The Job Interview

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←  STANDARD INTERVIEW QUESTIONS  →
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The Interview - In the space below, write down three standard interview questions that you would find / have found difficult to answer.

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With a partner, ask an answer your interview questions.
Together, write down the best answers.

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Use the STAR Method

Interviewers like to see that you can think logically and express your ideas clearly in an interview. The STAR method helps you to structure your response and talk about your positive characteristics. Here's how it works:

S = Situation = Introduce the situation
T = Task = Explain the task
A = Act = How did you act / What was your role?
R = Result = What was the result of your actions?

Task

Read the following interview answer. Label each sentence(s) with the correct part of the STAR Method. Write the letters S, T, A or R next to each sentence.

"I remember one time at University during our English course where we were set a group task. The task was to write a business report about the marketing techniques of a global company and present this to the group. As team leader, I allocated sections to each person and set a deadline. When we finished writing, we collated the report and I assigned each person a role for the presentation. Because of this structure, we were able to give a clear and professional presentation and received an A for the project.

The Job Interview

We interviewed Kirsty Smith, an HR Business Partner at a leading technology company in London. Below is her advice when answering typical interview questions.

1. Tell me about yourself	2. What are your weaknesses?
An interviewer is looking for short summary of your experience / education. This question is to break the ice. Keep it to 60 seconds or less. Interviewers hate when candidates talk about every aspect of your life. Try: "I am currently studying / working at _____, where I undertake a __*(what you do)*_____. Here I developed excellent communication and organisational skills as well as a keen interest in __*(Insert field)*__ which led to apply for this great opportunity at _*(company you are applying to)*_."	A classic question! "I work too much", "I am a perfectionist" and "I don't know when to relax" are all cliches. The best way to answer this is to think of an area you found difficult and have improved: "At university I found cross cultural communication skills difficult, particularly the differences between Europe, America and Asia. So I took a course / read up on effective communication techniques to give me a good background on different cultural practices."
3. What are your goals?	**4. Why our company?**
The interviewer wants to know how serious you are about the position and work out if you are a suitable candidate to invest in. They want to see that your goals match the company's goals and any future promotion possibilities. Please avoid the following answers: "I'm spontaneous and and never plan too far into the future." "I see this company as a stepping stone to my goal which is to work for Google."	My favourite! We want to see how much you know about us. This questions helps us to tell the difference between serious candidates and candidates who sent their CV by chance. Please research the company you applying for and use this information in the interview. Avoid: "Because your company is the first position I found on the internet." "Because my careers advisor said you were a good company." "Because I have been rejected from 3 other companies before yours."

Look at the replies below. Which interview question from the text above to they belong to?

- I particularly enjoyed reading about your project in India, working with photovoltaics.

- I found pronunciation in English difficult, so I took an course with a native speaker online.

- I would like to pursue a career in digital design and see myself in a managerial role.

- I'm currently working as a software developer for a multinational company in France.

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Choose one of the interview questions from the text on page two. Using the STAR Method and tips from Kirsty Smith, write a response in the space below then swap it with your partner. Discuss what you like and what you can improve about the answer.

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Difficult interview questions - Read through the list of questions below, how would you answer these?

How do you feel about taking no for an answer?

Describe three positive characteristics that you don't have

What negative thing would your last boss say about you?

When was the last time you were in a crises?

The Job Interview

Glassdoor is an American job and career site where employees anonymously dish on the pros and cons of their companies and bosses. In the year prior to April 2014, more than 500,000 company reviews were submitted to the site. Launched in 2008, its ratings of CEOs and workplaces based on collating these reviews are widely reported, and in 2013 the site's annual Employees' Choice Awards were described as "well-respected" by the Daily Telegraph

According to BusinessWeek, Glassdoor "verified that the reviews came from real employees through technological checks of e-mail addresses and through screenings by a content management team". In 2013 Glassdoor said that "About 15 to 20 per cent of the content that is submitted to Glassdoor is actually rejected because it either doesn't meet our community guidelines or it appears suspicious."

In 2010 Glassdoor launched "Enhanced Employer Profiles", which allows employers to pay monthly fees to include official corporate biographies, job listings and corporate Twitter feeds, alongside the untamed voices of their workers. In 2012 it raised $20 million of venture capital to support expansion outside the United States, taking its total outside funding to $42.2 million.

The site has been mentioned by the Wall Street Journal as contributing to a wider trend: Sites where people post salaries and other feedback about employers, such as Glassdoor.com, also contribute to the sense that pay is no longer a private issue.

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Find the words in the text which mean:

1) someone who does something without giving their name.

2) when a company first begins / starts off.

3) systematic checks designed to consider, select or reject ideas, applications or people.

4) money given by an investor to a new company to help them start or grow.

5) news / information telling you how you performed in your job / interview.

The Job Interview Lesson Plan - Teacher's Notes

Whether your students will be taking part in job interviews in the future or just wish to discuss their job interview experiences, this lesson plan caters for all. The lesson begins by **discussing standard interview questions** and the best methods to respond to these. That's followed by a **reading article** taken from an interview with an HR Business Partner, looking at the best way to respond to typical interview questions. This leads to a look at more **difficult interview questions**, designed to make you sweat! (You'll find answers to these in the answer key below). It finishes with a discussion on **glassdoor.com**, a website which gives you detailed insights into companies, including salaries, interview questions and company culture.

Answer Key - The Job Interview

Standard Interview Questions

Tell me about yourself? Why should we hire you? Why do you want to work for us? What experience do you have? Where do you see yourself in five year's time? What are your strengths? What are your weaknesses?

STAR METHOD

"I remember one time at University during our English course where we were set a group task. The task was to write a business report about the marketing techniques of a global company and present this to the group. As team leader, I allocated sections to each person and set a deadline. When we finished writing, we collated the report and I assigned each person a role for the presentation. Because of this structure, we were able to give a clear and professional presentation and received an A for the project.

Reading Text - Kirsty Smith

• I particularly enjoyed reading about your project in India, working with photovoltaics. **4**

• I found pronunciation in English difficult, so I took an course with a native speaker online. **2**

• I would like to pursue a career in digital design and see myself in a managerial role. **3**

• I'm currently working as a software developer for a multinational company in France. **1**

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Suggested Answers:

How do you feel about taking no for an answer?

No is absolute. It gives you a clear indication of your boundaries and what you can and can't do. It allows you to pursue other avenues. In many ways I would rather here "no" than "maybe"

Describe three positive characteristics that you don't have

Note from Author: I have asked sales managers, teachers, doctors, even a brain surgeon and none could come up with a suitable answer (myself included). If you have a suggestion, I'd really love to hear it, write it in the comments section of ESL Right Now :)

What negative thing would your last boss say about you?

I don't think she would have called it negative, but she identified that I needed to work on being more dynamic in my presentation skills. I have sought out practice opportunities and taken classes with presentation trainers and I'ave seen some real improvement.

When was the last time you were in a crises?

While I was travelling abroad during my gap year I found myself stranded because of disruption to flights after a natural disaster in the region. Luckily I'd looked up advice on how to cope with unexpected travel problems before I set off and had made sure that I had all the contact details and documents I needed on me. I had already worked out how to stay in touch with friends and family in case of a crisis. I followed the news carefully and used my initiative and understanding of social media to band together with some other stranded travellers and share alternative transport home.'

GlassDoor Exercises

1) someone who does something without giving their name.

   anonymous

2) when a company first begins / starts off.

   launched

3) systematic checks designed to consider, select or reject ideas, applications or people.

   screening

4) money given by an investor to a new company to help them start or grow.

   venture capital

5) news / information telling you how you performed in your job / interview.

   feedback

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Lesson Plan Stages

1) Begin writing "job interview" on the board. Elicit typical interview questions from participants and write these on the board. Participants can also write these on the top of page one.

2) Ask participants to write down three difficult interview questions that they have been asked / could be asked in the future. Upon completion, pair or group participants, asking them to discuss their questions and potential answers for them. Hold a group discussion and elicit the difficult questions and potential answers as a class.

3) Next, explain that interviewers like to here structured answers. This shows logic and allows you to answer clearly. Ask participants to read through the star method and complete the exercise at the bottom of page one.

4) Introduce the reading text on page one. Ask the participants to read through the advice and complete the task underneath. Feedback and correct at the end of the task. Participants then complete the writing task at the top of page three.

5) Bring the class back together and ask them to think of the toughest job interview questions they've ever heard of. Elicit and discuss then introduce them to the four tough interview questions on page three. In paris or groups, ask the participants to think of answers for these questions. Upon completion, discuss as a whole class and use the answers in the answer key to give a "professional" response.

6) Introduce glassdoor.com, a website that allows you to find out more personal information about the company you are applying for, including interview questions, salaries and company culture. Start by reading through the text and completing the vocabulary exercise at the bottom. Finish off the lesson by discussing the concept of glassdoor.com. Is this a good idea for a website? What are the pros and cons for companies and candidates?