Career & College Readiness Lesson Plan

In the Interview Hot Seat

# 21st Century Skills

## Grade Level 12

### Overview

Students will learn about commonly used interview questions and how to effectively respond to them.

### Learning Outcomes

At the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

* Understand and respond clearly to common job interview questions
* Present their findings and/or research in a variety of ways (student choice or teacher may assign one format)

### Language Objectives

At the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

* Verbally describe common job interview questions and effective responses
* Participate in class discussions

### Standards Alignment

* California Common Core State Standards: College & Career Readiness   
  Anchor Standards:
  + RI. 3; SL. 1, 6
* California Career Technical Education Model Curriculum Standards:
  + 3
* California Standards for Career Ready Practice:
  + 1, 2, 5
* National Career Development Guidelines:
  + PS 1, 2, CM 4
* International Society for Technology in Education Standards for Students:
  + 1
* English Language Development Standards:
  + Part I: A 1, 4; C 9
  + Part II: B 3, 4, 5; C 6
* American School Counselor Association Mindsets & Behaviors:
  + BS-LS 2; BS-SMS 2; BS-SS 1, 2, 6

### Materials

Instructor Resources

* Computer with internet access and projection capability for instructor
* Projector and screen

* [California Career Resource Network Lesson Plan Handout E-copies](https://californiacareers.info/" \l "?Lesson%20Plans)

https://californiacareers.info/#?Lesson%20Plans

* Computer with internet access for students

Student Handouts

* Vocabulary (p. 7)
* Common Interview Questions Worksheet (p. 8)
* Common Interview Questions Sample Answers (p. 9)
* Legal vs. Illegal Interview Questions (p. 10–11)
* Lesson Resources (p. 12)

Online Resources

* [In the Interview Hot Seat Start-Up Video](https://youtu.be/xWGXw9pnON4) (0:59)

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* [Getting a Job](https://www.calcareercenter.org/Home/Content?categoryID=168)

https://www.calcareercenter.org/Home/Content?categoryID=168

* [Preparing for Your Interview](https://www.calcareercenter.org/Home/Content?contentID=135), California Career Center

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* [The Interview](https://www.calcareercenter.org/Home/Content?contentID=136), California Career Center

https://www.calcareercenter.org/Home/Content?contentID=136

* [Illegal Interview Questions](https://www.calcareercenter.org/Home/Content?contentID=137), California Career Center

https://www.calcareercenter.org/Home/Content?contentID=137

### Activity

Students will learn about commonly used job interview questions and how to most effectively respond to them to be ready for future job interviews.

### Lesson Prep

Review the lesson plan procedures, handouts, online resources, and start-up video. This information will help prepare you to lead discussions on job interviewing.

Before class begins, have your projector and computer on and the lesson start-up video and the Preparing for Your Interview webpage open in your web browser (links in the Materials section).

*About Hyperlinks*. All hyperlinks (URLs) used in this lesson are listed in the Lesson Resources handout.

Make copies of the Speed Interview Question Cards. The number of copies depends on the number of students in your class: you can make enough for half of your students and they can share with the other half, or, you can make enough for each student.

Make copies of the handouts or send them to your students electronically. The handouts are posted individually with the lesson plan on the California Career Resource Network Lesson Plans webpage (link in Materials section).

### Lesson Procedures

1. Introduce the lesson by describing the topic and activity. For a quick introduction, show the start-up video (link in Materials section). Confirm students understand what to expect.
2. Distribute and review the Vocabulary handout (p. 7)
3. Facilitate the discussion with these questions and write student responses on the board:
   * What do you know about interviews?
   * How many of you have had an interview?
   * Where was it? How was it? Did anything about it surprise you? Explain. Ask students to share their experiences.
   * If you’ve had multiple interviews, how did they differ? How were they the same?
   * If you did not get the job, what could you have done differently to improve the interview? For example, have more information, be better prepared, know what to expect.
4. Take students to the California Career Center website, select “Getting a Job” then scroll down to and select “Preparing for Your Interview” (link in Materials section). Review the suggestions for how to prepare for an interview.
5. Distribute these handouts: Common Interview Questions Worksheet (p. 8), Common Interview Questions Sample Answers (p. 9), and Lesson Resources (p. 12). Review them and instruct students to write responses to the questions on the worksheet. Remind students to write using English conventions befitting their grade level. Write-Pair-Share, then ask for sample responses. Have students submit their worksheets to you.
   * As homework, students would have more time to write thoughtful responses.
6. After students complete the writing assignment, tell them they are going to do a speed interview where they will have the experience of being both the interviewer and the interviewee.

Explain the speed interview process and walk them through it (the definition is in the Vocabulary).

1. Divide students into two equal lines facing each other. Label them line 1 and line 2 (or A/B, etc.)
2. Distribute the Speed Interview Question cards to the students in line 1.

*Asking the questions*: All line 1 students will ask all line 2 students the same questions in the same order.

1. Choose a line 1 to start.
2. When you say “Go,” have students in line 1 ask the student they are facing the first interview question. That person (the interviewee) has one minute to answer. (You may want to assign a timekeeper to call time.)
3. After one minute, the first person at the beginning of line 1 moves to the end of their line. Everyone in line 1 moves up to match line 2. Students ask the second question, etc.
4. After all students in line 1 have asked the questions, switch sides. Now, line 2 become the interviewers and line 1 become the interviewees. Have line 1 students give the question cards to the line 2 students unless each student has their own set.
5. Once all students have had the chance to ask and answer the questions, ask students what they thought of this type of interview. Do they think they would do well in this interview format? Ask them to share any answers from the interviewees they thought were good.
6. Distribute the handout, “Illegal vs. Legal Interview Questions” (p. 9–10). Review and discuss. Ask students what surprised them and why.

Remind students that while interviewing can be stressful, understanding commonly asked interview questions and being prepared to answer improves their chances for having a successful interview.

1. Wrap Up. Review with students the employability skills they developed and knowledge they gained in this lesson:
   * *Communication Skills*: Practiced by participating in class discussions, the Speed Interviewing exercise, and the writing assignment.
   * *Organizational Skills:* Practiced in the Speed Interviewing exercise.
   * *Self-directional Skills*: Practiced by completing the writing assignment independently.
   * *Social Skills*: Practiced by participating in class discussions and the Speed Interviewing exercise.

### Estimated Time

One class session

### Learning Assessment

* Group participation in class discussions and the Speed Interview exercise.
* Written responses to the Common Interview Questions.

Other lessons and materials are on the

[California Career Resource Network](https://californiacareers.info/).

https://californiacareers.info/

Speed Interview Question Cards

**Required (to complete the assignment)**

*8. After learning about this opportunity, what made you take the next step and apply for the job?*

*9. Tell us about a problem you had and how you solved it.*

*6. If you had 2,000 unread emails and could only answer 300 of them, how would you choose which ones to answer?*

*4. What are three attributes you value most in another person?*

*5. Where does this position fall along your career path?*

*7. What areas of training would your past supervisor say you would benefit from the most?*

1. *Tell us about yourself.*

*2. Why are you leaving your current job?*

*3. What particular skills or experiences make you the best match for this position?*

**Optional**

1. Tell me about a time when you disagreed with a co-worker or manager, and how you resolved it.

B) What’s Important to you in a job?

C) What is your relationship with your current boss like?

D) Give an example of when you were able to contribute to a team project.

E) How do others describe you?

F) If you were hired, what talents could you contribute to the company?

G) How would you describe yourself?

H) What makes you unique?

1. What motivates you?

J) What’s your dream job?

K) What should I know that’s not on your resume?

L) Sell me this pen.

R) What is your favorite website?

Q) What three skills or traits do you wish you had?

P) What are you passionate about?

O) 17. If you were an animal, which one would you want to be?

N) Tell me about a time you made a mistake.

M) How do you keep yourself motivated and engaged when working from home?

O) If you were an animal, which one would you want to be?

N) Tell me about a time you made a mistake.

M) How do you keep yourself motivated and engaged when working from home?

R) What is your favorite website?

Q) What three skills or traits do you wish you had?

P) What are you passionate about?

Vocabulary

**Applicant:** a person who makes a formal application for something, typically a job.

**Effective listening skills:** the ability to understand information provided by the speaker.

**Interview:** a meeting of people, especially for consultation; a formal meeting in which one or more people question, consult, or evaluate another person.

**Jargon:** the specialized language of a trade, profession, or similar group, that outsiders find difficult to understand.

**Career Vision Statement:** a set of career goals that a job-seeker sets for the long-term, typically five years or more.

**Compensation Package:** the combination of salary and fringe benefits an employer offer to an employee.

**On-the-spot Interview:** an interview that happens right away, when you apply for a job. On-the-spot interviews are common in retain and fast-food industries.

**Speed Interview:** a series of mini-interviews, each with a different interviewer. When one interview ends, you go to the next.

**Telephone Interview:** a potential employer calls to interview you. The employer may or may not schedule a time to call.

**Video Interview:** an interview that may be live or recorded. A live interview is talking real-time with an interviewer. A recorded interview is to record yourself answering a set of questions then sending your recording to the employer.

**Qualities:** distinctive attributes or characteristics possessed by someone or something.

Common Interview Questions Worksheet

Name\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. Tell us about yourself.
2. Why are you leaving your current job?
3. What particular skills or experiences make you the best match for this position?
4. What are three attributes you value most in another person?
5. Where does this position fall along your career path?
6. If you woke up and had 2,000 unread emails and could only answer 300 of them, how would you choose which ones to answer?
7. What areas of training would your past supervisor say you would benefit from the most?
8. After learning about this opportunity, what made you take the next step and apply for the job?
9. Tell us about a problem you had and how you solved it.

Common Interview Questions Sample Responses

1. *Tell us about yourself.*
   * I’m originally from O‘ahu where I graduated from Kapiolani Community College. I came to the mainland for school and stayed because there are more opportunities here than at home. It’s been a culture shock coming here but it’s been worth it. I’ve been able to further my career and still go surfing.
2. *Why are you leaving your current job?*
   * I’m looking for a new challenge, or
   * I want to change my career path, or
   * the company is closing.
3. *What particular skills or experiences make you the best match for this position?*

* I am very dedicated to my work and have a reputation for going beyond expectations. For example, when I worked at Windward Community College, each semester, I would go in on a Saturday to go to the bookstore and pick up our professors’ desk copies. They were thrilled because they didn’t have to deal with the hassle of going to the bookstore.

Another time, I returned early from vacation to take care of an urgent personnel issue. I think my dedication and creativity makes me a good match for this position.

1. *What are three attributes you value most in another person?* 
   * Integrity
   * Enthusiasm
   * Skill
2. *Where does this position fall along your career path?*
   * + This position is actually my first full-time step into my career field. It’s perfect to build my existing skills, learn new ones, and gain the knowledge I need to continue my career development.
3. *If you woke up and had 2,000 unread emails and could only answer 300 of them, how would you choose which ones to answer?*
   * My email filters sort my incoming emails into folders and my most important folders are at the top of my folders list. I would go through those first.
4. *What areas of training would your past supervisor say you would benefit from the most?*
   * My supervisor thought a project management certificate would be beneficial for me. I agree and I’m hoping to start a program soon. I’ve dabbled with the MS Project Management software but I think I will benefit from formal classes. This would be a valuable skill to add to my skill set.
5. *After learning about this opportunity, what made you take the next step and apply for the job?*

* As I said earlier, this is the perfect position to begin my career. This company uses the tools of the trade and can expand my knowledge and skills. I think I can do a great job in this position.

1. *Tell us about a problem you had and how you solved it.*
   * I had one job where the morale was awful. We worked in a windowless room with dirty white walls and poor ventilation. It was like working in a dungeon. I can’t work in that kind of environment so I did something about it. I brought in large pieces of art to put on the walls, started a regular “get out of the building” walk, and had potlucks once a month. We were all a little happier and it no longer felt like a dungeon.

Legal vs. Illegal Interview Questions

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **INQUIRY AREA** | **LEGAL QUESTIONS** | **ILLEGAL QUESTIONS** |
| **National Origin/ Citizenship** | Are you authorized to work in the United States?  What language do you read/speak/write fluently? (This question is okay only if this ability is relevant to the performance of the job.) | Are you a US citizen?  Where were you/your parents born?  What is your "native tongue"? |
| **Age** | Are you over the age of 18? | How old are you?  When did you graduate?  What's your birth date? |
| **Marital/ Family Status** | Would you be willing to relocate if necessary?  Would you be able and willing to travel as needed for the job?  Would you be able and willing to work overtime as necessary?  (These questions are okay assuming they are asked of all job applicants.) | What's your marital status?  With whom do you live?  Do you plan to have a family? When?  How many children do you have?  What are your child-care arrangements? |
| **Affiliations** | List any professional or trade groups or other organizations that you belong to that you consider relevant to your ability to perform this job. | What clubs or social organizations do you belong to? |
| **Personal** | Are you able to lift a 50-pound weight and carry it 100 yards, as this is part of the job? | How tall are you? How much do you weigh? (Questions about height and weight are not acceptable *unless* minimum standards are essential for safe performance of the job.) |

Legal vs. Illegal Interview Questions1 *p. 2*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **INQUIRY AREA** | **LEGAL QUESTIONS** | **ILLEGAL QUESTIONS** |
| **Disabilities** | Are you able to perform all the essential functions of the job? (This question is okay if the interviewer has thoroughly described the job.)  Can you demonstrate how you would perform the following job-related functions?  As part of the hiring process, after a job offer has been made, you will be required to undergo a medical exam. (Exam results must be kept strictly confidential, except medical/safety personnel may be informed if emergency medical treatment is required, and supervisors may be informed about necessary job accommodations, based on exam results.) | Do you have any disabilities?  Please complete the following medical history.  Have you had any recent or past illnesses or operations? If yes, list them and give dates when these occurred.  What was the date of your last physical exam?  How's your family's health?  When did you lose your eyesight? How? |
| **Arrest Record** | Have you ever been convicted of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_? (The crime named should be reasonably related to the performance of the job.) | Have you ever been arrested? |
| **Military** | In what branch of the armed services did you serve?  What type of training or education did you receive in the military? | If you've been in the military, were you honorably discharged? |

**1**Source: Understanding Illegal vs. Legal Interview Questions, Career Services Center, University of Delaware. Note: This document is no longer available online.

Lesson Resources

[In the Interview Hot Seat Start-Up Video](https://youtu.be/xWGXw9pnON4) (0:59)

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