

Interviewing: Prepare, Perform, Reflect

Workplace Readiness Training Benchmark and Requirement:

Summary of and feedback from any mock interviews and/or observations from job fairs attended.

Note to those providing service:

These activities are developed in a way that allows the learner to gradually build upon their skills. Each student has different foundational skills so some students may need more support or instruction than others. With that being said, you can choose what activity you start with based on your learner's strengths and needs.



Extended Pathways

Students who are interested or enrolled in career and technical education (CTE) or postsecondary education, regardless of disability (remember to presume competence!), may or may not need some of the information that seems introductory in nature. Take as much or little time as needed based on student knowledge. More specific activities related to CTE and postsecondary education are identified as extended activities and pathways.

Preparation and Materials Needed:

- Know the student's knowledge or awareness regarding interviewing skills (this helps with knowing how much time you may need to spend on an activity).
- Activity 2 of this lesson has two options for videos to support the learning. Review them in advance to determine which you feel will help you deliver impactful service.
- Computer to access videos. Print materials in advance if necessary.
- Be sure to review and / or print PowerPoint slides in advance. Discussion prompts are included in the slide notes for the [Types of Interviews PowerPoint](#).
- Review the Click and Explore videos in the Extended Pathway activity of this lesson. You may focus on one video to cover a popular type of interview in your area or to help the learners understand a type they are not familiar with.



Print

- [Types of Interviews](#) (PowerPoint)
- [Mock Interview Guide and Questions](#) (PowerPoint)
- [Interview Questions Practice Sheet](#)
- [Mock Interview Social Story](#)
- [Mock Interview Rubric](#)
- [Self-Reflection Mock Interview Performance Rubric](#)

Activities to Meet Benchmarks:

Activity 1: Types of Interviews

This activity aims to review interviews and their different formats.

Note to Instructors: *If you are planning to conduct mock interviews with students, ideally, they will know before beginning Activity 4 of this lesson. You may be working with students 1:1 or in a group. Depending on the group size, who is conducting the mock interview, and time available, you will want to consider if each student will have a 1:1 or group mock interview. Keep students informed so they can come prepared (attire, hygiene, etc.). For students who need support or practice with social skills or personal skills, there are resources in [Lesson 4: Essential Skills for Independent Living](#). If holding this activity in a school, you can have a teacher, school administrator, professor, or other school personnel act as the interviewer. If holding this activity in the community, like a library, you can invite a coworker or supervisor from your agency or ask the library administrator to act as the interviewer. You may also find local job fair opportunities where students should be prepared for potential on-site interviews. Be sure to take notes and provide summaries and/or observations as it is needed for service reporting.*



Discuss: An interview is a meeting where someone asks you questions to learn more about you. It usually happens when you're trying to get a job, join a program, or apply for a position. The person asking questions wants to know who you are, what skills or experience you have, why you're interested in the opportunity, and if you would be a good fit. You can also ask questions to learn more about the job, program, or position too. There are several different types of interviews and knowing the type of interview will help you know how to prepare.



Resource: [Types of Interviews](#) (PowerPoint). Feel free to modify the vocabulary list to meet the student's needs.

- **Mock Interview:** A practice interview where it feels like a real job interview but just for practice. Someone asks you questions like they would in a real interview and you practice how to answer.
- **Traditional Interview:** A one-on-one meeting where a person interviews you by asking questions to better know your skills, experience and if you would be a good fit for a job or program. This is a common type of interview.
- **Telephone Interview:** An interview that is planned as a phone call and the interviewer calls to ask the questions. This is sometimes used to narrow down a list of people who have applied. It's important to plan ahead and have a reliable phone, phone connection, and quiet space ready.
- **Video Interview:** An interview that happens on a computer, phone, or tablet using a video call. You and the interviewer can see each other but are in different places. You might use apps like Zoom, Google Meet, or Microsoft Teams. It's important to plan



ahead and have the technology, app, and quiet space ready.

- **Group Interview:** An interviewer or company decides to interview several applicants at the same time. You are with other applicants when answering and asking questions. Interviewers want to see how you work with others, share ideas, and communicate in a group.
- **Working Interview:** When you are asked to do a real task for a short time to show your skills. There may be some questions you answer then are given a task. This helps interviewers see how you work and if you are a good fit. This is a type of interview used when there is a specific skill needed like maintenance, writing, or coding.
- **Problem-Solving Interview:** Interviewer gives you a question or situation and asks how you would handle it. This helps interviewers see how you think, make decisions, and come up with solutions. You may be asked to give your response verbally or in writing. It's not about having a "right" answer but showing how you think things through.
- **Panel Interview:** Involves a meeting with 3 to 6 interviewers at one time. They may be managers, team members, or people from other departments. You will see this in competitive jobs to help reduce the number of interviews someone will need to be a part of. This will feel more formal and practicing will help.



Reflect: Think about the different interview types and reflect on these questions:

- Which types seem the most familiar? Which ones seem the most challenging?
- Have you ever participated in any of these interview formats? If so, what was your experience?
- What would make you nervous for an interview?
- How would you prepare differently for a traditional interview vs a group interview? How about a phone interview vs a virtual interview?

Activity 2: Why do a Mock Interview?

This activity aims to learn more about mock interviewing and how to prepare.



Discuss: There is a saying that practice makes perfect. But it's more that practice makes something easier. Practicing your interview skills is a great way to build confidence and reduce the nervous feelings you might have. A mock interview is a way to practice interviewing by pretending like it is a real interview. Even though there's no job at the end, you still want to prepare, research, and dress as you would for a real interview.



Watch: Select a video based on students' level of experience with interviews. The first option is helpful for those just learning about interviewing and mock interviewing.

Option 1: [Job Search Tips: How to Mock Interview](#) (3:44) – this video explains a mock interview and how to prepare.

[Note to Instructors: Video content ends around 1:38 and shows bloopers for the remainder. It may be helpful for students to see how even these individuals needed to practice recording the video and mistakes are ok because it helped them make improvements.]

Option 2: [How to Ace an Entry Level Interview](#) (6:55) – this video explains how to handle an entry level interview when you don't have a lot of experience. This video will provide you with helpful tips and tricks, as well as things to think about before you jump into an interview.



Reflect: Knowing how to prepare for a mock interview or interview is important to do before going into an actual one. Consider these questions after watching one of the videos to help you think about what you would need to do to prepare.

- What strategies stand out to you?
- Which tips do you think will be most helpful for your interview?
- How can you answer questions if you don't have a lot of work experience?
- Sometimes It can be hard to make eye contact or sit still. What strategies do you use or can you use that will help you?

[Note to Instructors: Strategies can include: looking near someone's eyes, like their forehead or space between their eyes; using a fidget if it's difficult to be still, or planning movement breaks.]

Activity 3: How to Prepare for an Interview

This activity aims to prepare for an interview.



Discuss: We're going to start something really important—and also kind of exciting. We're going to practice how to answer some of the most common interview questions. Why? Because one day, whether it's for a job, a volunteer opportunity, a program, or even something at school, someone might want to talk with you to learn more about who you are and what you can do. That's what an interview is—just a conversation where you get to show your skills, talk about your strengths, and help others see why you'd be a great fit.

Interviews can feel a little nerve-wracking at first, but the good news is: you can practice! And the more you practice, the more confident and prepared you'll feel. Today we are going to discuss how to prepare for an interview and review common interview questions.



Resource: [Mock Interview Guide and Questions](#) (PowerPoint) - reviews expectations for interviews and includes common questions to prepare for.

- [Interview Questions Practice Sheet](#) - students can follow along using this worksheet. The worksheet has a space to write in a job or opportunity the student would be interested in doing a mock interview for and there are two ways to respond to each question. One way uses helpful prompts to guide thinking. The other is fill-in the blanks using their own words. They can choose the one that works best for them or try both.
- [Mock Interview Social Story](#) is a printable of the social story for students that may need or want to review interview expectations with others.

[Note to Instructors: Prepare to model answers to these questions to show students ways to answer questions and ways not to answer questions. Review answers with them to help determine if they need adjusted or revised.]



Discuss: Next time we meet we will do mock interviews! Please wear a clean and neat outfit. You don't need anything formal like a suit or dress—just something casual that looks presentable. Try to avoid clothes with anything distracting or inappropriate on them, so you can feel confident and make a good impression like you would for a real interview.



Interactive Opportunity: Depending on time available students can practice with another student, teacher, school administrator, professor, or other school personnel. If holding this activity in the community, like a library, you can invite a coworker or supervisor from your agency or ask the library administrator to act as the interviewer. This is especially helpful if planning to attend a job fair with students.

Activity 4: Practice Makes Progress: Interview & Reflect

This activity aims to have students complete a mock interview and reflect.

Note to Instructors: *Students can have their notes from the [Interview Questions Practice Sheet](#). Continue to support students to answer as independently as possible and eventually without notes if possible.*



Discuss: The plan is to practice the mock interview. You will want to treat this as the “real deal”, so you want to make sure that you look sharp, answer the questions clearly and confidently, and to be professional. During the mock interview, I will be taking notes to be able to share with you how you did afterwards. After the mock interview you will have an opportunity to score yourself too, reflect on your experience, and identify areas of strength and areas of development.



Resource: Here are tools to help provide feedback and praise.

- [Mock Interview Rubric](#) – rubric for instructors to use to use for scoring the mock student’s mock interview
- [Self-Reflection Mock Interview Performance Rubric](#) – tool for students to use to score their own mock interview.



Reflect: Let’s take a moment to reflect on your mock interview experience. Think about what went well and what was challenging. What strategies helped you feel more confident, and what areas do you want to improve before your next real interview? Interviews can feel nerve-wracking, but with practice, they become easier. The goal is to learn from each experience and continue building your confidence. Keep in mind that every interview is an opportunity to showcase your strengths, grow your skills, and move one step closer to your career goals.



Interactive Opportunity: As students gain confidence, bring an employer, human resources staff, or other type of administrator to conduct the mock interviews and share their feedback and praise. What suggestion do they have for the group? What should the students continue to do for future interviews? Another opportunity may be a local job fair where students can practice skills with potential employers.



Extended Pathways

Activity: Navigating Interview Formats

This activity aims to review multiple interview formats.



Discuss: Interviews can happen in many different ways. Sometimes, you'll meet in person, while other times, you might have a phone or video interview. Some interviews are one-on-one, while others involve a group of people asking you questions. Since each format is different, you may need to prepare in different ways.

- How would you prepare for an in-person interview compared to a phone interview? What might you do differently?
- If you were doing a video interview, what extra steps would you take to make sure everything goes smoothly?
- How would you prepare for a group interview where multiple people are asking questions?
- What would change if you had to do an interview on short notice?

By thinking ahead and preparing based on the type of interview, you'll feel more confident and ready to make a great impression.



Click and Explore: Here are a few helpful videos that might be helpful in preparing for different interview formats and common interview questions.

- [Phone Interview Simulation](#) (9:35)
- [Video Interview Example](#) (10:19)
- [How To Ace Your Group Interview](#) (5:13)
- [How to Tell Your Personal Story During an Interview](#) (9:15)



Wrap-Up

You have taken important steps in getting ready for real-life situations where you talk about your skills and strengths. Remember, interviews are just conversations where you get to show who you are and what you can do. The more you prepare and reflect, the more confident and ready you will feel. Keep practicing because you're continuing to build skills to help you now and in the future.