

# Soft Skills for Employment

## Chapter Four: Interviewing



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**IV. Lesson Four: Interviewing (for employment, post-secondary training, etc.)**

Teaching Materials:	Duration:	Learning Objective:
PowerPoint for class discussion	20 minutes	➤ Raising an awareness of interviewing techniques (do’s and don’ts) for employment and post-secondary training.
Teaching staff for role playing/skits (at least two people)	30 minutes	
Individual practice of interview questions	20 minutes	
Handshaking 101	15 minutes	
<b>Setting and Method:</b> Classroom environment, role playing, interactive		

**Lesson Summary for Instructors:**

Interviewing is often called a person’s first chance to make a good impression with an employer. This lesson intentionally follows the lesson about verbal and non-verbal communication, since interviewing includes an understanding of how to effectively communicate using comprehensively good communication skills. Before teaching this unit, a class discussion about what kinds of verbal and non-verbal communication an employer might be looking for when meeting with interviewees would help set the stage for the next activity.

**Suggestion for Pre-requisite Lesson:**

If your class has not gone over proper ways of completing applications that would be a perfect lesson to complete prior to discussing interviewing. Having just discussing and learning about communication, it is a nice segue way to discussing that applications are another way we communicate our abilities and enthusiasm to an employer. A suggested approach is to complete an application with several errors and have the class “grade” the application as if they were the employers. In this exercise, they can determine how many errors are on the application and how they would feel about an applicant who does not correctly complete an application.

## Interview and Impress!

So, you have completed an application for a job and CONGRATULATIONS, you received a call to come in for an interview. Great News!

Now is the tough part. Interviews are very stressful for many people and make almost everyone nervous (whether they show it, or not). We are going to talk about a few tips on how to prepare for an interview, and then you are going to have a chance to observe some interviews and give your opinion on what went well and what did not go well.

### GETTING PREPARED!

Show you care about this interview!

- ✚ Be 5-10 minutes early for the interview.
- ✚ Shake hands with everyone who is part of your interview, or that you are introduced to.
- ✚ Dress nicely. A good rule of thumb is to dress one step nicer than the job would require. Keep it classy.
- ✚ Leave your gum, phone and coffee cup at home or in the car.

Communicate well!

- ✚ Answer the employer's questions with detail—avoid one word answers. They want to know who you are and what you have accomplished. Don't downplay your previous experience—if you haven't work before, talk about volunteer work, job shadow experiences, activities you are involved in at school, etc.
- ✚ Be prepared to ask questions—employers want to know that you have done your research about the job and are interested in learning about the business and job.
- ✚ Make eye contact.
- ✚ Speak so people can hear and understand you. If you are prone to talking quickly or mumbling when you get nervous, practice with someone or in front of a mirror.
- ✚ Be polite. Thank the employer for the opportunity to meet with him/her.
- ✚ Practice talking without the use of "pause" words like 'um', 'uh', and 'like'.
- ✚ Appropriate humor and conversation is GOOD! You can show a bit of yourself to the employer and make a great impression fun or meaningful chit-chat.
- ✚ Be friendly, enthusiastic and confident. Or at least look like it!



**Interview Skit:** *Two teaching staff should be prepared to act out two interviewing scenarios. Volunteers from the class who have experience interviewing may also be used. They can either use the script provided or make up their own. Suggestions are listed for the types of considerations to make when preparing for the good and bad interview scenarios. Each scenario has a person being interviewed and a manager doing the interview.*

*Ask the class to watch both interviews as if they are the boss. Encourage them to remember the points discussed regarding effective communication skills and either take mental notes or jot down notes on the Interview Comment Sheet in the student workbook, whichever works best for them. They will want to pay attention to skills, behaviors and manners that would make the candidates worthy of being hired or not.*

**Scenario:**

**The students in the class are the supervisors of a local grocery store and they need to hire a new grocery store clerk. The job duties of this position could include**

- Restocking shelves as needed
- Bagging groceries for customers
- Assisting customers to find products within the store
- Other customer service and store duties as they arise

Chances are, for this position, neither interviewee has any paid work experience.

**Possible questions for the interviews could include:**

1. Tell me about yourself
2. Since this would be your first paid job, can you tell me of other opportunities you have had to work with other people or the public?
3. Why would you like to work here?
4. What would your teachers say about you?
5. If a customer came to you with a concern about a product that they purchased at our store, how would you help them?
6. Do you have any questions for me about this position?

**“Interview Gone Wrong” Scenario:**

Person being interviewed:

- Is wearing dirty, holey clothing; wearing a baseball cap
- Is chewing gum
- Receives a call or a text while in the interview
- Is not answering questions or just giving one-word responses
- Is slumping in his/her chair
- Is not using any eye contact with manager
- Does not ask any follow-up questions
- Makes very little eye contact

**“Successful Interview” Scenario:**

Person being interviewed:

- Is wearing professional, neat clothing
- Does not have a visible phone
- Answers the manager’s questions with sentences and detail
- Is using good posture
- Is using appropriate eye contact
- Asks follow up questions about the company and job duties
- Has a copy of his/her resume in case the manager needs a copy

**Follow-Up**

After the interviews are completed, ask the class which person they would hire and why? Ask students to point out what they observed for verbal behavior as well as non-verbal behavior.

## **INTERVIEW COMMENT SHEET**

You are going to observe two separate job interviews. You will watch these interviews and decide which employee you would want to hire. Below is a note sheet that you can write down observations about how each person answered his/her questions and how he/she presented him/herself.

<b>Interview #1</b>	<b>Interview #2</b>

### **ANSWER THIS...**

Which person would you hire? Why?



### Class Activity: Individual Practice with Interview Questions

After the class has had an opportunity to observe other people interview, have the class divide up into pairs and practice answering some of the interview questions using appropriate verbal and non-verbal communication.

One reason that interviews are so nerve-wracking is a general discomfort about talking about ourselves and being positive about our accomplishments without feeling like we are bragging. Youth have a particularly difficult time thinking of examples to give, especially if they have not developed any work history. Having this opportunity to practice with their peers in talking about their school activities, after school activities, personal qualities, etc. will go a long way in terms of their ability to fill out job applications, answer interview questions, and generally feel more confident in talking to others about themselves.



### Class Activity: Shaking Hands!

Discuss the importance of shaking hands and making eye contact appropriately. In this discussion, you will want to cover the importance of knowing how to shake hands with the right amount of pressure. One should consider that the other person may have arthritis and a strong handshake isn't always the best policy. Use a moderate pressure without squeezing too hard and make eye contact with a smile. Encourage the class to practice this skill with one another as the applicant and as the manager.

The facilitator should start this activity with a demonstration of a good handshake as well as a bad one as well as with an opportunity for questions and discussion.

This is an excellent time to discuss a few related topics, including:

- ~ What to say when you are meeting someone for the first time and are shaking their hand (Example: It is very nice to meet you. My name is...)
- ~ How many times do you shake the other person's hand before letting go? (typically 3-4 times)
- ~ Why do you need to make eye contact? (It is all part of that non-verbal communication!)
- ~ What are alternatives to shaking hands when you or the other person has a physical disability that changes that typical right hand handshake? (Examples: shake with left hand, fist bump, put your hand out and follow the other person's lead if they have another style or option)