



## INTERVIEWING SKILLS: Module 8

GRADES: 11-12 | Assignments: 1-3

### LEARNING GOALS:

- Connect interview questions to job descriptions and respond to interviewers' questions using clear, concise evidence and narratives.
- Students will practice the use of cognitive, social and emotional skills needed to succeed in an interview environment. These skills include analyzing their own use of language, their emotions and the use of critical thinking skills throughout the entire interview process.
- Students will practice the use of professional body language, eye contact and overall appearance.
- Students will gain practical, real-world interviewing experience.

### ALIGNMENT WITH STANDARDS:

- **Illinois Learning Standards Grades 11-12:** This lesson is aligned with Social/Emotional Learning (SEL) *Goal 1 - Develop self-awareness and self-management skills to achieve school and life success.* The goal of this lesson is help students understand their emotions, effectively manage them and express them constructively.
- **Common Core State Standards Grades 11-12:** This lesson is aligned with *Speaking & Listening: Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.7.4.* Present claims and findings, emphasizing salient points in a focused, coherent manner with pertinent descriptions, facts, details, and examples; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume and clear pronunciation.

### MATERIALS NEEDED:

- **Sample Job Description:** *(Included to guide students as they prepare for mock interviews)*
- **Successful Interview Tips:** *(Included for student reference. The goal of this worksheet is to help students effectively prepare for interviews)*
- **Dress for Success Tips:** *(Included as a quick student reference guide. The goal of this worksheet is to guide student appearance as they prepare for a professional interview)*
- **Sample Interview Questions Worksheet:** *(Included to help format their first resume in MS Word)*
- **Internet Access:** *(for students to research possible interview answers)*
- **Written Reflection Worksheet:** *(Included within this lesson plan and within the ConnectEd studios platform)*
- **MS Word:** *(For students to compose their reflection)*

## MENTORING ASSIGNMENTS:

### 1. ASSIGNMENT 1 | Interview Preparation.

Through this assignment students will be introduced to the importance of interview preparation when job hunting. In order to guide students through this process, Assignment 1 includes a *Sample Job Description Handout*, *Successful Interview Tips Handout* and a *Dress for Success Handout*. Also included in Assignment 1 is a *Sample Interview Questions Worksheet*. The goal of each of these handouts and worksheets is provide students with the resources to adequately prepare themselves for the Mock Interview Workshop or a 1-to-1 Mock Interview with their mentor. The *Sample Job Description Handout*, *Successful Interview Tips Handout*, *Dress for Success Handout* and *Sample Interview Questions Worksheet* are included on page 3 of this lesson plan and within the ConnectEd studios platform under Assignment 1. This assignment should take approximately 25-30 minutes.

### 2. ASSIGNMENT 2 | Mock Interview Workshop/1-to-1 Mock Interview.

Once students have completed Assignment 1, they should be adequately prepared for the Mock Interview Workshop or the 1-to-1 Mock Interview, depending upon the format followed by the individual school. For either the Workshop or the 1-to-1 Mock Interview, Mentors should utilize the *Sample Job Description Handout* and the *Sample Interview Questions Worksheet*. The goal is to connect interview questions directly to the Assignment 1 handouts. Throughout the entire interviewing process Mentors should actively reinforce the importance of responding to interview questions using clear, concise evidence and narratives.

A *Sample Workshop Itinerary* is also included with this assignment. The Event Itinerary is included on page 7 of this lesson plan and within the ConnectEd studios platform under Assignment 2.

This assignment should take approximately 2 hours.

### 3. ASSIGNMENT 3 | Reflecting on the experience.

After students have completed Assignment 1 and 2 they should then complete a written reflection. The goal of this reflection is to help students become more aware of their thought processes and learn to write narratives using effective writing techniques, well-chosen details and well-structured event sequences. Written Reflection Worksheet is located on page 8 of this lesson plan and within the ConnectEd studios platform under Assignment 4. This assignment should take approximately 25-30 minutes to complete.

## STUDENT PRODUCTS:

- **Written Blog Reflection:** Students should thoroughly answer the questions included within the worksheet.

## SAMPLE JOB DESCRIPTION:

### Instructions:

**Read sample job descriptions.** Below is a SAMPLE Job Description. If you have completed the Resume Module, this job description was also included with that module. As you read through this lesson plan, start to connect your background to the job description.

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## SAMPLE JOB DESCRIPTION #2 | Information Technology Help Desk Associate

### Position Overview:

The basic function of this position is to support the computer hardware and software used by students, administrators, faculty and staff in a variety of academic settings and to achieve student success.

- Maintains, installs and tests software applications on computer hardware throughout the college.
- Submits help desk tickets to assist students, administrators, faculty and staff with technology related issues
- Protects physical technology assets in public areas and other settings, through ongoing equipment refresh, planning maintenance, installation, configuration, troubleshooting, and asset inventory management.
- Manages, tracks, and protects equipment that is designated for use by students, administrators, faculty and staff.
- Facilitates use of equipment for various internal and external events.
- Assembles and disassembles equipment on site before and after classes.
- Provides limited training to audio-visual/multi-media equipment users.
- Performs other duties as assigned, including, but not limited to, adherence to after hours, emergency, holiday and/or on-call schedule.

### Qualifications:

- Associate's degree in Information Technology, Computer Science, Data Processing or related area, or an equivalent combination of education and experience, with a history of progressively increasing responsibility and accomplishments, preferably, in a college or comparable academic setting.
  - Minimum of two years of related work experience.
  - Knowledge and experience with supporting both Windows and Macintosh platforms.
  - Knowledge of all current versions of Microsoft Windows (XP, Windows 7), all current internet browsers (IE, Chrome, Safari) including networking concepts and general technical troubleshooting skills.
  - Sound verbal and written communication skills.
  - Great team player and self-starter.
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## SUCCESSFUL INTERVIEW TIPS:

### INTERVIEW PREPARATION:

1. When you prepare for an interview it is important to learn as much as possible both about the position and about the organization, before you interview with them. When you are researching the organization, find out about what services/products they provide, how long they have been in business, whether they are growing or downsizing, their reputation, and any other interesting information. By demonstrating what you've learned about an organization you show them that you are serious about the position. The interviewer will be impressed that you have made an effort to learn about their organization.
2. Throughout this process, know who you are and be honest and open about it. With that said, everyone has room for growth, so during the interview it is important to highlight positive character traits. It may be helpful to write down ten things you are good at.
3. Bring extra copies of your resume, your portfolio, a notepad with some questions prepared for the interview and a pen. Preparing questions to ask the employer is a very important part of demonstrating that you are interested in the position.

### THE INTERVIEW:

1. When you meet the interviewer, look them in the eyes, shake their hands firmly, introduce yourself, smile, be confident and wait to sit until you are offered a seat. Remember that throughout this process nervousness is very natural, but try to remember to smile and take deep breaths. When you smile and breathe deeply it will help you relax.
2. Put your phone away during the interview. Even if you usually take notes on your phone, during the interview, use a pen and paper.
3. Remember to be positive in all of your communications, including your nonverbal communications. Sit up straight and try not to be too bold or too shy. Make sure you let the interviewer know that you are happy to have the opportunity to interview.
4. Active listening is a very important part of the interviewing process. Pay close attention to what the interviewer is saying and take notes. If anything is unclear, ask for clarification.
5. Organize your thoughts before speaking. Feel free to think for a moment about tough questions. Silence is not a bad thing as long as you do not take an excessive amount of time.
6. Always respond to interviewers' questions using clear, direct stories and evidence. Never answer with just a "yes" or "no." Always provide explanations and examples.
7. Try to keep the job description that you are interviewing for in mind. Make sure your answers are connected to the position that you are interviewing for.

**DON'T:**

1. Emphasize your weaknesses.
2. Draw attention to negative attributes such as poor attendance, grades, being fired, etc.
3. Criticize former employers, co-workers, or school personnel.
4. Discuss personal issues, good or bad, which are irrelevant.
5. Discuss salary or benefits unless the interviewer brings it up first.

**FOLLOW-UP:**

Send the interviewer a thank-you letter soon after the interview.

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## DRESS FOR SUCCESS TIPS:

There is an old saying that goes, “You never have a second chance to make a first impression.” Whether you’re doing a mock or real interview, looking for an internship at a career fair, or visiting a company’s information table, you want to make a strong first impression. You might be a student now, but someday soon you will want to be a professional. Even if you are going into a more casual work environment, you will want to present yourself in the best way possible. When you begin the interview process and ultimately land a full-time job, your wardrobe will need to reflect your new level of professionalism. Below are some tips to help you along the journey.

### Men:

- Ideally you should wear a suit in a conservative color such as black, navy or dark gray. Avoid busy patterns or bright colors.
- If you do not own a suit, a dress shirt with sleeves in a solid color is a great choice. Again, avoid busy patterns and bright colors.
- Your tie should also be a conservative pattern and match the suit or shirt you choose. Just like before, you should avoid busy patterns and bright colors.
- Shave or trim all facial hair for a clean appearance.
- Remove noticeable piercings that may cause interviewer to judge you unfairly.

### Women:

- Suits should be your first choice. However, if you do not own a suit a great alternative is a black or other dark color pants or skirt, with a sweater or coordinating jacket.
- Best colors to wear are gray, medium to dark blue, burgundy, or black. Conservative and subtle checks and plaids are also acceptable. Avoid busy patterns and bright colors.
- Remember, if you do choose a skirt, it should be no shorter than the knee.
- Always wear skin colored hose. Knee-highs are great for pants suits.
- Classic closed toed pumps with a mid-height heel and little or no decoration.
- Wear make-up but style should be light or neutral.
- Limit jewelry to a watch, wedding or class ring, small earrings, and pearl necklace. If it jingles, flashes, or dangles, don’t wear it!
- Hairstyles should be classic and not distracting to the interviewer.
- A professional wardrobe requires that you spend the extra money on supportive bras, camisoles and slips.

### Both Genders:

- Shower and wash your hair the morning of the interview.
- Make sure your hair is neatly trimmed.
- Clean and trim your finger nails.
- Avoid strong colognes and perfumes.
- Attire should be clean and pressed.
- Don’t underestimate the importance of proper undergarments. Undershirts for guys are a must. Women should wear a camisole and slips when wearing light colored or flimsier weight materials.

## SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS WORKSHEET:

- Why should we hire you over the other applicants?

*Answering Tips:* Be very positive and highlight your strengths, but stay humble through this process. Be sure to connect your strengths to the job description.

- What are your professional goals? Where do you see yourself in \_\_\_\_\_ years?

*Answering Tips:* The goal of question is to let the interviewer know why you want to work at their organization. It is also important to show them how this position fits into your overall career goals. Never say that your goal is to make a lot of money.

- How would you describe yourself?

*Answering Tips:* Similar to the first question, be very positive and highlight your strengths, but stay humble through this process. Use your critical thinking skills and think about the uniqueness that can bring into this job and talk about that.

- What are your weaknesses?

*Answering Tips:* This can be a very tricky interview question. The key to answering this question is honesty and creativity. Highlight a weakness that you are working on that does not interfere with your ability to do the job. For example, if you are a customer service specialist and your weakness is working with customers, you would automatically disqualify yourself for the position.

- Tell me/us about a recent conflict and how you resolved it?

*Answering Tips:* Anytime an interviewer asks a question like this, make sure you tell a story with a positive outcome. If possible, use a story from the workplace. However, if you have never encountered a conflict in the workplace, use a story from school or your personal life. Whatever example you use, make sure the outcome was positive.

- Why do you want to work at our company?

*Answering Tips:* Do research about the company before the interview. This question is a great opportunity for you to show the interviewer what you know about the company and why you care.

- Do you have any questions for us?

*Answering Tips:* Again, it is important for you to do research about the company before the interview. Some great questions to ask include, “Is there room for advancement in the position?” and “Can you describe the culture of the organization?”

Use your creativity and think of other great questions. This a great way to decide if you really want to work at this organization.

## SAMPLE WORKSHOP ITINERARY:

The goal of this workshop is to prepare students to be successful in professional interview settings. Prior to the workshop students should be given the above materials and encouraged to thoroughly read through them. Then through the course of the workshop students should spend at least 10 minutes at each of the five interview stations. The stations should include at least one Dress for Success group, two or more Group Interview panels, at least three 1-to-1 interviewers and two Prep groups, one comprised of peers/students, and one comprised of Mentors and Teachers. The total number of volunteers needed for this event will vary, however 10 mentors would be a minimum number needed for successful execution.

<b>4 – 4:10 PM</b>	Introduction and workshop overview <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Explain the room layout, stations and how the students should progress through the room.</li></ul>
<b>4:10 – 4:20 PM</b>	Break the Mentors and Teachers into at least five groups. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Dress for Success panel</li><li>• 2 Group Interview panels</li><li>• 2 1-to-1 interviewer stations.</li><li>• 2 Prep groups (One comprised of peers, and one with Mentors and Teachers.)</li></ul>
<b>4:20 – 5:30 PM</b>	Students should spend at least 10 minutes at each of the above stations. When students have spent time at each of the stations, they should be encouraged to spend any remaining time where they feel they could use additional practice.
<b>5:30 – 5:45 PM</b>	Students should be encouraged to write a quick reflection about their experience during the workshop.
<b>5:45 – 6 PM</b>	Closing remarks and Next Steps.



## COMPLETE A BLOG REFLECTION WORKSHEET:



Gather your thoughts based on this series of worksheets and the workshop. What did you find helpful about the interview workshop and what do think you still need to work on? Write this reflection honestly and professionally, as if your school's Program Manager and your mentor's boss will be reading it.