms with exposed tattoos, displaying poor posture, disorganized, late, etc.

Q: "Did you bring a copy of your resume?"

Ah, yeah, it's in here somewhere. (Digs around in their bag until they find a crumpled resume)

Q: "Tell me a little about yourself."

Well, I've been a bit off the beaten path for awhile. I collect tattoos. In fact, my goal is to get one from each of the 50 states. I've already got a pretty good start, see? (show arms).

Q: "What are your strengths?"

I'm a good conversationalist. I can talk about any subject. Never a dull moment when I'm in a room.

Q: "What are your weaknesses?"

Wow, I can't think of anything. Oh yeah, I have a weakness for Rocky Road ice cream. I bet I could eat an entire gallon in one sitting. I also like to sleep late. Really I'm much more of a night owl than an early bird. Sure the early bird gets the worm but who wants worms anyway?

Q: "I noticed that you checked that you have a criminal record on your application. Can you explain a little bit about that?" (This is an optional question)

Sure, I got busted for bouncing checks and a couple of other money-related problems. I should have gotten a deferred sentence, but I got a bad judge. Anyway, I did my time.

Q: "Why do you want to work here?"

I figured I'd be able to get free meals if I worked for a restaurant.
(Optional response: A condition of my parole is I have to have a job.)

Q: "Tell me about your most recent job."

I haven't worked for 3 years. I worked at a video store for awhile.

Q: "Why did you leave your last job?"

I didn't see eye to eye with the manager at the video store. Sometimes customers were pretty rude when we didn't have a video they wanted and my manager expected me to be nice to these people when they clearly didn't deserve it. Let's just say I left by mutual agreement.

Q: "Do you have any questions for me?"

Do your employees get free meals?

CRITIQUING THE INTERVIEWS

When critiquing the interview teams, use these points to help decide which team does the best job discussing the interviews:

Good candidate points

- Dressed professionally
- Good handshake
- Good posture while sitting
- Came prepared with a resume and references
- Smiled
- Highlighted that they love being around people
- Likes to learn new things
- Listens well
- Learning another language to communicate better with others
- Made a personal weakness less of a weakness by planning differently
- Knew the reputation of the restaurant (shows some research) and indicated they would be proud to work in a restaurant like that
- Indicated how much they liked interacting with people, even people who were depressed, at a previous job in a cafeteria.
- Left previous job to go to school
- Had a good question on training, again highlighting the fact the restaurant's reputation for good customer service was top notch
- Thanked the interviewer and shook hands

Bad candidate points

- Not dressed professionally
- Tattoos on arm exposed
- Didn't shake hands with the interviewer
- Bad posture
- Handed interviewer a crumpled resume, not well prepared
- None of the personal information was helpful for learning whether or not the candidate would be a good fit for the job
- The strength they highlighted made it sound like they are the life of the party, rather than a good communicator
- The weaknesses they admitted had nothing to do with work habits. Liking to sleep in could indicate a problem being on time for morning shifts.
- Explained too much about the conviction and blamed the judge for their incarceration. Didn't say they learned anything from it or took advantage of any training while in prison
- Wants to work there for free food, and to meet parole conditions. It's all about the candidate's needs and not the employer's.
- Didn't give enough information about the previous job. It appears they quit or were fired because of their poor customer service.
- The question the candidate asked showed no concern or interest in the needs of the employer.
- Didn't thank the interviewer or shake hands

TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL JOB INTERVIEW



- **RESEARCH THE COMPANY**
Find out as much as you can about the company
- **EXPLAIN YOUR EXAMPLES IN DETAIL**
Use the S.T.A.R. method to answer questions*
- **LOOK YOUR BEST**
Your clothes should be neat and appropriate for the working environment
You should be well-groomed
No heavy perfume or cologne
Modest jewelry
- **BE PREPARED**
Bring a copy of your resume, references, samples of work if appropriate
- **ARRIVE EARLY**
Make sure you know how to get to the interview and arrive 10 minutes early

*The S.T.A.R. Method:

Situation

Explain the situation

Task

Explain your task or role

Action

What action did you take?

Results

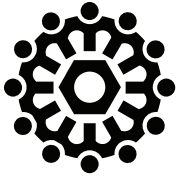
What resulted from your action?

Commonly asked interview questions:

- ✦ *Tell me a little about yourself.*
- ✦ *What are your strengths?*
- ✦ *What are your weaknesses?*
- ✦ *Why do you want to work here?*
- ✦ *Tell me about your most recent job.*
- ✦ *Why did you leave your last job?*

- **BODY LANGUAGE**
Look the interviewer in the eye, but don't stare
Sit up straight and act alert
Don't chew gum or smoke
Smile when appropriate
- **BE ENTHUSIASTIC**
Show genuine interest in the job
- **USE DISCRETION**
Be honest in your answers but steer away from troublesome areas
- **ASK QUESTIONS**
Ask questions that will help you decide if the position is suitable for you
- **SUBJECTS TO AVOID:**
Don't mention financial or personal problems
Don't talk about what was wrong with previous employers
Don't mention salary or benefits
- **REMEMBER TO THANK YOUR INTERVIEWER**





Montana Department of
LABOR & INDUSTRY
Career Resources

Research and Analysis Bureau

P. O. Box 1728

Helena, MT 59624-1728

Phone: (406) 444-2430

Toll-free: (800) 541-3904

www.careers.mt.gov

50 copies of this public document were produced at an estimated cost of \$0.49 per copy, for a total cost of \$24.50, which includes \$24.50 for printing and \$0.00 for distribution.