

VSO Working Papers in Development

Job interview success

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Job Interview Success

by Lincoln Chin

This workshop is designed to prepare speakers of English as a second language for job interviews in English. It is suitable for upper intermediate to advanced learners of English and is mainly intended for college-leavers or university students looking for a first job. The workshop facilitator's pack has been written in a simple and user-friendly way so that both new and experienced facilitators can run the workshop successfully. The workshop focuses both on the language used in CVs, applications and in the actual job interview as well as on general interview skills such as preparation and presentation. The pack includes handouts and activities and could also be used as a self-study guide.

Facilitators can adapt the guidelines in this pack to local circumstances.

To reduce downloading time this document has been saved in different files, follow the links to access and download the whole paper.

About the author

Lincoln Chin has a degree in English Literature and an English teaching Diploma. He has experience of teaching English as a Foreign Language and has travelled extensively. He produced this workshop pack while working with VSO as an English Lecturer at Rajarata University of Sri Lanka.

Acknowledgements

Thanks to Jill McEwen for material support.

The interview case study activity in Session 1 is based upon an exercise in section 18.4, 'Applying for a Job' in *Language in Use - Pre-intermediate (Teacher's Book)*, by Adrian Doff and Christopher Jones, Cambridge University Press, 1991, ISBN 0 521 378532, © CUP. It is used with kind permission of the authors and the publisher.

Introduction

The Job Interview Success workshop is based on the idea that 'hands-on' workshops, where students participate and actively think, is the best way to improve skills. The sessions include a range of techniques and task-based activities, such as brainstorming, and buzz groups. The workshop is intended to build participants' confidence in the use of English and in general interviewing techniques.

This workshop guide will help both new and experienced facilitators conduct this workshop successfully.

The workshop consists of two sessions. Each session lasts for about 2 to 2½ hours:

- **Session 1: General information about interviews**
- **Session 2: Interview practice, including mock interview and self and peer assessment.**
- **Self Awareness exercises**
- **Appendices**

Read the whole workshop guide through to help you plan the workshop, which activities you will do and how long you estimate it will take.

You should schedule the two sessions a few days apart to give the participants time to absorb the information and to prepare for session 2. The workshop is most effective with 10 to 20 participants, to maximise interaction and participation. Ideally, there should be at least two facilitators, particularly for the mock interviews in session 2 but the workshop can also be run by one facilitator. In this case, you should allow for more time to complete the activities.

Session 1 contains several main activities and there are also optional activities. These optional activities use self-awareness techniques to help participants to find out more about themselves and to encourage them to

talk about themselves, their skills and qualities. These [self-awareness activities](#) are useful practice for interviews and they also help the groups work together well during the workshop. The optional self-awareness activities are grouped together at the end of the session plan for session 1 and the guide indicates when they can be inserted if you choose to do so. Remember that the session will take longer if you do any optional activities. The workshop pack does not give timings for the activities, since the time will vary depending upon how many participants you have, and which aspects you want to concentrate on. For example, you can choose to spend more time on the English language activities than on the Interview role-play in Session 1.

Session 2 consists of mock interviews and it may last longer than 2 hours depending on the number of participants. You can divide session 2 into 3 parts, to allow more time for the exercises, discussion and the optional self-awareness activities.

The handouts for the two sessions are in the [appendices](#).

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Appendix 1: Model of a poster announcing the workshop

Workshop: Job Interview Success

This 2-part workshop is designed to help you have **successful job interviews in English**. It is an interactive, hands-on workshop which involves discussion, group work, problem-solving and mock interviews. You **must** talk and share your ideas with others in these sessions: confident, communicative people get jobs! And you must be punctual! If you show up to the workshop more than 10 minutes late, you won't be allowed to enter!!

Conducted by _____

Location: _____

The 2 workshop sessions are on _____ at _____

and _____ at _____

[Give instructions on how to join the workshop, for example: Sign up: at the ELT UNIT Office. (A maximum of _____ students for the workshop on a "first come, first served" basis.)]

***Note: If you can not sign up for this workshop, don't worry, the same workshop will be conducted again during this academic year.**

- Come to the workshop prepared to discuss the following interview topics:
- What should you do before you go to an interview?
- What sort of clothes should you wear?
- What questions will they ask you?
- What questions should you ask them?
- What are employers looking for?
- What kind of things must you NOT do with your body (hands, legs, face etc.) in an interview?

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Appendix 2

CHECKLIST: Positive body language 'It's not what you say, it's what you do.'

Walking

- Walk slowly with good posture.
- DON'T slouch or put your hands in your pockets!!

An armful

- Carry only a file or portfolio and a pen into the office.
- DON'T carry too many things! If you have a bag and coat, umbrella etc. leave them with the receptionist or security.

The handshake

- Not too hard and not too weak!
- Don't stand too close! (If you can put your hand on their shoulder, you are at the correct distance).

Sit down

- Legs together, back straight!
- You can only cross your legs if it is a relaxed, causal kind of interview.
- DON'T shake your legs, slouch in the chair, sit with your legs far apart (it's rude).

What do I do with my arms?

- Hands on your lap or on the arms of the chair!
- DON'T cross your arms, cover your mouth with your hand, scratch, wipe your nose, tap fingers, play with pen etc!!

Look me in the eye

- Make eye contact (it shows confidence)!
- DON'T stare (too much eye contact). DON'T break contact too much like a shy person!!
- When you do break eye contact, look to the left(or the right(, DON'T look down(!!

SMILE! ... and the world smiles with you (especially the interviewer!).

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Appendix 3

Top 12 hints

ON TIME!

- Arrive about 10–15 minutes before your interview.
- Chat with the receptionist.
- Calm yourself.
- DRESS UP! Not too casual and not too smart. If you look good, you feel good!

BATHROOM CHECK!

- Make sure you use the toilet.
- Check your hair, clothes etc.
- Smile at yourself in the mirror.
- You can do a quick practice of saying some of your prepared sentences.

GO BEFORE!

- If you can, go to the exact location beforehand so you know how to get there (buses etc.) and how long it takes.
- Take a look around and talk to people who work there.
- Pick up any company pamphlets, reports etc.
- Extra hint: If your interview is a long journey away, arrive the day before!

TAKE YOUR TIME!! (in the interview).

- Don't rush your answers (pause, take a moment's time to think calmly before you answer. To give you time, use such expressions as 'I should think about that for a few seconds...', 'That's an important question, can I think about it for a moment?')
- *Extra hint: It's okay if you don't understand something, just ask the interviewer to repeat or explain it .

TALK ABOUT YOU, NOT YOUR CV

- The interviewer has read your CV so talk about your qualities and abilities which are not in your CV. If they like you and they can remember you, then there is a better chance they will hire you!
- *Important hint: Take a PRESENTATION PACK (see handout) to give to your interviewer. It gives them extra information about you and gives you a great advantage over people who only have a CV.

BE POLITE!

ASK QUESTIONS!

- A good interview is like a conversation: you must speak and ask questions too. Find out information about the company and the job beforehand, so you can ask intelligent questions (about the company, staff training, its products, advancement opportunities etc.)
- Extra Hint: DON'T talk about money, holidays or benefits unless they do!!

GIVE THEM WHAT THEY WANT!

Find out what skills and qualities you need for that job with that company. Do a KEY LIST of important skills and qualities you need for the job. Prove to the interviewer that you have the skills. In addition, employers always look for the following skills:

- Communication skills
- Problem-solving/analytical skills/ability to learn new skills
- Team-working skills IT (computer) and numerical skills
- Self-management skills Language skills
- Ability to work under pressure or in difficult situations

AVOID ONE-WORD ANSWERS!

- The interview is your chance to tell the interviewer about your skills and your ability to communicate – make sure you use it! Don't just say 'yes' or 'no'. Be specific: give examples and details.

TURN NEGATIVES INTO POSITIVES!

- Be honest. Don't lie about something bad on your record, but make sure you prepare to tell it **POSITIVELY**. For example: 'Yes, I lost my last job because I didn't have the right skills, but I learned a valuable lesson so now I have prepared well for this job with my degree and computer and language skills.'

PRACTICE! PRACTICE!! PRACTICE!!!

- Practice makes perfect:

ASK for advice.

- Talk to people who work in the company which you want to join or who are in that field of work.(

PREPARE YOUR ANSWERS!

- Write them out.
- Edit and correct them (or ask someone else to help you).
- DON'T memorise, just use the notes as a guide to give you confidence.

TAPE YOURSELF!

- If possible, use a tape recorder to check your language, how clearly and loudly you speak and your pronunciation.

USE A MIRROR!

- This is useful to watch your body language and your eye contact.

MOCK INTERVIEWS!

- Practice interviews with a friend. You must do this seriously. Only serious practice helps

"JUST DO IT!"

- Apply for real jobs (even if you are not sure whether you want the job). Interview practice is good. The more interviews you have, the better you will become.

WORST-CASE SCENARIOS!

- Prepare for the most difficult questions (for example, what do you say if you are asked about your work experience and you don't have any). If you prepare for the worst, the rest is easy!

AFTERMATH

- After the interview, write some notes (keep a job hunting file) about what you did well and what you did badly so that you can go home, practice and improve. Next time you'll do better. Follow up the interview: telephone or write to the interviewer to thank her/him soon after your interview. This reminds them of who you are and you can take this opportunity to correct any major mistakes that you made in the interview. For example, 'I've thought some more about your question...' 'I'd just like to expand on my answer concerning....' 'I'm afraid that in the interview I did not make it clear that...'. But keep it short since interviewers are busy people.

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Appendix 4

Presentation Pack

What is it?

A presentation is a written report on you. It is not a CV – your CV has biographical information and your qualifications. A presentation pack talks about the qualities, abilities and skills that make you suitable for the job. You can use it to highlight important things that you have done (projects, life experiences). You should prepare a presentation pack for each job you apply for and make sure you address the key qualities the job requires and the employer is looking for.

A good presentation pack can add a lot to your CV, especially if you don't have much job experience. The interviewer can use this to evaluate you and it will remind her/him of good points you made in the interview.

How do I make one

It has 4 parts (plus a Cover Page). Each part is about a ½ to 1 page:

Part 1: Motivation behind wanting to work with (name of company).

- A statement of the reasons why you want to work with that organisation. Find out information about the company so you can tailor your explanation to the company's policies, work practices etc.
- Hint: you can quote words and ideas from the company's own reports, pamphlets etc and show how it relates to you.

Example:

'Motivation behind wanting to work with Microsoft

There are several reasons why I would like to become a Microsoft salesperson. I support / I share the belief that market demand controls production. Microsoft is at the forefront of technology – leading the way to the Internet superhighway.'

Show that you know what key phrases like 'demand controls production' means and name some new products that they make.

'I'm interested in..... working with international companies like Microsoft. I enjoy the challenge of working with people from different cultures, using our differences to create new ideas together.'

Explain why you like it, describe your past experiences of working with foreigners, or give examples of sharing ideas.

'I appreciate..... your company's professionalism. It's important to have a good working environment and efficient colleagues.'

Now give some examples of your qualities which are relevant to a professional environment (for example, meeting deadlines or describe your professional qualities)

'I understand the need for aggressive sales policies in today's market.'

Explain how your sales techniques are similar to theirs and your experience in aggressive sales.

'In summary, I am highly motivated to join your company, which shares many of the same principles I live and work by. Microsoft is innovative, it is the leader in the computer industry and you need forward-thinking people to continue its success. I hope that I am given the opportunity of making a valid and worthwhile contribution to your team.'

Part 2: Outline of suitability for the position

Make a list of work and non-work experiences which show that you have the key qualities and skills for this job (focus on 3 or 4 important ones). 'Non-work' means experiences that are not paid jobs. If you don't have much job experience, then use your education, volunteer jobs, social activities etc to illustrate your skills.

Example:

'Outline of suitability for the position

These work and non-work experiences show my suitability for the job of Customer Services Officer. Although some of these are not in the service industry, they all developed skills and qualities which are important for

this position.

Solving customer problems: At the Miridiya Hotel I worked on the front desk which required me to act professionally and politely with all guests, no matter how difficult the situation was. My manager admired the way I handled problems by calming the guest, assessing the situation and then finding solutions. Guests always react positively when they are treated with concern and efficiency.

Teaching experience as a tutor: I taught young learners mathematics and English. In helping them, I had many practical tasks such as giving instructions, organising lessons, explaining difficult ideas simply and clearly. Good communication skills, patience and flexibility are important in teaching and also in assisting others in general.

Working with people: as a member of the youth club, I help to organise sports and social events. I also work with local officials and solicit businesses to raise funds. The members work co-operatively to achieve common goals. Sometimes we have personality conflicts but we work out our differences through discussion and compromise.

As you can see, people are central to my experience and a Customer Services Officer must always keep the customer as the number one priority. We're helping people and also helping the company's good reputation. These principles make me a good candidate for your company.'

Part 3: Summary of main achievements

Achievements are important events, projects or activities in your life (but related to work).

Give examples of how your skills, abilities and qualifications develop or are used constructively. Show how you've become such a great candidate!

Example:

'Summary of Main Achievements'

This is a summary of examples when I have developed my skills and used my abilities effectively.

Organised the 1999 student social. Worked on the social committee to organise and run the year-end social event at the university. I used creative and organisational skills and learned to work on a team effectively to reach common objectives. It was a successful and enjoyable night and the Vice-Chancellor appreciated our effort.

Entrepreneurship. I operated a kiosk during the national holiday. This involved purchasing goods, setting up the stall and sales on the day. I learned a lot about running a small business and it was a profitable enterprise.'

Part 4: is an extra copy of your CV.

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Appendix 5

Words for Work

CHECKLIST: Adjectives to describe your qualities

Use these positive adjectives to describe personality. When someone asks, 'What's your teacher like?', you could answer 'S/he is thorough, good with people and creative.' To describe yourself in an interview, you might say 'I'm resourceful, dynamic and efficient!'.

- assertive
- calm under pressure
- clear-thinking
- communicative
- competent
- co-operative
- creative
- decisive
- dependable
- dedicated
- dynamic
- eager
- efficient
- enthusiastic
- good with figures
- good with people
- flexible
- friendly
- hard-working
- helpful
- independent
- innovative
- logical
- loyal
- mature
- methodical
- open to new ideas
- optimistic
- organised
- outgoing
- patient
- people-orientated
- persuasive
- practical
- precise
- reliable
- resourceful
- responsible
- self-confident
- self-motivated
- tactful
- thorough

These words are very useful to answer this type of interview questions:

Tell me about yourself.

What are your (strengths/good qualities)?

How would you describe yourself?

What makes you (suitable/a good choice) for this job?

To answer, use sentences like: I am _____ because.....I (feel/would say) that I'm _____ because.....My strengths are that I'm _____, _____, and _____.

I'm (suitable / a good choice) for this position because I'm _____.

***Always explain why and give examples: 'I am flexible because I can work different shifts, and do many different duties effectively. When I worked in a hotel I had to work in many different departments which meant I had to adapt quickly.'**

CHECKLIST: Verbs

These verbs describe skills, for example:

I can operate a forklift.

I know how to arrange a conference.

OR duties, for example:

In my last job I conducted customer surveys, and organised a sales training program. (*Note the use of the past tense here.)

- administer/manage/direct
- arrange/organise/set up
- assist/facilitate/help
- calculate
- check/inspect
- communicate with
- conduct
- deliver/distribute
- demonstrate
- establish/launch (a product)/implement
- expand /increase/reduce
- instruct/train/teach
- lead
- learn/pick up
- maintain
- make/manufacture/produce
- MarketNetworkoperate/handle (equipment)orderprocessprogram/prepare/design/createrecord/keep (accounts)
- research
- sell
- serve/service
- solicit
- solve/ deal with (problems, complaints)
- supply
- type/write/word process
- work with (people, things)

Checklist: OTHER USEFUL LANGUAGE

Sentences to describe your qualifications and experience:

- I am very good at / skilled at . . . using Microsoft Access.
- I am experienced in / trained in . . . quality management.
- I have expertise in . . . cost accounting.
- When I was at (IBM), we . . . often worked on team on projects
- .My previous employer admired the way that I . . . handled difficult customers.
- My colleagues/friend s would say that I . . . am very dependable.
- I am responsible / accountable for . . . contract negotiations.
- I am responsible / accountable to . . . the Deputy Director.
- Sentences to describe your values and priorities
- In my personal opinion . . .
- I believe/think/ feel . . .
- I prefer . . .
- Most important to me is . . .
- My first/second/ third priority is . . .

Checklist: Sentences to ask for clarification

- Sorry/pardon me . . . I didn't quite follow you.
- Could you repeat that?/ Could you say that again?
- I am not clear what you mean by ...
- What exactly do you mean by . . . ?
- Could you give me an example of what you mean?
- If I understand your question correctly, then (answer what you think the interviewer wanted).

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COMMON INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

The types of questions which are asked during interviews varies depending upon the company and also upon which country you are in.

There are some useful hints on how to answer some of the more complex questions.

General questions

- What is your marital status?
- Do you have dependants?
- How is your health?
- Do you have a current driver's license?
- What experience have you had of working with people from other cultures?
- How do you plan to travel to work?

Work patterns (Some of these questions may be irrelevant for you now if you are looking for your first job, but you can refer to them in the future)

- You say that you are presently employed. How did you get that job?
- Tell me about your work history.
- I would like to know the kind of work you did.
- Would you explain your reasons for leaving?
- Tell me about what you found disappointing or frustrating in your work. Could you explain why?
- What is most important to you in a job?
- What is least important to you in a job?
- What is your usual reaction when your superior finds fault with you for doing something wrong?
- How do you feel about living and working away from home? What arrangements would you have to make?
- Why are you looking for a new job?

(If you have already left or plan to leave a position due to poor working relationships, don't express negative feelings, accuse superiors, claim unfair treatment or condemn your former colleagues. This will make the interviewer conclude that you were unable to handle an interpersonal problem at work, that you yourself may have been the cause of the problem. Also you are displaying disloyalty and this means you could also be disloyal to your new employer! Respond to this question as positively as possible by stating the new job objectives rather than old job failures, and how you are qualified to meet them).

- How do you plan/manage time?

Education and social life

- Tell me about your performance at school.
- What kind of extra-curricular activities did you take part in at school/university?
- What positions of authority did you hold at school/university?
- What experience during your school days means the most to you? Why?
- Would you tell me about something interesting that happened during your university life?
- How has your education / previous work experience prepared you for this job?
- Why did you choose to study nutrition/mathematics/agriculture . . . ?
- What did you do between completing you're a-levels and going to university?
- What training have you had since leaving school?
- What is your educational background?
- What are your qualifications?
- Have you attended any specialised courses?

Personality

- What do you think are your strong points as a person? . . . What do you mean by that?

(You must sell yourself – select one key quality that is important for this job. State the quality, then support your claim with past achievements).

- What are your weak points as a person?

(Try to express weak points positively: for example, 'I care too much about getting things right, which means I sometimes spend too long on one task.' Be self-confident and express the desire to improve the good credentials you now possess. You can also point to a relatively unimportant, non-job related area that you think needs some improvement.)

- What qualities do you admire in other people? Why?
- What is your opinion about teamwork?
- What irritates or displeases you most in other people?
- What was the last incident to make you angry? How did you cope with the situation?
- How do you react in a crisis situation?
- How do you react under pressure?
- Describe a stressful situation for you.
- Why have you chosen this particular field?

(Impress the interviewer with your interest, knowledge of the field and your ability to perform successfully on the job. Explain that this type of work gives you a strong sense of purpose, identity and accomplishment, a feeling you could not derive from other types of work. Mention key functions of the job and explain why you are interested and are competent in them).

- What have been some of your achievements?
- How do you think a client should be treated?
- Do you prefer working on your own or as part of a team?

(You must stress that both are important – you can work independently and are self-motivated but you also enjoy being part of a team and sharing responsibilities and ideas).

- What qualities do you think we are looking for/are required for this position?
- How do you deal with conflict?
- What experience have you had in developing new ideas?

Goals and values

- Why did you apply for this job with our organisation?
- Why do you feel we should hire you?

(Sell yourself – explain your qualities above and beyond your CV)

- What contributions do you think you could make to our organisation?
- What plans do you have for improving your qualifications?

(Before the interview, find out what position you could reasonably expect to reach in 5 years and 10 years – read about and speak to others who have successfully advanced in your field and with this company. Show the interviewer that you want to progress within the organisation and will acquire the necessary skills).

- Why are you interested in working for this company?

(Emphasise that you have considered joining the company for a while and that your decision to seek employment here is based on sound reasons. Remember to support what you say with evidence.).

- What would be your perfect job?
- What current issues do you feel strongly about?
- Give me an example of how you set priorities.
- Outline your personal goals for this year.

Position/organisation

- What salary do you expect? Are you prepared to negotiate this amount?
- Would you agree to a training position for a year?
- What is it that interests you most in this job?
- What experience do you have that is relevant to this job?
- Why would you be good at this job?
- What qualities/relevant experience do you have which would you suitable for this job?
- Why do you want this job?
- What do you think you would find difficult about this job?
- You may be expected to do overtime. How do you feel about that?
-

Session 2 – Handout: Mock interview preparation

During session 2, you will have a mock interview to practice your skills and you will role-play an interviewer

FOR YOUR MOCK INTERVIEW

You should prepare to answer any of the questions that have been highlighted in the boxes. YOU WILL BE ASKED ONLY 3 OF THEM, but you should prepare for all of them. Use the WORDS FOR WORK sheets to help you, and be specific: provide examples and details in your answers! Also prepare some questions to ask the interviewer. Dress formally like you would for a real interview. You will go through all the steps of an interview from the greeting to the goodbye.

*Note: If you don't prepare and practice for session 2, DO NOT come to the session! People who get jobs are people who are willing to work hard!

Instructions for role-playing the interviewer

1. Do all the steps that an interviewer would do in a real interview, from greeting the candidate to saying goodbye.
2. Choose any 3 of the following questions to ask the candidate. Don't tell the candidate what you are going to ask them beforehand.
 - Why are you looking for a new job?
 - What is most important to you in a job?
 - How has your education / previous work experience prepared you for this job?
 - Why did you choose to study nutrition/mathematics/agriculture..?
 - What did you do between completing your a-levels and going to university?
 - What are your strong points as a person?... What do you mean by that?
 - Do you prefer working on your own or as part of a team?
 - What qualities do you think we should be looking for / are required for this position?
 - What made you apply for this job with our organization?
 - Why do you feel we should hire you?
 - Outline your personal goals for this year.
 - What salary do you expect? Are you prepared to negotiate this amount?
 - You may be expected to do overtime. How do you feel about that?

After the 3 questions, ask: 'Do you have any questions?' to give the candidate a chance to ask one or two questions they have prepared.

Finally, evaluate the candidate by answering this simple question honestly:

WOULD YOU HIRE THIS PERSON? Yes / No

WHY? WHY NOT?

Session 2

INTERVIEW ASSESSMENT SHEET: Interview # _____

Write the score in the boxes below using:

G = Good A = Average P = Poor

FIRST IMPRESSIONS		SCORE
General appearance (clothes, neatness etc.)		
Body language		
Eye contact		
Politeness		
Smiling/ friendliness		
Voice (clear, loud enough)		
ANSWERS TO	SCORE	COMMENT(What was good, what needs improvement, how can be improved)
Question 1		
Question 2		
Question 3		

.Circle YES or NO for the following questions

Did the candidate:

- ask the interviewer good questions? Y / N
- talk about things OUTSIDE the CV? Y / N
- use good English? Y / N

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 - What are your strong points as a person?... What do you mean by that?
 - Do you prefer working on your own or as part of a team?
 - What qualities do you think we should be looking for / are required for this position?
 - What made you apply for this job with our organization?
 - Why do you feel we should hire you?
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ANSWERS TO	SCORE	COMMENT(What was good, what needs improvement, how can be improved)
Question 1		
Question 2		
Question 3		

.Circle YES or NO for the following questions

Did the candidate:

- ask the interviewer good questions? Y / N
- talk about things OUTSIDE the CV? Y / N
- use good English? Y / N

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Session 2 – Mock Interview

Session 2 is a mock interview which allows each participant to practice their interview skills. They are a simulation of real interviews. The mock interview also involves peer and self-evaluations. Each participants will also get the chance to role-play an interviewer.

If you have access to a video camera, it is a good idea to videotape some of the interviews. This is an excellent way to improve interview skills because participants can see themselves and review areas they need to work on.

Before the session, set up the interview offices (a desk and 2 chairs sitting opposite each other) and a semi-circle of chairs around them at a discreet distance for the rest of the group.

It is important to make the mock interview as realistic as possible, so try to have a separate room for the interview and another room to be the waiting/reception area. Set up furniture and one of the participants can act as a receptionist. Be sure that both the interviewer and the interviewee are very clear about their roles and which job the candidate is applying for.

Warm-up

This activity will help to release some of the tension participants may feel before their mock interview. It will also review some of the information in session 1.

Activity: Review race

1. You will need a lot of space, so it is best to do this activity outside. Post two signs on chairs in big letters: **ACCEPTABLE** and **NOT ACCEPTABLE**.
2. Divide the participants into 2 teams and ask them to line up.
3. As you call out statements, the 2 people at the front of the lines go to sit either on the **ACCEPTABLE** or on the **NOT ACCEPTABLE** chair.

Examples:

- Wearing a dark blue shirt with a tie (**ACCEPTABLE**)
- Arriving 30 min. before your interview and sitting in the waiting room. (**ACCEPTABLE**)
- Slapping at a mosquito which is bothering you. (**NOT ACCEPTABLE**)
- Crossing your legs because the interviewer tells you to relax and be comfortable. (**NOT ACCEPTABLE**)
- Not eating any breakfast because you're nervous. (**NOT ACCEPTABLE**)
- Asking the interviewer when you will be able to find out the results of the interview. (**ACCEPTABLE**)
- Telling the interviewer that you left your last job because your manager was taking the credit for all your hard work. (**NOT ACCEPTABLE**)

The first to sit in the correct chair gets one point. If that participant can give a valid explanation why it is acceptable or unacceptable, s/he will get another point. If s/he cannot answer adequately, then the other participant gets a chance to give an explanation for one point.

Although this activity involves movement, do not worry if the participants do not run – it is not a race and they will not want to become hot and their interview clothes to become untidy.

Activity: Mock interviews

Divide the participants into interviewers and candidates. If you have a video camera, ask for pairs to volunteer to be videotaped (you can also choose at random or choose pairs according to their abilities.) Divide the pairs between the facilitators and decide the order of presentation. When all interviews have been done, the interviewers and candidates change places. At the end of the session, everyone should have been both interviewer and candidate.

Hand out the evaluation sheets to everyone and the interviewer instruction sheets to the interviewers.

Explain that the observers' comments are VERY important and that they must be constructive. Not writing anything is not helpful. Participants may write their notes in English or in their native language.

Interview guidelines

- **Participants must do all interview steps from the knock to the goodbye.**
- **If the candidate gets nervous, forgets what to say or interrupts, DO NOT start over. Continue just like in a real interview.**
- **The observers must be quiet (respect, please) and evaluate the interview.**
- **Remember: we are here to learn and to help each other. Don't be ashamed, this is a valuable learning experience. Be constructive in all your comments.**
- **RELAX!**

After each pair finishes the mock interview, give the observers a few minutes to finish their assessments. Then do a feedback session. The interviewer gives a general assessment first (refer to the INTERVIEWER INSTRUCTIONS sheet) and then the observers.

If you have videotaped an interview, use the tape as an aid: replay the relevant section to illustrate a point; for example, 'here is where you seemed a little hesitant. Try to ask questions with a more confident tone.' The interviewers and candidates can evaluate themselves as the tape is played. Video is also very useful for comparative assessments. If you have the opportunity at a later date, you can video another session of mock interviews, and contrast it with the video from the earlier session to illustrate the participants' progress.

Ask questions and add any comments that you feel are useful. It is important to highlight positive things (what they did well). THIS IS NOT A TEST – participants did not 'fail' anything, it's just that they need to improve.

Closing.

Allow a question and discussion period (5 –10 min) for any questions about the sessions and for participants to review their next steps in job hunting.

Click for [appendix list](#)
Back to [session one](#)

Session 1

This session covers basic information about interviews, with 'how to' advice and helpful hints that all job seekers should be aware of.

Warm-up

This warm-up gives participants general information about interviews and the language they will need to use.

Ask participants about the difference between greetings:

- to friends - you say 'hi!' or 'hello', and smile
- family - you may kiss or each other hug
- and strangers - you will use formal language, shake hands

Meeting an interviewer is like meeting a stranger:

Shake hands: firmly, not too softly, not too strong. It is a good idea to wipe your hands just before entering the interview room to avoid sweaty hands.

Use formal language: 'Hello' or 'Good morning/good afternoon'. Do NOT say 'Hi.'

Be very polite: ask 'May I come in?'.

Remember: FIRST IMPRESSIONS ARE LASTING IMPRESSIONS!

Activity: Greetings

Ask participants to stand and to practice greeting everyone in the session. They should smile, look each other in the eye, shake hands firmly and greet them formally. Examples of language to be used: 'Hello'. 'Nice to meet you.' 'Good afternoon, how do you do?'.

You should also participate. After the exercise, give participants advice on points like: 'Your handshake is too weak/strong.' 'Please speak louder.' 'Make eye contact', and so on.

OPTIONAL SELF-AWARENESS ACTIVITY: [Life and job priorities](#)

Activity: Body language

This exercise helps participants to practice using positive body language during an interview. It involves a technique called Total Physical Response (TPR). TPR is based on the idea that if participants actually do the physical actions, they will remember them better.

You will need: some newspapers, pens, papers, lunchbox, water bottle, umbrella, briefcases and jackets etc (ask participants to use theirs if they have brought these). Place these items around the room.

You will also need to ask one of the higher-level participants to help you with a short role play.

1. Start by asking participants to define body language. Then tell them that body language is the way we speak with our bodies. The way we move, or sit or hold our arms and place our legs communicates messages. Body language is a very powerful way of communicating: actors and politicians pay a lot of money to study it.
2. Ask participants to 'follow the leader' – they must copy whatever actions you show them. Tell them it is important that they should try to copy EXACTLY what you are doing. This will help them to learn these physical body movements. Most people do many of these movements unconsciously, without being aware of them. This activity will help participants to become aware of negative body language so they can learn to use positive body language.

3. Walk around the room in a slouched position (bend forward a little, with a rounded back). Ask the participants to look around at each other. Now put your hands in your pockets and continue walking. Ask them how they feel about themselves and the others around them. What kind of impression does this position give? (For example, lazy, depressed, unconfident.)
4. Now ask participants to continue walking while they pick up several of the items around the room until they have a large armful. Now ask them to stop. Tell them to imagine that they have arrived at the interviewer's office. Ask them what's wrong. What will they do with all the items they are carrying?
 - **Ask:** what are the only things you should take with you when you go to an interview?
 - **Answer:** a file/portfolio or briefcase.
 - **Ask:** what should be in the file.
 - **Answer:** pens, copies of CV, reference letters and other material which is relevant to the interview.
 - **Ask:** them what they should do with all the items they have in their hands (coat, lunchbox, water bottle, umbrella etc)?
 - **Answer:** They can be left with the receptionist, security desk or secretary. However, this may not be possible, so it is best to not bring these items. Bring only what is necessary:
5. Sit in a chair and do the following actions. After each, ask participants to tell you what impression you give.
 - Sit down. Lean back. Sit slouched in the chair.
 - **Answer:** over-confident/arrogant, casual, uninterested.
 - Spread your legs very wide
 - **Answer:** rude, aggressive
 - Shake your legs
 - **Answer:** nervous, impatient
 - Cross your legs.
 - **Answer:** This is a special case. If it is an informal interview and the interviewer is casual and relaxed, THEN and ONLY THEN you can do it.
 - Cross your arms
 - **Answer:** defensive, 'closed' – not responding or interacting with the interviewer.
 - Put your hand over your mouth and ask questions. Participants should answer with their hands over their mouths.
 - **Answer:** dishonesty, fear, nervousness. It is also difficult to hear: if the interviewer can watch your mouth moving, they can understand you better!
 - Play with your pen, scratch, tap your fingers, wipe your nose.
 - **Answer:** rude, impatient, nervous, unclean
 - Lean forward slightly in your chair. Ask them to imagine that you are the interviewer talking to them – what is their response?
 - **Answer:** Leaning forward is a good sign – it is a sign of interest from the interviewer. It is good to lean forward occasionally when the interviewer is speaking because it shows the interviewer that you are listening attentively and that what s/he is saying is important to you.
5. Now ask a high-level participant to sit across from you in front of the class. Start speaking, talk about yourself, your skills and background. While you are talking, look everywhere in the room except at the participant.
 - Ask the participant how this makes her/him feel about you.
 - **Answer:** shy, dishonest, unconfident, nervous.
 - Ask the other participants what you did wrong.
6. Repeat the exercise, but this time, look only directly at the participant, staring into the eyes. Ask the participant how this makes her/him feel about you. **Answer:** uncomfortable, you seem overconfident or aggressive. It can also give the impression that you are slightly strange.

The ideal is to make steady eye contact and to break it sometimes. When you talk, you should make eye contact more and when you listen, you can interrupt eye contact more.

- **Ask:** where should you look? Out the window? Down?
- **Answer:** Make eye contact and then look slightly to the side, left or right, of the interviewer. Looking down shows lack of confidence and it can be particularly uncomfortable for female interviewers because it appears as if you are at their body.

The best position for an interview is to sit with your hands on your lap with palms open, or with your arms resting lightly on the armrests. Keep your pen in your portfolio or briefcase, not in your pocket (this looks untidy).

OPTIONAL: Ask participants to find a partner and to tell each other about themselves and to practice making good eye contact. Tell them it will feel awkward at first but it will feel natural later. You can observe and give advice.

8. Finally, give each participant a copy of the handout on **BODY LANGUAGE** and ask them to review it at home. It covers all the advice in this exercise.

Activity: What are you worried about?

This activity gives participants an opportunity to discuss issues about interviews which they are concerned about.

You will need: a chalkboard, a flipchart or a large sheet of paper, and pens.

1. Divide the participants into groups of three. Give them 5 minutes to suggest three things about interviews that they are worried out. List them on the chalkboard or on a flipchart/poster.
2. The whole group should discuss ways to solve these problems (for example, if you have little work experience, a good interview can present you in your best light; you can tape yourself or practice with a friends to improve the way you speak and to reduce nervousness.)

The rest of the workshop will tackle some of the issues which are likely to be raised here.

EXAMPLES	POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS
Worried about level of English	Pre-prepare answers, ask your English teacher to edit them, practice saying them until you sound fluent and natural. This gives you confidence.
Worried about too much competition	Sell yourself, help the interviewer to remember you out of the crowd.
Not enough qualifications or work experience	Get some volunteer work. Highlight achievements in school (for example, special projects completed, membership of the student council) or the community (membership of clubs or organisations, and so on). Highlight your skills and abilities and your ability to learn.
Nervousness	Practice. Use a mirror. Practice with a friend. Do mock interviews. Learn relaxation techniques like deep breathing.

Helpful hints for success

1. Give each participant a copy of the handout 'Top 12 hints' and the attached sheet "Practice makes perfect' to read. These hints should help overcome some of the fears about interviews which you have been discussing. Encourage participants to ask questions. Ask each participant which hint they think is important or useful, and why.
2. Highlight the 'Dress up' hint: emphasise that first impressions are VERY VERY IMPORTANT. The interviewer may reject candidates who do not look right when they walk in the door. Ask participants to look at you and each other and to identify those people whose clothes they think are suitable for an interview. Why are these clothes suitable? What would they change about the clothes for an interview? Often, only one or two changes are necessary.

Here are some hints on appropriate clothes for interviews:

General:

- Do not dress too formally or too casually.
- Do not wear sandals or open shoes.
- Always wear a watch.
- Well-groomed, neat hair
- Clean teeth, hands and fingernails
- Remember the CSC rules for interview clothes: CLEAN! SIMPLE! CONSERVATIVE!

Men:

- White or light blue shirt, preferably long-sleeved, and tie
- Dark trousers
- Belt (trousers without belts can look untidy)
- Socks – black is best
- Polished shoes, black is best.
- Wear a suit with a jacket if the men working in that company dress in formal business clothes, or if you know that your interviewer does (the interviewer will feel comfortable if your clothes are similar). Male staff of international companies usually wear suits.

Women:

- A white, business-like blouse with a dark skirt
- or a simple business suit
- or appropriate local dress (for example, a sari in Sri Lanka. Facilitators can adapt this, depending upon what is appropriate in your country.
- Do not wear dresses
- Always wear a watch but do not wear too much jewellery
- Do not wear a lot of make-up

Tell participants that it is a good idea to check your interview clothes before the interview. Make sure that they fit properly and are clean. The day before the interview, try the clothes on and get used to them. This will help you to feel more comfortable on the day.

3. Emphasise the 'Bathroom check' hint.
4. Highlight the 'Ask questions' hint. Ask participants to tell you why it is a good idea to ask questions during an interview.

Answer: It shows that you are interested in the company and the job. If you have a relevant question, ask during their interview and not only at the end when the interviewer asks them whether they have questions. However, do not ask irrelevant questions only because you think it is a good idea to ask.

Activity: Questions

You will need: several job advertisements from an English-language newspaper which suit the participants' fields of work or study. (Keep these: you will use them again later to prepare for the mock interviews in Session 2.)

Ask participants to form groups of three and give each group a job advertisement. Give the groups a few minutes to read the advertisement and to make three intelligent questions which a candidate for these jobs could ask the interviewer.

The groups report back and the class can discuss questions and how to improve them.

1. Tell participants that it is important to find out as much information as they can about the job and the company. You can use this during the interview to show the interviewer that you are keen to work with their company. Many employers complain that applicants come to interviews with poor knowledge of what the job requires and no knowledge about their company – and therefore, these candidates are NOT hired.
2. Put the following lists on a poster or the blackboard:

Company information

- What the firm makes/sells/does
- What is its mission statement?
- How big is it?
- Where is it located? Where is the head office?
- How is it organised?
- How many employees does it have?

Job information

- Who you will work with? In which department?
- Who will be your manager/superior?
- What are the duties of the job and which skills are required.?
- What career prospects are there with the company?
- How secure is a job with the company?
- What is the work environment like?
- What is the approximate salary?
- What are the benefits, holidays, and so on?

Tell participants: you can get much of this information from the job advertisement and from the job description. It may be possible to make a short visit the company's office to pick up their literature, like the annual report. If you telephone the company to find out more information, keep your calls short and to the point. One telephone call is ideal, but if you have forgotten something, a second telephone call is the maximum.

During the interview, you can show the interviewer that you have taken the time to research information about the company, for example:

- 'When I spoke to (name, position) last week, he told me that . . .'
- 'I know that your company produces /sells/ . . .'
- 'This position requires that I (give a list of duties), is that a good summary of the duties involved?'

OPTIONAL SELF-AWARENESS ACTIVITY: **INTERVIEW STAGES**

Activity: **Presentation Pack** (this can also be done as homework)

Participants can either complete this activity at home or you can use the Presentation Pack during the session. A Presentation Pack is a written report on themselves. It gives additional information about a candidate and it can cover gaps in a CV. It is useful because it can add information which a candidate may not remember to say during the interview but wish they had.. The Presentation Pack is produces according to the guidance and hints in **session 1**, so it is an excellent review of the session.

Activity: **Interview case study**

This activity is based upon an exercise in section 18.4, 'Applying for a Job' in *Language in Use - Pre-intermediate (Teacher's Book)*, by Adrian Doff and Christopher Jones, Cambridge University Press, 1991, ISBN 0 521 378532, © CUP. It is used with kind permission of the authors and the publisher.

You will need: copies of the job advertisements, the covering letter for the participants (see below). You can also write them on a poster or on the chalkboard. You will also need to ask one high-level student to act out the interview with you (you can practice this before the workshop).

Ask participants to read the job advertisement and the covering letter and to brainstorm ideas about the main duties of the job and kind of person who is ideal for this job.

Job advertisement:

Receptionist/General Assistant

for busy 3-star hotel. Applicants must be mature and outgoing with a minimum of 1 year's experience. An excellent salary, a uniform and your own bedroom will be provided. Please supply a recent photograph and CV to: Mrs Santos, Sand and Sea Hotel.

Covering letter:

Dear Mrs Santos

I am writing to apply for the job of Receptionist/General Assistant, which you advertised recently in Hotel & Catering magazine.

I am 25 years old and I have 5 secondary school passes, including French and Mathematics. I also have the Pitman Secretarial Diploma. Since leaving college, I have had several years' experience doing secretarial and general office work, including several months as receptionist for a large company.

At the moment I am working as a receptionist at the Mountain Hotel, a small private hotel. I have been employed here for the past six months.

I am interested in working as a receptionist in your hotel as I enjoy hotel work and now I would like to broaden my experience.

I enclose a photograph and a full curriculum vitae, and I would be happy to send any further details you may require.

Yours sincerely

Angela Wright

1. Ask participants to make a list of the key, or important, skills and qualities needed for this job on a poster or on the chalkboard. This is called a Key List.

SKILLS: A receptionist has to . . .

- sit at the reception desk
- greet visitors
- make bookings
- deal with complaints
- be able to speak foreign languages
- communicate on the telephone.

QUALITIES: A receptionist should be . . .

- friendly
- organised
- a good listener/communicator
- diplomatic
- helpful.

2. Ask participants whether they think Angela is a good candidate for a job interview – if they were the General Manager, would they ask her to come to an interview? Why?

3. Now act out the interview with a high-level student. Tell the other participants that they should make notes of their comments during their interview so that the group can discuss this at the end of the interview. They should think about questions like, for example: How well did Angela do in the interview? Would they hire her?

Interview role play

* A = Angela Wright I = Interviewer

PART 1

A: I'm terribly sorry I'm late, I had rather an awkward time finding your office.

I: That's quite all right. Please sit down.

A: Thank you, thank you.

I: *Perhaps now I could start by asking you what kind of work you've been doing at the Sand and Sea Hotel?*

A: Well, for the past six months I've been working as a receptionist there, which means that I've been answering the telephone and generally working at the reception desk.

PART 2

I: *Now in this hotel we use the Receptel system, which I expect you know is a computerised booking system. Are you familiar with that? Would you know how to use it?*

A: I don't think I would know straight away how to use it. I never have come across that particular kind of booking system. But I have done office work previously and used word processors and various office computers, so I'm quite confident that I could probably learn quite quickly.

PART 3

I: *Now perhaps you could tell me why you want to leave your present job and join us here?*

A: Well, I don't really feel that a small private hotel is really what I'm looking for. The hours are very, very long and I don't really get paid very much.

I: *You say the hours are very long. You mean you don't like working long hours?*

A: Oh no, no, it's not that, it's not that I'm afraid of hard work or anything like that, no, it's very repetitive work, and I don't feel that my qualifications are being properly used.

PART 4

I: *Now, could I end by asking if you have any questions to ask me?*

A: Yes. Could you be more specific about what general assistant actually involves?

I: *It means roughly what it says, really. It's helping out with any day-to-day problems that turn up, not just booking people in and welcoming guests but being, if you like, part of junior management, helping us out day-to-day. We'd expect that.*

A: I see. And I'd have holidays, would I?

I: *You would have holidays, but perhaps we should leave that until you have the job . . . Well, thank you very much for coming along today, and we'll be in touch.*

A: Thank you, thank you.

4. Give participants a few minutes to record their comments. Then discuss their ideas. Use the information below to guide the discussion and to highlight the most important points.

Part 1: Angela arrives late and is feeling rather nervous. She should have found out the location of the interview and how to get there beforehand. She doesn't describe her work very well – she only mentions obvious things.

Part 2: A good response – honest, but also positive and confident.

Part 3: Her first reply isn't very good – it gives the impression that she is lazy and cares only about money. She tries to correct herself, but not very successfully. Don't criticise or complain about your current or former job or colleagues. If you are negative about them, then your interviewer will feel that you will be negative about future employers as well!

Part 4: Her first question is good because the advertisement is vague about this, but the interviewer doesn't

answer it. She should have tried to follow this up by asking specific questions, for example: Will I be involved in training new staff? How closely will I be working with management? Will I be required to fill in for other staff if there is a shortage of staff?.

Her second question again gives the impression that she doesn't like hard work. The interviewer is correct: you can negotiate work conditions, salary, days off and so on AFTER you secure the job.

Activity: Key lists

1. Divide participants into small groups and ask each group to make KEY LISTS for a job (for example, fashion model, hotel receptionist, policeman, executive, sportsperson, bus driver). Then they should give one specific example of how a person applying for that job can show that they meet the key skills or qualifications and how they can back up that statement. Remember: 'Prove it or forget it!'. Be prepared to prove to the interviewer that you have all the key skills and qualities for the job. for example:

Key quality	Evidence
Reliable	I have rarely missed any workdays in my present job.
Good with figures	I recently took an accounting course and got an 'A

* This activity can be competitive by dividing participants into groups working on the same job. Compare the lists and discuss which group has the better candidate profile.

2. Then, ask participants to make their own personal Key Lists with evidence as shown in the example above.
3. To end, you could ask participants to present their Key Lists and the group can discuss how they can be improved.

OPTIONAL SELF-AWARENESS ACTIVITY: [THE SKILLS MARKET](#)

Activity: Words for work

Hand out copies of the '[Words for Work](#)' sheets. If you have time, you can go through them with participants, to practise forming sentences and responses. Alternatively, you can ask participants to study them at home and to use them to prepare for the mock interviews in Session 2.

OPTIONAL SELF-AWARENESS ACTIVITY: [Hobbies are more than fun](#)

Activity: You be the judge

Below is a list of six questions which might be asked at different stages of an interview. Each question has two answers: the answer in the right column below is a better answer than the answer in the the left column. There are also some brief comments under each answer which show why the answer in the right column is better.

You will need to prepare several sets of cards of questions and answers. Write each question and answer onto a separate piece of paper or card. The questions and answers are listed below. **Do not copy the comments!** Divide the class into small groups of three to five. Hand out one full set of questions and answers to each group. They have 15 minutes to decide which answer is better and why. Use the comments to guide the discussion.

Which is the better answer?

<p>What have you been since you graduated? Have you been working?</p> <p>I'm afraid that I couldn't find work immediately, but I'm trying to. It's difficult these days to find a job because of the economy, companies just aren't hiring. I helped to build my family's house while I looked for work. It can be quite discouraging, but I'm a hard worker and qualified so all I need is a chance to prove my abilities and skills.</p> <p>Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● sounds negative and complaining ● the candidate has not done much to improve 	<p>What have you been doing since you graduated? Have you been working?</p> <p>I'm afraid that I couldn't find work immediately so I used my time constructively. I helped to build my family's house so I know how to work hard. I improved my skills with a computer course; I learnt to use programs like Excel and Word. I also studied English to improve my communication skills. Now I'm better qualified for this job.</p> <p>Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● positive, optimistic, helpful ● the candidate has her/his used time well to improve her/his qualifications
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<p>her/his qualifications</p> <p>Can you tell me about your work experience?</p> <p>I worked as a waiter and as bar staff in a busy hotel restaurant for tourists for two years. It was my first job and I worked very hard. It was a good experience even though it wasn't in my field.</p> <p>Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● this candidate has had only a little work experience so s/he needs to give an answer to make this little experience relevant. The work experience is relevant because it teaches skills (such as working with people and customer service) which are useful in all jobs ● it is a very general description of the job 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● candidate has highlighted her/his abilities <p>Can you tell me about your work experience?</p> <p>I worked as a waiter in a hotel restaurant. It was challenging and I was able work under a lot of pressure because the restaurant was always very busy. I learned about the importance of good service, and working in a team, and also how to calculate money quickly and accurately.</p> <p>Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● this candidate has not much work experience but this answer highlights important skills (for example, working with people and customer service) and learning abilities ● employers are always looking for people who can handle pressure ● it is a specific description of the job.
<p>Tell me about yourself</p> <p>I'm married and I have two beautiful children. I'm interested in cricket, history and bird watching. I graduated from university with a Business Management degree with high marks. I studied courses such as accounting and English. I've got two years' work experience, first as a clerk and then as a manager in a factory in the capital, so I can easily do the duties of this job. I'm also very skilled with computers.</p> <p>Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● this is an average answer. It repeats information which can already be read on the CV ● this is a very general answer which misses the a perfect chance to 'sell' yourself ● see GIVE THEM WHAT THEY WANT hint. 	<p>Tell me about yourself</p> <p>I'm efficient; when I have a project to do, I do it thoroughly and on time. For example, I always double-check my reports. I like to be organised; in my last managerial position I had many duties so I organised a schedule and prioritised my jobs. I'm a fast learner: I didn't know anything about computers before university, it was difficult at first but I studied hard, got high marks and can use it effectively now.... I believe that problems are really challenges and that I can solve them.</p> <p>Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● this is an excellent answer. It gives a lot of additional information which is not on the CV ● it gives specific details, examples and evidence of key skills and qualities ● it reveals the personality and values of the candidate (for example, 'problems are really challenges') ● it shows a problem-solving approach and self-management skills. ● see GIVE THEM WHAT THEY WANT hint
<p>Why do you think we should hire you?</p> <p>Well, I meet the requirements of your company: I'm qualified, and I have many years of experience in this kind of work. I'm a hard worker, knowledgeable in this job's duties, and I have computer skills. I'm efficient, organised and work with others very well. I'm sure you will be satisfied with my performance.</p> <p>Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● this is an average answer. It gives a list of good points, but it is not very memorable and there are no details or examples ● Remember: 'PROVE IT OR FORGET IT!' 	<p>Why do you think we should hire you?</p> <p>'Well, I meet your requirements but furthermore, I will be a positive addition to your company. I'll work very hard because success for this company means success for everyone who works here. I'm a team player, but I also have ideas on how to improve sales and productivity. I'm sure you'll be satisfied with my performance.</p> <p>Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● this answer sells the candidate well; it is very persuasive and shows a lot of enthusiasm ● it shows how the candidate can help the company with new ideas ● it is confident, but not over-confident or arrogant.

<p>Why did you leave your last job?</p> <p>I left my last job because they couldn't compensate me for my hard work. I performed well, and took on extra duties, but because of a downturn in the market they weren't able to pay me a fair salary. I would much prefer a job your company, which is growing quickly.</p> <p>Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● this answer is too honest: the candidate sounds greedy and gives the impression that s/he cares more about personal performance than the company's success ● remember: don't criticise others. It gives a negative impression ● (Don't mention money during the interview unless it is raised by the interviewer! See ASK QUESTIONS hint, and below 	<p>Why did you leave your last job?</p> <p>I left my last job even though it was a good experience because I wanted new challenges and opportunities. Your company has a good reputation for quality, and it is expanding into new markets so I can use my abilities better in this job.</p> <p>Comments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● this answer highlights positive things. It does not mention past mistakes but concentrates on the future prospects with this company. It sounds positive
<p>What salary do you expect?</p> <p>Well, I'm not sure, but I think I can expect about AMOUNT a month, which is normal for a person in the position.</p> <p>Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● this is an average answer. It shows the candidate has done some research into the salary scale 	<p>What salary do you expect?</p> <p>Well, I hope to be paid according to my qualifications and performance. I expect about AMOUNT a month; however, it is negotiable – we can discuss it.</p> <p>Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● this is a good answer which is informed, confident and leaves room for discussion.

Preparation for session two:

Tell participants when and where session 2 will be held. session 2 consists of mock interviews. emphasise that the mock interviews are serious: they will be just like real life, so they should prepare, practice and dress appropriately, and arrive on time.

Use the job advertisements from the **questions activity** in **helpful hints for success** or bring in a selection of job advertisements from an English-language newspaper.

Each participant should select which job they want to apply for. They should prepare to answer any of the questions in the **commonly asked questions** **handout**. They should also use their **personal key lists** and other **handouts from session 1** to prepare.

If you have access to a video camera, it is a good idea to videotape some of the interviews. This is an excellent way to improve interview skills because participants can see themselves and review areas they need to work on.

Session two
Appendix list

OPTIONAL SELF-AWARENESS ACTIVITIES FOR SESSION 1

- Self awareness activities: [priorities](#)
- Self awareness activities: [interview stages](#)
- Self awareness activities: [the skills market](#)
- Self awareness activities: [hobbies are more than just fun](#)

You can select additional activities for session 1 depending upon the time you have for the workshop and the needs of the participants. These additional activities are SELF-AWARENESS activities. Self-awareness activities help us to understand what our **priorities/values** are and how they relate to work and **which jobs would suit us**. The activities promote group dynamics, discussion and the ability to 'sell' oneself. As participants become more aware of their needs and priorities, this helps them to **present themselves more positively and confidently**.

Self-awareness activity: Priorities

Use this activity near the start of Session 1, after the warm-up.

This activity helps participants understand what their priorities are and how they relate to work and which jobs would suit them. It will also promote interaction between the participants and their ability to discuss and 'sell' themselves. These are useful interview skills.

Life Priorities

On a poster or the chalkboard, write a list of things that are usually important to people (for example, FAMILY, FRIENDS, EDUCATION, JOB, FAME, RELIGION, MONEY, HAVING A GOOD TIME, POWER, MATERIAL POSSESSIONS (home, car) and so on. Ask participants to suggest ideas.

Ask participants to prioritise the items in this list: each of them should make a list, from the thing which is most important to them, to the thing that is least important.

Job priorities

This part of the activity involves movement, so clear a large space at the front of the room or go outside. Tell participants you will call out opposing priorities (see the examples below) and point to the left or right. They must go to the side of the priority that is more important to them. (For example, you point to the left and call 'I prefer to work alone', and point to the right and call 'I prefer to work in groups.'). They have to decide quickly, while you count "1, 2, 3" then call "STOP!". Those who have not decided when you call 'stop' are out.

It is important that participants should make their choice quickly. This encourages them to use their first instinct to make the choice rather than thinking about it for a long time. The first instinct is usually more accurate!

Each group should then discuss the reasons for their choice and report back the best reason. You and the students who are 'out' then choose to join the group which you think had the better reason. The team that attracts the most people to join them is the most persuasive: they have thought of reasons which explain and 'sell' better, which is important in interviews.

***But remember: the other priority is equally valid! Different jobs require different skills and qualities – but in an interview, it is important to explain and 'sell' the skills and qualities you have.**

Some examples of contrasting priorities:

I prefer to work alone	vs	I prefer to work in groups
A job that I can do easily and very well	vs	A job that is difficult and challenging
Travelling around a lot to different places	vs	Working in one office
Meeting new people all the time	vs	Working closely with the same group all the time
Working with my hands	vs	A desk job
A job that has a high salary but is very boring	vs	A job that is interesting but has a low salary
A job in a small town	vs	A job in a big city

Having a set schedule (for example 9am to 5pm)	vs	Having flexible hours
More holidays	vs	More benefits

You can add another step which relates the priorities to job preferences by asking each group to suggest jobs or careers which fit their group's choice. Alternatively, you can write different jobs on a poster or on the chalkboard. Then, for each priority, ask each group to choose a job that suits their preference (for example: 'I prefer to work alone = data entry clerk or sales representative; I prefer to work in groups = ...

Self-awareness activity: Interview stages

Use this activity after the Questions exercise.

Use this outline of stages of an interview to help students who have little or no experience with the interview process. Draw the outline on the chalk board or on a poster.

The average interview lasts about 30 minutes:

- GREETING = 1 minute
- GETTING ACQUAINTED = 4 minutes
- QUESTION PERIOD = 15 minutes
- INFORMATION PERIOD = 5 minutes
- CLOSING = 5 minutes

For each stage of the interview, ask participants to generate ideas of what questions the interviewer will ask and what language the interviewer will use. For example:

- Stage 1, **greeting**: how was your trip? did you have any difficulty finding here?
- Stage 2, **getting acquainted**: small talk, gets you comfortable
- Stage 3, **question period**: questions about your CV, how your skills/qualifications match the job, asks about your personality, abilities, values etc.
- Stage 4, **information period**: gives information to you (about company, when you find out the results of the interview etc.), answers your questions
- Stage 5, **closing**: goodbyes, evaluates and writes notes about you.

Self-awareness activity: The skills market

Do this activity after the **Key List** exercises.

Make a list on the chalkboard or flipchart of skills that are important in finding jobs (choose some or all from below). Ask participants to choose 2 important skills for the type of job they want: one skill which they already have and one skill which they need but which they do not have.

ORGANISATIONAL	COMPUTER SKILLS	NUMERICAL
ENGLISH SKILLS	PROBLEM-SOLVING	PEOPLE MANAGEMENT
SALES	TELEPHONE	TRAINING/TEACHING
TYPING	MECHANICAL	CONFLICT MANAGEMENT
WRITING	COMMUNICATION	SELF-MANAGEMENT

For each skill, ask all the participants who HAVE the skill to step forward and explain to the group why this skill is important and how they learned this skill. This shares ideas and allows participants to benefit from each others' experience.

Next, ask participants to sit in pairs. Give each pair a sheet of paper with one skill which they need but don't have written on it. The pairs write down ideas on how they can improve or gain this skill. After a few minutes, ask them to exchange their sheet with another group and repeat the brainstorming for the new skill. You can add your own suggestions too.

Here are some examples of ways to gain a new skill or to improve a skill:

- Listen to programmes about this skill on the radio
- Do voluntary work: for example in your local school, community or religious group or for a local company
- Get a part-time job, for example in a restaurant

- Become the financial treasurer of your youth club
- Coach a youth sports team
- Take a course to learn computing skills
- Borrow a book from the library
- Tutor your neighbour's children
- Join the college newspaper
- Use the Internet.

It is not necessary to have a job or to take formal courses or to spend a lot of money in order to learn skills and gain experience. Ask participants to think of other creative ways in which they can learn key skills.

Do a few exchanges to collect as many ideas as you can. Then post the papers around the room to create a skill market. Ask participants to go shopping around the skills market for ideas to help them gain the skills they need. Encourage them to think about all the practical issues (how, when, why and where) so that they can act on these suggestions in real life.

To end, sit in a circle as a group and participants can tell each other what they found useful and the steps they will take to develop their skills. Encourage them to be as detailed as they can. This will help participants to visualise what they will do and then they are more likely to do it.

As facilitator, you can start. For example, you can say 'I'm going to visit my favourite high school teacher and ask to work with her once a week, on Fridays when I have a lot of free time. I'll feel nervous but I'll be positive. I'll watch carefully, ask questions and learn important skills: I'm going to help children to learn and I will learn teaching and organisational skills including lesson planning and marking papers.'

You or other students should try to promote detailed visualisation by asking information questions: "What time will you go to the class? Why was that teacher your favourite? What will you actually say to the teacher? What will you wear? What subjects will you help to teach? How will you feel when you are helping a student?"

Ask participants how they felt about this process of visualisation. Does it help them to feel motivated to make it come true? Visualisation is also a powerful tool when they are practising for interviews. This is why it is important to make mock interviews as realistic as possible. If they prepare, dress and behave realistically, it will be very good preparation for the real thing!

Self awareness activity: Hobbies are more than just fun

Use this activity after the **Words for Work**, before **You be the judge**.

This activity shows that personal interests and hobbies can reveal qualities that are relevant to work. In many countries, interviewers may not ask directly about hobbies or personal interests. The purpose of this activity is to help participants become aware of the many key job skills that hobbies can teach so that they can use this information to present themselves better during the interview. It can also motivate them to improve these skills.

Divide the participants into small groups and ask them all to call out their hobbies and interests, or things they've always wanted to do or would be interested in doing. For example, they may not have scuba dived before but they hope to. Write the ideas on the chalkboard or the flipchart.

Choose several hobbies for each of the categories listed below and assign one hobby to each group. Each group should imagine a detailed picture of the type of person who has this hobby: personality, job, appearance, values, what kind of car do they have?, do they have pets? Each group writes the description of the type of person who has this type of hobby. So for example,

- Stamp collecting – an efficient person, neat and tidy, likes organising things, probably older/middle-aged, likes stamps because stamps come from all over the world and s/he has not travelled much but would like to.

Then participants should choose one of the groups' hobbies that they actually like and gather around that sheet. Try to ensure that there are even numbers for each.

Ask participants how the description of the person with their hobby is similar to themselves and how it is different. It should be clear how, in many ways, our interests do reflect our personalities, our choices in careers and our values etc.

Now ask participants to stand around you in a large circle. Call out hobbies from the original brainstormed list (use hobbies which have NOT already been used for the group activity) and everyone who is interested must

step forward to form a smaller inner circle within the bigger circle. Ask these students to tell each other why they like this hobby.

Now reveal to the inner circle some positive qualities that this hobby represents, for example, football: 'I am a team-player. I am competitive. I like working with others. I'm active!'

Participants can repeat this after you, they can shout it out as positively and as loudly as they can (make sure you do not disturb other classes!):

- 'I AM A TEAM PLAYER!'
- 'I AM COMPETITIVE!'
- 'I LIKE WORKING WITH OTHERS!'

This helps them to realise that they have positive qualities that employers are looking for. It relieves tension in the classroom and promotes positive feelings.

Now ask them to step back out into the bigger circle and call out another hobby.

Some ideas of hobbies and the qualities they represent:

TEAM sports (football, netball, tennis etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I am a team player ● I am competitive ● I like working with others!
INDIVIDUAL sports (running, hiking, climbing, cycling etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I like challenges ● I'm self-motivated ● I'm disciplined! I'm energetic
INDIVIDUAL LEISURE activities (reading, listening to music, cooking)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I concentrate well ● I'm independent ● I enjoy learning about new things
GROUP LEISURE activities (going out to the movies, picnics, parties etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I'm friendly ● I'm outgoing ● I have good interpersonal skills ● I communicate well
CREATIVE activities (painting, music, writing, sewing, gardening)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I'm creative ● I like to work on projects ● I'm imaginative ● I like to start things and watch them develop
COLLECTING hobbies (stamps, coins, butterflies.. whatever)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I'm systematic ● I'm well organised ● I like to study things carefully
TRAVELLING (local or foreign)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I'm open to new ideas ● I enjoy learning about new cultures, places and people ● I'm adventurous
COMMUNITY activities (volunteering, local clubs, Lion's Club etc)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I like to help others ● I'm people-orientated ● I'm co-operative ● I'm a leader! I work well with teams
TECHNOLOGICAL / MECHANICAL hobbies (computers, motorbikes etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I'm skilled ● I'm good with my hands ● I'm a problem-solver ● I'm constructive

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