



For young people with special educational needs and disabilities

Interview skills

Age range: 14+

 **BARCLAYS** | LifeSkills



Session overview

Time	Key learning outcomes	Resources
120 mins	By the end of the activity students will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand that interviews help the employer and employee assess their match for one another 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interview skills presentation slides Interview skills student worksheet Virtual Interview Practice tool

It's recommended that lessons are repeated to ensure concepts are understood, and allow for skills to be built over time. Always start the session by agreeing ground rules with the group. For advice on this and other ways to establish a safe learning environment, [download the content guide](#).

This is one of a set of core lessons that have been adapted for young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (also known as Additional Support Needs/Additional Learning Needs). Adaptation has been completed with the support of specialist careers provider Talentino, and tested with staff and students at several different special schools.

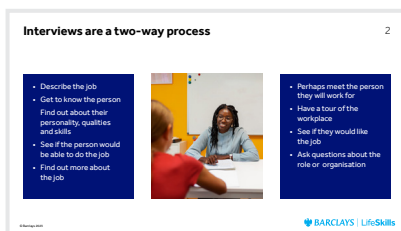
Contents

Activities	Time	Page
Activity one: What is an interview and what different types of interview are there?	60 mins	3
Activity two: STAR model	60 mins	5
Activity three: Preparing for an interview	60 mins	6
Activity four: Practising for an interview	60 mins	9

Activity one

What is an interview and what different types of interview are there?

Depending on your class, you may need to scaffold the activities in this lesson through discussion or the use of programs such as Communicate in Print.

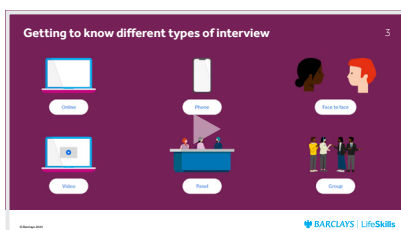


1. Discuss how an interview helps an employee showcase their skills

- Set the scene for the session by asking the group what they think the purpose of a job interview is, and why employers usually use them to choose the right person for a job. You could talk about your own experience of having an interview or holding one, including any memorable experiences and concentrating on positive situations
- Explain that the interview process helps an employer get to know each applicant, understand what skills they can bring to the role and why it is an essential part of securing a job. How else could employees work out how to hire someone?
- Show **slide 2**. Discuss students' ideas and help them see that interviews are a two-way process, helping both employers and applicants find out more
- Ask students if they can think of any other ways that an interview might take place rather than being face to face with one person. Suggest that they can also be with a panel, over the telephone, or via video

2. Getting to know different types of interviews

- Explain that different interview scenarios require you to adapt your approach to suit your audience
- Ask students to think about how they might act differently in a face to face interview (one to one) and a panel interview. For example, who do they direct their questions and answers to, how might they need to adjust their body language?



3. Using the 'Different types of interview and assessments' tool

- Load the ['Different Types of Interview and Assessments' interactive tool](#) and show **slide 3**. (Note: Teachers should consider which parts of the tool are most appropriate for their group of students and focus on these). Explore the possible interview formats and allow time to pause and discuss key points around what to expect and how to prepare, including:
 - Why this type of interview might be used
 - What skills an interviewer might be able to gauge in candidates
 - How students might feel when taking part in this type of interview

Activity one

Tips for different types of interviews

Online application forms

Make sure you get someone to help you complete the form. Check spelling using the spellchecker. If you don't have all the information, save the form and then come back to it. Make sure you know the closing date and submit it on time. Provide all the information asked for.

Phone

Rehearse some questions with a supporter before the appointment. Prepare and make sure you know the right time and date and the phone is charged up.

Face to face

This is the most common type of interview. You may want to have someone come with you to help you get there on time. Arrive early and make sure you tell the reception your name and the person you are there to meet with. Before you leave home, make sure your clothes are appropriate, clean and tidy and your hair is clean and tidy. If you wear make up, don't put too much on. Use deoderant. In preparation for the interview make sure you know all about what the job is, what you will need to be doing, what the company does. Have 2 good questions to ask the employer already prepared. Think about the STAR model (see this lesson).

Video

You could practise video interviews with adults you know and trust. When you do have a video interview, make sure you know the time and date. Check your position in the webcam beforehand and what is in the background. Look as smart as you would if you were face to face. Have someone with you to take notes for you.

Panel interview

If you have to attend a panel interview make sure your trusted person has permission to attend with you. When in the panel interview, try and make contact with each person in the room. They will ask questions at different times. It is important the company knows you have additional needs and need to bring your supporting person.

Group interview

This is where you will be with people from the company with the job and other people applying for the job. You should take your supporter with you and they should make sure the company know you have additional needs in advance of the group interview. They may choose to ask you to come in for an interview on your own instead.

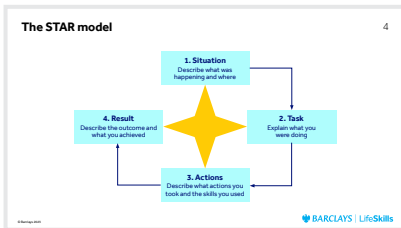
Activity summary

- Explain that it is normal for interviewers to challenge students or to explore areas in which they appear less confident. Discuss what would be a positive way to respond to this style of questioning
- Remind students that they are likely to get additional support in an interview setting and will be able to take a trusted person with them if they want to
- Remind students that every answer is an opportunity to sell themselves to the employer, even ones that ask them about their biggest weakness or mistake
- If appropriate for your group, you could role play different types of interview and styles of questions

Activity two

The STAR model

1. Introduce the STAR model



- Show **slide 4**, ask if any students have heard of the STAR model. Explain that it is useful to think about when answering a question because it helps give all the information an employer might be looking for
- Review each element of the STAR model and explain that students are going to practise giving good answers using STAR to help
- Show **slide 5** and talk through the example. Now ask students to think about how they might answer the same question following the STAR format using their own skills and experience. If they're struggling, you may want to give them some prompts, e.g. playing in a sports team, being in a band, organising a charity fundraiser, working with co-workers at a part-time job

Activity summary

- Show **slide 6** and run through the top tips
- Explain that it is normal for interviewers to challenge students or to explore areas in which they appear less confident. Discuss what would be a positive way to respond to this style of questioning
- Remind students that every answer is an opportunity to sell themselves to the employer, even ones that ask them about their biggest weakness or mistake



Activity three

Preparing for an interview

1. Doing well at an interview

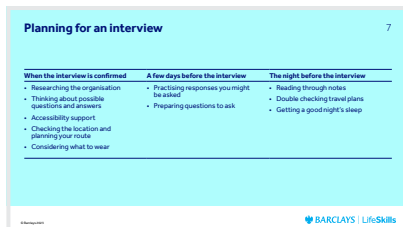
- Let students know that in this first activity you will be focusing on the preparation involved in getting ready for an interview
- Ask for a show of hands of anyone who has had an interview before. Ask a couple of students to tell the class about their experience:
 - What was it for?
 - How did they prepare?
 - How did they feel during the interview?
- Ask students to consider some dos and don'ts of job interviews. You could search for clips online of examples of performing poorly in interviews to demonstrate this
- Ask students to consider what they have seen or discussed. For example;
 - **Positives** – greeting with a handshake and smile, maintaining eye contact
 - **Negatives** – looking and sounding nervous, hesitant speech, being unprepared, lack of understanding of the company
- Let students know that demonstrating skills and confidence is the best way to have a successful interview
- Explain that to be interview ready, students will need to plan and prepare in advance, do research, make sure they present the right image and make a good first impression



Activity three

Preparing for an interview (cont'd)

2. Plan the interview preparation



- Ask students to get into small groups. Their first task is to think about what goes on 'behind the scenes' of an interview: the preparation and research they should do to be ready on the day. Groups can fill in the **Preparing for an interview student worksheet** so they have a guide to take away with them
- Ask teams to discuss each stage of the preparation process – once the interview is confirmed, a few days before and then the night before, and collate these ideas under the relevant headings. Key elements to reference include:

Once the interview is confirmed:

- Researching the organisation e.g. what they do, competitors, size of team, departments
- Thinking about possible questions and answers e.g. what are your strengths and weaknesses, how would your friends or colleagues describe you, why do you want to work here, what can you bring to the organisation?
- Researching career progression and training opportunities
- Accessibility support – if needed
- Checking the location and planning your route
- Considering what to wear

A few days before:

- Practising responses you might be asked with friends and family, asking them to check you have used the STAR model where possible
- Preparing questions that you might want to ask – e.g. working hours, start date, and main duties of the role

The night before:

- Reading through notes
- Double checking travel plans
- Getting a good night's sleep
- Ask the teams to feed back their ideas to the wider group. Highlight any elements from the list above which they might have missed, using the list on **slide 7**

Activity three

Preparing for an interview (cont'd)

3. Plan to make a good impression

- Ask teams to think about how they'll make a great impression, and focus on clothing and appearance for the day of an interview
- Ask students to write down their ideas for what to wear and how to look, and some things they should avoid. Students should consider how style of dress might change according to the type of organisation they are interviewing with

Would they wear the same clothes if interviewing at a bank as they would at a film production company or at a veterinary surgery?

- Now ask teams to think about making the right entrance so that they give a good impression

How can they come in and make a good impression on their interviewer?

- Explain to students that it's important to think about your audience when preparing for an interview, as interview styles can be quite different. To put this into context, ask the students to imagine if they were being interviewed for a place in a college or sixth form by their own teacher or by a headteacher from a different school/college – how might they act differently? For example, their initial greeting, introduction, tone of voice and manner may all change when speaking to a familiar face or to a stranger

4. Students role play their ideas

- Explain that you'd like each team to present their ideas about how to make a good entrance before explaining what they think would be appropriate clothing. Give teams a few minutes to select a job and prepare
- Bear in mind that some students won't feel comfortable standing up in front of the class, watch out for body language and enable less confident students to verbally share their ideas
- You may want to clear some space and act the role of the interviewer, with someone from each team role-playing making a good impression. Make it clear that students need to think about the very first impression they make, considering how they enter a room and greet an interviewer, before sharing some dress and appearance tips. As the interviewer you can showcase how to make a good impression, and refer to your actions afterwards, e.g. greet with a smile and confident handshake, positive body language, make eye contact, look smart
- Ask the class to treat each team with support and respect. This is also a good opportunity to introduce some humour in the examples e.g. demonstrate some different handshakes, or avoid eye contact altogether
- Give feedback to students and congratulate them on their ideas

Activity summary

- Show **slide 8** and summarise the key points to think about when preparing for an interview
- Help students gather their ideas into some dos and don'ts for preparation, dress and entrance

Activity four

Practising for an interview

1. Using the Virtual Interview Practice tool



- Load the [Virtual Interview Practice tool](#) at the front of the room. Explain that, for the rest of the session, students will practise responding to typical interview questions before evaluating their answers.
- Students can choose whether they'd like to write their answers or, if they each have access to their own computer, record themselves saying them so they can listen back to their responses and self reflect. Bear in mind that a SEND/ALN audience might prefer to write them
- As the students are working through their answers to the proposed questions, make sure they're thinking about how STAR can help them deliver an effective response – if you haven't already, refer to activity one of this lesson plan for guidance on using the STAR model
- Allow them time to plan and prepare their answer with STAR in mind
- You can display the list of general questions using **slide 9**, or hand out **Practising for an interview student worksheet** with the list of five practice questions

2. Answering common interview questions

- Facilitator/s should circulate offering hints and tips on student performance and what to include:
- 1. Tell me about yourself**
 - Reference interests and hobbies, educational achievements, aspirations
 - 2. What do you know about the organisation and the sector you have applied for?**
 - Discuss your knowledge of the field, different features of the organisation, specific projects they've worked on, etc.
 - 3. Tell me about a situation where your communication and collaboration skills made a positive difference to something you were working on**
 - Offer a specific example, using details that demonstrate how you used these skills
 - 4. Tell me about a time when you found a simple solution to a complex problem**
 - Use an example from a school project or extracurricular activity, be specific and use the STAR model
 - 5. Describe a situation where you worked in a team. What role did you take, what did you learn and what did you achieve?**
 - Offer specific examples, reference your role in the group, demonstrate organisation and communication skills, successes and challenges

3. Share feedback

- Ask a selection of students to share their responses to one of the questions and ask them to comment on what it was like to use the STAR model. Invite other students to provide helpful comments on how a student might improve their answer
- Discuss answers as a class and encourage them to comment on what they found most difficult. Be sensitive to the fact that some students will not be as confident as others and there may be variations in performance

Activity four

Practising for an interview (cont'd)

Activity summary

- Facilitator/s should give their own feedback, helping students see that a good answer uses the 'actions' element to showcase their skills and the 'results' element to showcase their achievements
- Finish by congratulating the students on their efforts, especially if they have not done this before and wish them luck with their job searches.

Supplementary activity: Face to face mock interviews

Time needed: 45-60 minutes

If there are a few facilitators available, you may wish to run a face to face mock interview session with students once you have worked through the [Virtual Interview Practice tool](#) in activity four.

1. Planning for a mock interview

- Ask students to read the job advertisement, or do this as a class, on **Applying for a job student worksheet** and explain that this job will be used for the mock interviews. Alternatively, search online for some job advertisements from a range of sectors relevant to your group. Ask students to think about the skills and qualities each employer might be looking for and think about how they can showcase each of these
- Ask them to also consider what they should try to achieve in their interviews. What questions might the interviewer ask them? How can they give great answers that will help them land the job?

2. Running a mock interview activity

- Explain to the students that they are going to take part in a face to face mock interview to practise their interview skills and learn from the experience
- Point out that some students will have more time to prepare than others, and this will be taken into account when you review how they performed
- Display **slide 10** whilst they role play the interviews to help remind them of the key points

3. Carry out the interviews

- Arrange the session so each student is interviewed for about 10 minutes in total, including a few minutes for feedback
- Facilitators or students can use **Mock interview feedback student worksheet** to make notes on their performance and what they can improve next time
- Congratulate students on what they did well and provide some constructive ideas on what they could improve and how they might do this

Interview skills

Preparing for an interview

When the interview is confirmed	A few days before the interview	The night before the interview

Interview skills

Practising for an interview

1. Tell me about yourself

2. What do you know about the organisation and the sector you have applied for?

3. Tell me about a situation where your communication and collaboration skills made a positive difference to something you were working on

4. Tell me about a time when you found a simple solution to a complex problem

5. Describe a situation where you worked in a team. What role did you take, what did you learn and what did you achieve?

Interview skills

Apply for a job: Catering in a cafe - Supported internship

Success is open to everyone at our Community Cafe. We encourage all our staff to be their best within a team of dedicated, inspiring people. Our Supported Internship provides you with paid work, training and time at College every week.

We don't see age, background, experience or disabilities or health conditions as barriers. All we look for is potential. We can adapt your working environment so you can be successful, we'll help you perform to your best. You will be mentored by a Job Coach and be given lots of support. Because the further your potential takes you here, the better it is for our customers and our business.

We're looking for someone who can work as part of a team, is helpful when serving customers, can assist with cooking and cleaning, and is confident to learn how to use the till.

If you get an interview with us, you will be asked about any work you may have done as work experience, or relatable skills carried out in a personal setting, that are similar to the role in question, and also why you would like to work for us. We won't expect you to have all required skills from the outset – we will provide training and help you acquire the skills during the internship.

At the end of the internship, we may have a job you can apply for. Alternatively, there may be similar jobs in the area which you can apply for, using the experience you have gained with us to support your application.

The Supported internship is ideal for you if you're over 16 and either have relevant work experience or are completely new to the world of work.



Interview skills

Mock interview feedback sheet

Student name:	Interviewer name:
----------------------	--------------------------

	Strengths	Areas for development
First impressions		
Body language and eye contact		
Language and communication skills		
Quality of examples and references to skills and achievements		
Asked questions at the end		

Other comments or suggestions
