

Strengths & Interests

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Lesson Objective

In this lesson, you will review your **strengths** and **interests**. You will also think about your **weaknesses**. Throughout this lesson, you will practise using gerunds. By the end of this lesson, you may discover a job that is a good fit for you. Let's begin!

Warm-Up

Get into small groups.

How did you answer this question when you were five years old?

What do you want to be when you grow up?

My Interests

An **interest** is something you like doing or learning about.

Check any box that applies to you. Add at least two of your own interests. Then compare your interests with a partner's interests.

I enjoy/like:

- | | | |
|--|---|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> reading | <input type="checkbox"/> working with numbers | <input type="checkbox"/> exercising |
| <input type="checkbox"/> writing | <input type="checkbox"/> managing others | <input type="checkbox"/> cooking |
| <input type="checkbox"/> helping people | <input type="checkbox"/> learning new things | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> talking to people | <input type="checkbox"/> drawing | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> making things | <input type="checkbox"/> researching | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> being outdoors | <input type="checkbox"/> advertising | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> working with machines | <input type="checkbox"/> selling | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |

Exercise 1

A GOOD FIT

Read about the following people, and then choose a job that matches their interests:

1. **Janis:**

I love learning new things. I hate being creative, and I enjoy collecting facts. What should I be?

- a) a painter
- b) a janitor
- c) **a scientist**
- d) an actor

2. **Doug:**

I like being outside. I like working with other people. I like being competitive, and I hate losing. What should I be?

- a) a singer
- b) **a football player**
- c) a receptionist
- d) a nurse

3. **Ali:**

I love helping people. I like wearing comfortable clothes, and I can't stand dressing up. I don't mind working for long hours at a time. What should I be?

- a) a model
- b) a lawyer
- c) **a healthcare aide**
- d) a chef

4. **Gerald:**

I hate being outdoors. I love playing computer games and reading fantasy novels. I like pretending that I live in a different world with lots of strange creatures and people. What should I be?

- a) **a game designer**
- b) a carpenter
- c) a park ranger
- d) a doctor

5. **Igor:**

I love working with my hands and creating things. I enjoy using machines and learning about how things are built. What should I be?

- a) a dancer
- b) a teacher
- c) a taxi driver
- d) a carpenter

6. **Helena:**

I don't like being alone, and I really enjoy talking to people. I like being helpful, and I also enjoy working on a computer. I don't like exercising. What should I be?

- a) a construction worker
- b) **a receptionist**
- c) a gym teacher
- d) a janitor

Exercise 2

VOCABULARY PRACTICE

Find the words that are placed around the room.
Match the words to the correct definitions below.

#	Definition	Word
1	a good match to something	
2	when something or someone deserves respect	
3	a conclusion or resolution reached after consideration	
4	absolutely necessary	
5	motivated or determined to do something	
6	to communicate with someone	
7	to think carefully about something	
8	a choice	
9	to be unsuccessful	
10	a quality that is a disadvantage	
11	something a person wants to achieve	
12	to quit	
13	to confess	
14	to recognize the value of something	

Exercise 3

GERUND PRACTICE

Choose a verb from the list and write the gerund form for each of the following sentences. You can only use each verb once.

1. _____ *Applying* _____ for a job usually requires you to fill out an application form.
2. Sarah hopes that _____ a teacher will be the right choice for her.
3. Patrick loves _____ people, so he became a police officer.
4. _____ the driving test is very difficult.
5. I don't enjoy _____ computer work.
6. Yana hates _____ cover letters.
7. Harris practises _____ the newspaper every morning.
8. I don't mind _____ you to your job interview.
9. Gary hates _____ new employees. It's a stressful process.
10. Let's talk about _____ shifts. Is it possible with your current schedule?
11. _____ more than one language is sometimes beneficial when looking for a job.
12. I like _____ outside, but not during the winter!
13. We discussed _____ him more hours at work because he wants to work full-time.
14. Nora talks about _____ for a job, but I don't think she has yet.
15. I love _____ people, so I want to be a nurse.

Verb List:

- become
- read
- ~~apply~~
- speak
- take
- hire
- look
- write
- pass
- protect
- do
- help
- work
- give
- change

Exercise 4

LISTENING

Listen to the interview and fill in the blanks.

- Mr. Gordon** Good afternoon, Ms. Peterson. Thanks for coming in today.
- Ms. Peterson** Thank you for seeing me.
- Mr. Gordon** I have a few questions I'd like to ask you. It shouldn't take long.
- Ms. Peterson** No problem.
- Mr. Gordon** All right, let's get started then. What makes you a good fit for our company?
- Ms. Peterson** Well, first of all, I enjoy _____ with others and _____ strong work relationships. I believe that a company is only as strong as the people within it.
- Mr. Gordon** I completely agree with you. _____ well with others is essential within our company. What would you say is your greatest strength?
- Ms. Peterson** I don't give up. I don't _____ failing an option. If something doesn't work the first time, I continue _____ other options and plans until I succeed.
- Mr. Gordon** You're driven.
- Ms. Peterson** Yes. I _____ going until I reach my goals.
I _____ failing, so I don't let it happen.
- Mr. Gordon** And what would you say is your greatest weakness?
- Ms. Peterson** Well, my greatest strength can be my greatest weakness too.
I can't stand _____, and this sometimes stops me from moving on when I should. I am working on this, though.
- Mr. Gordon** _____ your weaknesses is an admirable quality.
You seem to have many admirable qualities.
- Ms. Peterson** Thank you.
- Mr. Gordon** Well, that's about all I have to ask you for now.
Thank you so much for coming in.
- Ms. Peterson** No, thank *you*. I really appreciate you _____ the time to speak with me.
- Mr. Gordon** We'll be making our decision in the next few days, so we'll be in touch.
- Ms. Peterson** Okay. Thanks again. I look forward to hearing from you. Goodbye.
- Mr. Gordon** Goodbye.

Exercise 5

LISTENING COMPREHENSION

Listen to the interview again. Then answer the following questions.

A. True or False?

If the statement is true based on the interview, write T beside the sentence. If it is false, write F.

- _____ 1. Mr. Gordon thinks the interview will take a long time.
_____ 2. Mr. Gordon thinks Ms. Peterson is driven.
_____ 3. Ms. Peterson thinks it's okay to fail.

B. Written Responses

1. What is Ms. Peterson's greatest strength?

2. Is Mr. Gordon impressed or unimpressed with Ms. Peterson? How do you know this?

C. Multiple-Choice

1. Ms. Peterson thinks she is a good fit because...
- a) she enjoys working hard.
 - b) she enjoys managing others.
 - c) she enjoys working with others.
 - d) she enjoys listening to others.
2. Ms. Peterson's greatest weakness is...
- a) she is lazy.
 - b) she doesn't like winning.
 - c) she doesn't always move on when she should.
 - d) she fails a lot.
3. This conversation is...
- a) polite and formal.
 - b) casual and boring.
 - c) informal and fun.
 - d) impolite and long.

Exercise 6

PAIR WORK

Look at the following dialogue with a partner. Together, fill in the blanks with your own ideas, using gerunds and infinitives when possible. When you are finished, read it out loud. Switch roles and read it again.

Interviewer: Good afternoon, _____ . Why do you want to work for our company?

Interviewee: Thanks for having me in. First, I love _____ , and I _____ .

Interviewer: What kind of experience do you have?

Interviewee: Well, I used to work _____ .
When I worked there, I learned _____ .

Interviewer: What would you say is your greatest _____ ?

Interviewee: I _____ .
This makes me a good fit for your company because _____ .
_____ .

Interviewer: And what would you say is your greatest weakness?

Interviewee: _____ .
I am _____ .

Interviewer: Thank you. I think _____ .
We'll be in touch as soon as we've reached a decision.

Interviewee: Thank you. I _____ .
Have a good afternoon.

Assessment

SPEAKING

A. My Interests

I ENJOY/LIKE + GERUND

Your interests tell an interviewer if you are a good fit for a job. How will you describe your interests in an interview?

Read the example and prepare a similar answer. Then record your answer or say it for your teacher. Use at least three **gerunds** in your answer.

Example:

Interviewer: Let's find out if you are a good fit for our company. What **interests** do you have?

Interviewee: I enjoy **researching** and **learning** new things. I believe education doesn't stop after college or university. I like **knowing** everything about my industry and **staying** up to date with new technology.

B. My Greatest Strength & Weakness

Sharing your strengths is an important part of an interview. Admitting your weaknesses is important too. How will you describe your strengths and weaknesses in an interview?

Read the example and prepare a similar answer. Record your answer or say it out loud for your teacher. Use at least three **adjectives** in your answer.

Example:

Interviewer: What **strengths** do you have that make you a good fit for our company?

Interviewee: My greatest strength is that I'm **punctual**. I always arrive on time, and I come to work every day. I never take sick days. I am also **loyal** and **trustworthy**. I always put my work first.

Interviewer: What would you say is your greatest **weakness**?

Interviewee: My greatest strength is also my greatest weakness. I can't stand being late or missing a deadline, and this sometimes causes me to feel **anxious** and **stressed**. I am learning relaxation techniques, though. I'm also reading books about having a work-life balance.

Speaking Assessment Tool

Student: _____

Date	CLB Level	Assessed By	Speaking Task	Skill Competency
			Sharing interests, strengths & weaknesses for employment purposes	IV. Sharing Information

Criteria	Goes Beyond	Meets the Mark	On the Right Path	Needs Direction
answers all parts of the question				
uses gerunds to describe interests				
uses adjectives to describe strengths and weaknesses				
speaks loudly and clearly				
shows evidence of preparedness				

Answer Key

STUDENT OUTCOMES:

Students will be able to use adjectives and gerunds to talk about strengths, weaknesses, and interests related to employment.

GRAMMAR FOCUS:

Review of gerund usage.

THEME: Pre-Employment & Interests

TIME: 3+ hours

LEVEL: Low Int / CLB 4

Warm-Up

Get your students talking about jobs they thought they wanted when they were children. What were their interests then compared to now?

CLB Skill Competencies

Speaking: I. Interacting with Others

CLB Skill Competencies

Reading: IV. Comprehending Information

Exercise 2

Before class, cut out the vocabulary words on page 17 and place them around the class. Have students match these words to the definitions in Exercise 2. When they are done, have them partner-check their answers, and then go over the answers as a class.

- | | | |
|--------------|----------------|----------------|
| 1. good fit | 6. be in touch | 11. goal |
| 2. admirable | 7. consider | 12. give up |
| 3. decision | 8. option | 13. admit |
| 4. essential | 9. fail | 14. appreciate |
| 5. driven | 10. weakness | |

CLB Skill Competencies

Reading: IV. Comprehending Information

My Interests

Give students a few moments to fill in a very basic checklist of interests. Invite them to add a few of their own. Encourage them to use gerunds. Then place them in pairs or small groups to compare interests.

CLB Skill Competencies

Speaking: IV. Sharing Information

Exercise 1

Have students read about the people and have them choose a job that matches each person's interests. Alternatively, you could ask for volunteers to stand up and pretend to be these people as they read out the descriptions.

1. c 2. b 3. c 4. a 5. d 6. b

(continued on the next page...)

Answer Key cont.

Exercise 3

If your students are unfamiliar with gerunds or need a review, hand out the grammar review on pages 16–17 and go over it as a class. It’s a good idea to mention that gerunds are complex and have many uses, and that at this point they will only be learning the most common uses of gerunds. When your students are comfortable with gerunds, have them complete Exercise 3. Go over the answers as a class. You can download the audio file or stream it. The listening transcript is available on page 19.

- | | | |
|---------------|--------------|--------------|
| 1. Applying | 6. writing | 11. Speaking |
| 2. becoming | 7. reading | 12. working |
| 3. protecting | 8. taking | 13. giving |
| 4. Passing | 9. hiring | 14. looking |
| 5. doing | 10. changing | 15. helping |

CLB Skill Competencies

Writing: II. Reproducing Information

Exercise 4

Students will now hear a brief job interview . Play the audio clip and have students fill in the gaps. If needed, play twice, then go over answers as a class. Answers are in **bold** below.

- Mr. Gordon Good afternoon, Ms. Peterson.
 Thanks for coming in today.
- Ms. Peterson Thank you for seeing me.
- Mr. Gordon I have a few questions I'd like to ask you.
 It shouldn't take long.
- Ms. Peterson No problem.
- Mr. Gordon All right, let's get started then.
 What makes you a good fit for our company?
- Ms. Peterson Well, first of all, I enjoy **working** with others and
developing strong work relationships. I believe
that a company is only as strong as the people
within it.

- Mr. Gordon I completely agree with you. **Working** well with
others is essential within our company. What
would you say is your greatest strength?
- Ms. Peterson I don't give up. I don't **consider** failing an option.
If something doesn't work the first time, I continue
trying other options and plans until I succeed.
- Mr. Gordon You're driven.
- Ms. Peterson Yes. I **keep** going until I reach my goals.
I **can't stand** failing, so I don't let it happen.
- Mr. Gordon And what would you say is your greatest weakness?
- Ms. Peterson Well, my greatest strength can be my greatest
weakness too. I can't stand **losing**, and this
sometimes stops me from moving on when
I should. I am working on this, though.
- Mr. Gordon **Admitting** your weaknesses is an admirable quality.
You seem to have many admirable qualities.
- Ms. Peterson Thank you.
- Mr. Gordon Well, that's about all I have to ask you for now.
Thank you so much for coming in.
- Ms. Peterson No, thank *you*. I really appreciate
you **taking** the time to speak with me.
- Mr. Gordon We'll be making our decision in
the next few days, so we'll be in touch.
- Ms. Peterson Okay. Thanks again. I look forward
to hearing from you. Goodbye.
- Mr. Gordon Goodbye.

CLB Skill Competencies

Listening: IV. Comprehending Information

(continued on the next page...)

Answer Key cont.

Exercise 5

Students will now listen to the job interview again before answering a set of comprehension questions. Go over the answers as a class.

A. TRUE OR FALSE?

1. F – He thinks it shouldn't take long.
2. T
3. F – She can't stand failing.

B. WRITTEN RESPONSES

1. She doesn't give up.
2. Yes, because she is driven and he admires that she can admit her weakness.

C. MULTIPLE-CHOICE

1. c
2. c
3. a

CLB Skill Competencies

Listening: IV. Comprehending Information

Exercise 6

Put students in pairs and have them fill in the blanks to create their own dialogues. Then get them to practise reading it out loud. As an option, they can present their dialogue to another group when finished. Answers will vary.

CLB Skill Competencies

Writing: II. Reproducing Information

Speaking: III. Getting Things Done

Assessment

Use this task to assess your students' preparedness for an interview. Give your students a little bit of time to prepare what they want to say. If you decide to do this task orally, you or another student can play the role of the interviewer. Alternatively, have students record and submit a video or audio recording of their answers. Students should use gerunds to describe their interests and adjectives to describe their strengths and weaknesses (review from a previous lesson). A ready-made assessment tool is available on page 10. Share this with your students before the formal assessment.

CLB Skill Competencies

Speaking: IV. Sharing Information

Gerunds

You will find this optional grammar review sheet for gerunds on pages 16–17. This review includes an introduction to gerunds, uses for gerunds, and common verbs that follows gerunds.

Grammatical Knowledge: Gerunds

Answer Key cont.

Canadian Language Benchmarks Summary

OVERVIEW

Stage: 1

CLB Range: 4*

Primary Skill Competency: Speaking – IV. Sharing Information

PAGE	TASK	SKILL COMPETENCIES
2	Warm-Up	Speaking: I. Interacting with Others
2	My Interests	Speaking: IV. Sharing Information
3	Exercise 1	Reading: IV. Comprehending Information
4	Exercise 2	Reading: IV. Comprehending Information
5	Exercise 3	Writing: II. Reproducing Information
6	Exercise 4	Listening: IV. Comprehending Information
7	Exercise 5	Listening: IV. Comprehending Information
8	Exercise 6	Writing: II. Reproducing Information Speaking: III. Getting Things Done
9-10	Assessment Task / PBLA** <i>Includes Assessment Tool</i>	Speaking: IV. Sharing Information
16-17	Gerunds	Grammatical Knowledge: Gerunds

***Note:**

This CLB range is suggested by ESL Library based on the descriptors in the Canadian Language Benchmarks guide: <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/pdf/pub/language-benchmarks.pdf>

****Note:**

PBLA refers to portfolio-based learning assessment in the LINC program (though any teacher can use the review tasks for assessment). Visit our Resources section for additional Assessment Tools that you can print and personalize for PBLA: <https://esllibrary.com/resources>

Answer Key cont.

Canadian Language Benchmarks Summary cont.

PROFILES OF ABILITY

The following descriptors from the Canadian Language Benchmarks apply to this lesson and are used with permission. For more detailed information see: <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/pdf/pub/language-benchmarks.pdf> and visit: <https://www.language.ca/>

BENCHMARK	THE LEARNER CAN:
Reading (4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand the purpose, main idea, key information, and specific details in simple, short texts related to everyday familiar and personally relevant situations and topics.
Speaking (4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Give information about needs and feelings related to common everyday activities. Use a range of courtesy formulas and some casual small talk in short, one-on-one, or small group interactions.
Listening (4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand short descriptive or narrative communication on topics of personal relevance (identify details, key words, and expressions).
Writing (4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Copy text with no major omissions and only occasional copying mistakes.

Gerunds

GRAMMAR REVIEW

A. Form

Pattern: base verb + *-ing* ending

Example: I like **working** outside.

B. Function

A gerund is a verb that acts like a noun.

Gerunds are used to turn a verb into the subject or object of a sentence.

- **Cooking** is my favorite hobby, so I want to be a chef.
(*cooking* is the subject of the sentence)
- We discussed **hiring** another office worker.
(*hiring* is the object of the verb *discussed*)

C. Uses

#	Use	Examples
1	As the subject of a sentence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning another language could help you get a better job. • Working as a lawyer is a great dream of mine.
2	After certain verbs (see the list on page 17)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He considered applying overseas. • She enjoys helping other people.
3	After a preposition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am thinking about emailing the CEO of that company. • They plan on finishing the report tonight.

Gerunds cont.

D. Common Verbs Followed by Gerunds

There are many verbs that can be followed by gerunds.
The list below is only a small sample of the most common ones.

Verb	Example
consider	She considered applying for a job at the new pub, but she went travelling instead.
discuss	Let's discuss working under pressure. How do you stay calm in stressful situations?
enjoy	Jim enjoys drawing, so he wants an artistic and creative job.
finish	When Fiona finishes writing her resume, she will take it to the mall.
go	Let's go shopping when you get off work tonight.
keep (on)	Hayden keeps applying for jobs, but he hasn't gotten an interview yet.
like	Jay likes working with his hands. (or Jay likes to work with his hands.)
love	Chloe loves taking pictures. (or Chloe loves to take pictures.)
mind	Would you mind telling me about your previous work experience?
practise	If I practise speaking in front of a mirror, I will feel more confident during my interview.
talk about	Can we talk about giving him a raise? He is a very hard worker.

Exercise 2 Cut-Outs

good fit	admirable
essential	decision
driven	be in touch
consider	option
fail	weakness
goal	give up
admit	appreciate

Listening Transcript

This is the listening transcript for Exercise 4 (page 6).

Mr. Gordon Good afternoon, Ms. Peterson. Thanks for coming in today.

Ms. Peterson Thank you for seeing me.

Mr. Gordon I have a few questions I'd like to ask you. It shouldn't take long.

Ms. Peterson No problem.

Mr. Gordon All right, let's get started then. What makes you a good fit for our company?

Ms. Peterson Well, first of all, I enjoy working with others and developing strong work relationships. I believe that a company is only as strong as the people within it.

Mr. Gordon I completely agree with you. Working well with others is essential within our company. What would you say is your greatest strength?

Ms. Peterson I don't give up. I don't consider failing an option. If something doesn't work the first time, I continue trying other options and plans until I succeed.

Mr. Gordon You're driven.

Ms. Peterson Yes. I keep going until I reach my goals. I can't stand failing, so I don't let it happen.

Mr. Gordon And what would you say is your greatest weakness?

Ms. Peterson Well, my greatest strength can be my greatest weakness too. I can't stand losing, and this sometimes stops me from moving on when I should. I am working on this, though.

Mr. Gordon Admitting your weaknesses is an admirable quality. You seem to have many admirable qualities.

Ms. Peterson Thank you.

Mr. Gordon Well, that's about all I have to ask you for now. Thank you so much for coming in.

Ms. Peterson No, thank *you*. I really appreciate you taking the time to speak with me.

Mr. Gordon We'll be making our decision in the next few days, so we'll be in touch.

Ms. Peterson Okay. Thanks again. I look forward to hearing from you. Goodbye.

Mr. Gordon Goodbye.