

# Lesson Plan: The Art of the Interview - How to Land Your First Job

## Materials Needed

- A notebook or digital document for taking notes
- Pen or pencil
- Access to the internet (for watching a short video clip)
- A sample entry-level job description (e.g., barista, retail associate, camp counselor - can be printed or viewed online)
- Timer or stopwatch app
- (Optional) A phone or camera to record the practice interview for self-review

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## Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, you will be able to:

1. Identify the purpose and key components of a successful job interview.
2. Develop and articulate clear, confident answers to common interview questions using a structured method.
3. Demonstrate effective communication and professional behavior in a simulated interview scenario.

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## Lesson Structure

### I. Introduction (10 minutes)

#### Hook & Opening Discussion

Let's start with a question: What's the single most nerve-wracking part of trying to get a job? For most people, it's the interview. It can feel like a test you can't study for, but that's not true. An interview isn't a test; it's a conversation to see if you and the employer are a good fit. Today, we're going to crack the code on how to have a great conversation that gets you hired.

#### Discussion Questions:

- Why do companies even do interviews? What are they trying to find out?
- What do you think makes a "good" first impression versus a "bad" one in an interview?

#### Setting the Stage

Today, we're moving from theory to practice. Our goal is to make you feel prepared and confident walking into your first real interview. We'll break down what interviewers are *\*really\** asking, practice crafting solid answers, and then put it all together in a practice run.

## II. Body (35-45 minutes)

### Part 1: Deconstructing the Interview - "I Do" (10 mins)

The first and most common question is often the hardest: "So, tell me about yourself." This isn't an invitation to share your life story. It's a test to see if you can communicate clearly and connect your story to the job.

**Educator Models:** I'll show you a simple, powerful formula for this question: **Past, Present, Future.**

- **Past (15-20 seconds):** Briefly mention a relevant experience or skill you've developed. *Example: "In my last volunteer role at the animal shelter, I was responsible for greeting visitors, which really helped me develop my communication skills."*
- **Present (15-20 seconds):** Talk about what you're doing now that relates to this job. *Example: "I'm currently a student focusing on my communication and time management skills, and I'm looking for an opportunity like this cashier position where I can apply those skills in a fast-paced environment."*
- **Future (15-20 seconds):** Explain why you are excited about *this specific* opportunity. *Example: "I've always been a fan of your store, and I'm really excited about the chance to join a team that values great customer service and contribute to that positive experience."*

See? It's short, professional, and connects your experience directly to the job. Now let's look at another common type of question.

### Part 2: Crafting Your Story - "We Do" (15 mins)

Interviewers love "behavioral questions" like "Tell me about a time when you had to solve a problem." They want proof you can do what you say you can do. The best way to answer these is with the **STAR** method.

- **S - Situation:** Briefly set the scene. (e.g., "In my robotics club...")
- **T - Task:** What was your specific goal or responsibility? (e.g., "...we were behind schedule on building our robot for a competition.")
- **A - Action:** What specific steps did *you* take? (e.g., "I suggested we create a detailed checklist, and I volunteered to stay late to organize all the parts so we could work more efficiently.")
- **R - Result:** What was the outcome? (e.g., "As a result, we caught up and were able to finish our robot on time for the competition, placing third.")

**Guided Practice:** Let's use the sample job description. We'll pick a key requirement, like "works well in a team." Now, let's brainstorm a STAR story from your experience (school project, sports team, volunteer work) that shows you're a great team player. We'll build the answer together step-by-step.

**Formative Assessment (Quick Check):** Can you explain what each letter in STAR stands for? Which part of the STAR method do you think is most important to an interviewer and why?

### Part 3: The Mock Interview - "You Do" (10-20 mins)

This is where it all comes together. I will be the interviewer for the job on the sample description, and you will be the candidate. The goal isn't to be perfect; it's to practice applying the Past-Present-Future and STAR methods in a realistic conversation. We'll take about 5-7 minutes for the interview itself, and then we'll discuss how it went.

### Instructions:

1. Take 5 minutes to prepare. Review the job description and quickly jot down some notes for how you might answer these questions:
  - "Tell me about yourself."
  - "Why do you want to work here?"
  - "Tell me about a time you had to manage multiple tasks. How did you handle it?" (STAR)
  - "What is your greatest strength?"
  - "Do you have any questions for me?" (Always have one ready! e.g., "What does a typical day look like in this role?")
2. We will conduct the mock interview. I will stay in character as the hiring manager. Remember to make eye contact, speak clearly, and be yourself.

### **Success Criteria (What a great interview looks like):**

- **Clear & Structured Answers:** You used the Past-Present-Future or STAR method.
- **Relevant Content:** Your answers connected your skills/experience to the job description.
- **Professionalism:** You maintained good eye contact, had positive body language, and spoke clearly.
- **Engagement:** You asked a thoughtful question at the end.

## **III. Conclusion (5-10 minutes)**

### **Debrief and Recap**

Great job! Let's step out of the role-play. How did that feel? What was the easiest part? What was the most challenging part?

### **Summative Assessment & Reflection:**

Based on our practice and the success criteria, let's review:

- You provided a structured answer to "Tell me about yourself."
- You used the STAR method to give a specific example of your skills.
- You asked a question at the end.

What is ONE thing you did really well, and what is ONE thing you want to focus on improving for your next real interview?

### **Takeaway Message**

Remember, an interview is a skill you can build, just like any other. The more you practice, the more comfortable and confident you'll become. The goal is to show them who you are and the value you can bring. You've already taken the biggest step by preparing today.

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## **Differentiation & Extension**

- **Scaffolding for Struggling Learners:** Provide a worksheet with common interview questions and sentence starters for both the Past-Present-Future and STAR methods. Allow the learner to use their notes during the first mock interview.
- **Extension for Advanced Learners:** Have the learner research a real company they admire online. They should then tailor their mock interview answers specifically to that company's mission, values, and a real job posting on their website. Challenge them with tougher questions

like, "What is your greatest weakness?" or "Tell me about a time you disagreed with a teammate or supervisor."

- **Kinesthetic Learners:** If recording the interview, watch it back together and analyze body language and tone of voice, not just the words being said.