

# teaching students how to interview someone

Teaching Students How to Interview Someone: A Guide to Developing Essential Communication Skills

**Teaching students how to interview someone** is an invaluable skill that goes beyond simply asking questions. It cultivates critical thinking, active listening, empathy, and confidence—abilities that serve students well in academic settings and future careers alike. Whether it's for a school project, a journalism class, or preparing for a job interview, learning the art of interviewing can transform a student's communication style and deepen their understanding of others. This article explores practical methods, tips, and strategies to help educators and mentors guide students through the process of conducting effective interviews.

## Why Is Teaching Students How to Interview Someone Important?

Interviewing is more than just a technique; it's a gateway to meaningful conversations and insightful information gathering. When students learn how to interview, they develop skills that promote curiosity and engagement with the world around them. This practice encourages them to ask open-ended questions, listen actively, and respond thoughtfully—traits essential for successful interpersonal communication.

Furthermore, interviewing enhances research skills, helping students to learn how to prepare, organize, and analyze information. It also builds confidence, as students become comfortable interacting with different personalities and adapting to various conversational dynamics. These skills are transferable to countless scenarios, from college admissions and job interviews to networking and leadership roles.

## Getting Started: Preparing Students for Interviews

Before students jump into the interview process, preparation is key. Teaching students how to interview someone begins with laying a strong foundation that emphasizes planning and mindset.

## Understanding the Purpose of the Interview

Help students clarify the goal of their interview. Is it to gather facts, explore opinions, or tell a personal story? Knowing the purpose shapes the types of questions they'll ask and guides the flow of conversation. Encouraging students to identify their objectives encourages intentional listening and more focused interactions.

# Researching the Interviewee and Topic

Good interviews are built on background knowledge. Guide students to research their interviewee's background, interests, or expertise before the conversation. This preparation aids in crafting relevant questions and shows respect to the person being interviewed. For example, if a student is interviewing a local artist, understanding their style or previous work can lead to deeper, more insightful questions.

## Developing Thoughtful Questions

One of the most critical steps is teaching students how to create effective questions. Encourage them to:

- **Avoid yes/no questions:** Instead, focus on open-ended prompts that invite detailed answers.
- **Use the "5 W's and H":** Who, What, When, Where, Why, and How can guide question development.
- **Sequence logically:** Start with simple, warm-up questions and gradually move to more complex or sensitive topics.

This approach ensures the interview flows naturally and keeps the interviewee engaged.

## Building Interview Skills: Active Listening and Engagement

Teaching students how to interview someone involves more than just question-asking; it requires cultivating attentive listening and interactive skills.

### Active Listening Techniques

Active listening means fully concentrating on the speaker, understanding their message, and responding thoughtfully. Students should be encouraged to:

- Maintain eye contact and use positive body language.
- Avoid interrupting the interviewee.
- Take notes or use recording devices (with permission) to capture details.

- Paraphrase or summarize answers to confirm understanding.

Practicing active listening helps students pick up on nuances, follow up on interesting points, and build rapport with the interviewee.

## **Handling Unexpected Answers**

Interviews don't always go as planned. Sometimes, interviewees provide surprising or off-topic responses. Teaching students to stay flexible and adapt their questions accordingly is crucial. Instead of sticking rigidly to a prepared list, encourage them to explore intriguing tangents or clarify ambiguous answers. This responsiveness often leads to richer, more authentic conversations.

## **Practical Activities to Teach Interviewing Skills**

Incorporating hands-on exercises can make learning how to interview someone engaging and effective.

### **Role-Playing Exercises**

Role-playing different scenarios—such as a journalist interviewing a celebrity or a student interviewing a teacher—allows students to practice question formulation, active listening, and conversational flow in a low-pressure environment. Peers can switch roles to experience both sides of an interview, fostering empathy and understanding.

### **Mock Interviews with Real Guests**

Inviting guest speakers or community members for mock interviews can provide students with real-world practice. This interaction often motivates students to prepare more thoroughly and take the process seriously. After the interview, debrief sessions can help reflect on what went well and what could be improved.

### **Recording and Reviewing Interviews**

Encourage students to record their interviews (audio or video) and review them afterward. Listening or watching themselves can reveal strengths and areas for growth, such as tone of voice, pacing, or question clarity. This reflective practice enhances self-awareness and skill development.

# Overcoming Common Challenges in Teaching Interviewing

Despite best efforts, students may encounter obstacles when learning to interview. Addressing these challenges head-on can empower them to succeed.

## Nervousness and Confidence Building

Many students feel anxious about interviewing, especially if it involves strangers or authority figures. Normalize this feeling and provide strategies such as:

- Practicing deep breathing and positive self-talk.
- Starting with interviews of familiar people to build confidence.
- Emphasizing that mistakes are part of learning.

Building a supportive classroom environment encourages students to take risks and grow.

## Encouraging Ethical Interviewing Practices

Teaching students about respect, consent, and privacy is essential. They should always explain the purpose of the interview, ask for permission before recording, and respect any boundaries the interviewee sets. Discussing the importance of honesty and integrity in representing the interviewee's words helps students develop ethical communication habits.

## Managing Time and Staying Focused

Students sometimes struggle to keep interviews on track or within time limits. Teach them to politely steer conversations back to relevant topics and to prioritize key questions if time runs short. Time management skills are crucial for maintaining professionalism.

## Integrating Interview Skills Across Curricula

Teaching students how to interview someone doesn't have to be confined to language arts or journalism classes. These skills are highly adaptable and can enrich various subjects.

## **In Social Studies and History**

Students can interview family members or community elders to gather oral histories, providing firsthand perspectives that textbooks might lack. This approach deepens understanding of cultural heritage and historical events.

## **In Science Classes**

Interviewing scientists, researchers, or healthcare professionals can make scientific concepts more tangible and inspire student interest in STEM fields.

## **In Career and Technical Education**

Mock job interviews or informational interviews with professionals prepare students for the workforce and help them explore career options.

By weaving interviewing into diverse lessons, educators create dynamic learning experiences that build communication and critical thinking skills simultaneously.

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Teaching students how to interview someone is a powerful way to equip them with tools for effective communication, empathy, and lifelong learning. With thoughtful preparation, guided practice, and supportive feedback, students can transform from hesitant questioners into confident interviewers capable of leading meaningful conversations. As they hone these skills, they gain not only academic advantages but also the ability to connect with others authentically and thoughtfully in any context.

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **What are the key skills students should learn when being taught how to interview someone?**

Students should learn active listening, effective questioning techniques, note-taking, maintaining eye contact, and managing the flow of conversation.

### **How can teachers prepare students for conducting their first interview?**

Teachers can prepare students by discussing interview purposes, practicing question formulation, role-playing interviews, and teaching ethical considerations.

## **What types of questions should students be encouraged to ask during an interview?**

Students should be encouraged to ask open-ended, clear, and relevant questions that elicit detailed and meaningful responses.

## **How can teachers help students overcome nervousness about interviewing?**

Teachers can help by providing practice opportunities, teaching relaxation techniques, encouraging preparation, and offering positive feedback.

## **What role does research play in teaching students to interview someone?**

Research helps students understand the interviewee's background and topic, enabling them to ask informed and thoughtful questions.

## **How can technology be integrated into teaching students interview skills?**

Teachers can use recording devices for practice reviews, video conferencing for remote interviews, and apps for organizing questions and notes.

## **What ethical considerations should students be taught when interviewing someone?**

Students should learn about obtaining consent, respecting privacy, avoiding leading questions, and accurately representing the interviewee's responses.

## **How can teachers assess students' interviewing skills effectively?**

Assessment can be done through observing mock interviews, reviewing recorded sessions, evaluating question quality, and reflecting on interview summaries.

## **What strategies can help students keep an interview on track?**

Students can use prepared questions as a guide, politely redirect off-topic answers, and practice active listening to build rapport and control the conversation flow.

## **Why is it important to teach students how to follow up during an interview?**

Following up allows students to clarify responses, dig deeper into topics, and demonstrate genuine interest, leading to richer and more insightful interviews.

# Additional Resources

Teaching Students How to Interview Someone: A Guide to Developing Essential Communication Skills

**Teaching students how to interview someone** is an invaluable educational endeavor that extends beyond traditional classroom learning. Interviewing is a skill that fosters critical thinking, enhances communication abilities, and cultivates empathy—qualities essential for academic success and professional growth. As educators and mentors seek effective methods to impart this skill, it becomes imperative to explore best practices, underlying challenges, and the broader impact of mastering the art of interviewing.

## The Importance of Teaching Interviewing Skills to Students

In today's information-driven society, the ability to conduct interviews is a multifaceted competence that supports research, journalism, human resources, and interpersonal communication. For students, learning how to interview someone encourages active listening, questioning techniques, and nuanced understanding of verbal and non-verbal cues. This skill set is particularly relevant in disciplines such as social sciences, media studies, and business, where gathering accurate and insightful information is critical.

Moreover, teaching students how to interview someone empowers them to engage with diverse perspectives, which enhances cultural awareness and social empathy. It also prepares them for the workforce, where job interviews and professional interactions are routine. According to a 2022 survey by the National Association of Colleges and Employers, 87% of employers value strong communication skills, with interviewing being a core component.

## Core Components of Effective Interview Training

### Preparation and Research

A successful interview begins long before the actual conversation. Students must learn how to research their interviewee thoroughly, understanding their background, expertise, and potential viewpoints. Preparation includes formulating relevant and open-ended questions that encourage detailed responses rather than simple yes/no answers. This phase teaches students the importance of context and specificity, which can lead to richer, more meaningful exchanges.

### Question Design and Types

Teaching students how to interview someone involves instructing them on the structure and purpose of different question types:

- **Open-ended questions:** Encourage elaboration and storytelling.
- **Closed-ended questions:** Useful for gathering specific facts or clarifications.
- **Probing questions:** Follow-up inquiries that delve deeper into initial responses.
- **Hypothetical questions:** Stimulate critical thinking and scenario analysis.

Balancing these question types helps maintain a dynamic flow and prevents interviews from becoming monotonous or superficial.

## **Active Listening and Non-Verbal Communication**

A critical aspect of interviewing is active listening, which involves fully concentrating, understanding, and responding thoughtfully to the interviewee's answers. Teaching students to observe body language, facial expressions, and tone of voice enriches their interpretative skills, enabling them to pick up on subtleties that may not be explicitly stated. This attentiveness fosters rapport, making interviewees more comfortable and forthcoming.

## **Practical Methods for Teaching Interview Techniques**

### **Role-Playing and Simulations**

One of the most effective ways to teach students how to interview someone is through role-playing exercises. By simulating real-life interview scenarios, students can practice formulating questions, managing the flow of conversation, and responding to unexpected answers. This experiential learning method allows for immediate feedback and reflection, which enhances skill retention.

### **Use of Technology and Multimedia Tools**

Incorporating video recordings of interviews can be a powerful teaching aid. Students can review their performance to identify strengths and areas for improvement, such as clarity of questions, pacing, and body language. Additionally, analyzing professional interviews from podcasts, documentaries, or news outlets provides models of effective interviewing styles and techniques.

### **Peer-to-Peer Interviews**

Encouraging students to interview each other fosters a low-pressure environment for skill

development. Peer interviews promote mutual learning and increase confidence as students alternate between the roles of interviewer and interviewee. This approach also highlights the interpersonal dynamics of conversation and builds empathy.

## **Challenges and Considerations in Interview Training**

Teaching students how to interview someone is not without its challenges. Some students may experience anxiety or discomfort in interpersonal interactions, which can hinder their ability to conduct effective interviews. Addressing these emotional barriers through supportive instruction and gradual exposure is essential.

Another consideration is cultural sensitivity. Interviewers must be trained to navigate diverse cultural norms and communication styles to avoid misunderstandings or offense. This aspect underscores the importance of empathy and adaptability in the interviewing process.

Furthermore, ethical considerations such as respecting privacy, obtaining consent, and accurately representing the interviewee's words must be emphasized. Students should understand the responsibility they carry when documenting and sharing information gathered through interviews.

## **Balancing Structure and Flexibility**

While preparation is critical, rigid adherence to a script can stifle natural conversation flow. Teaching students how to balance structured questions with spontaneous follow-ups encourages authenticity and responsiveness. This adaptability is a hallmark of skilled interviewers who can navigate unexpected topics or emotions gracefully.

## **Benefits of Mastering Interviewing Skills for Students**

Students who effectively learn how to interview someone gain multifaceted benefits. Beyond academic research and media projects, interviewing sharpens critical thinking by compelling students to analyze responses and synthesize information. Communication skills cultivated through this practice improve public speaking, writing, and interpersonal relationships.

Additionally, early exposure to interviewing can boost career readiness. Many professions require gathering qualitative data, conducting surveys, or engaging with clients and stakeholders—competencies directly linked to interviewing prowess.

In a social context, students develop greater confidence in initiating conversations and building networks. These social skills are invaluable for personal and professional opportunities alike.

Teaching students how to interview someone, therefore, is more than a classroom exercise; it is an investment in their holistic development as communicators, thinkers, and empathetic individuals. As educational institutions continue to adapt to evolving demands, integrating interview training remains a strategic priority to equip learners for success across diverse domains.

## **Teaching Students How To Interview Someone**

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**teaching students how to interview someone: 100 Ways to Teach: Seven Elements of Effective Lesson Planning** Shane Dixon, Chelsie Acedo, Jere Van Patten, Emily Wilson, 100 Ways to Teach: Seven Elements of Effective Lessons is designed to give teachers instant access to dozens of creative and engaging ideas, explained clearly and illustrated with examples from real-life classrooms. The book demonstrates 20 basic yet foundational skills that teach some of the essentials of active learning. In addition to these skills are 80 activities, all organized according to the 7 elements of effective lessons. By learning these skills and activities, teachers will develop the ability to motivate students, organize curriculum, and enhance student learning gains. Finally, the book boasts simple templates that serve as a valuable tool to structure lesson planning. By using these templates, teachers can demonstrate to evaluators their organizational skills as well as their subject mastery and creativity. A chapter dedicated to evaluators offers tips on how to engage teachers in effective feedback in pre- and post-observation meetings. In short, this book is for teachers and evaluators to improve teacher effectiveness on any campus.

**teaching students how to interview someone: Handbook of Demonstrations and Activities in the Teaching of Psychology** Mark E. Ware, David E. Johnson, 2016-02-04 For those who teach students in psychology, education, and the social sciences, the Handbook of Demonstrations and Activities in the Teaching of Psychology, Second Edition provides practical applications and rich sources of ideas. Revised to include a wealth of new material (56% of the articles are new), these invaluable reference books contain the collective experience of teachers who have successfully dealt with students' difficulty in mastering important concepts about human behavior. Each volume features a table that lists the articles and identifies the primary and secondary courses in which readers can use each demonstration. Additionally, the subject index facilitates retrieval of articles according to topical headings, and the appendix notes the source as it originally appeared in Teaching of Psychology--especially useful for users needing to cite information. The official journal of the Society for the Teaching of Psychology, Division Two of the American Psychological Association, Teaching of Psychology is a highly respected publication

devoted to improving teaching and learning at all educational levels. Volume III consists of 95 articles about teaching personality, abnormal, clinical-counseling, and social psychology. Divided into four sections (one for each specialty), the book suggests ways to work with case studies, advocate a research perspective, use the arts and literature as teaching tools, and otherwise facilitate understanding of theoretical concepts.

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**teaching students how to interview someone: 41 Active Learning Strategies for the Inclusive Classroom, Grades 6-12** Diane Casale-Giannola, Linda Schwartz Green, 2012-06-27 Keys to engaging secondary students Research shows that all students—regardless of learning style, disability category, or language difference—learn more effectively when they are engaged in active learning. This book shows teachers how to help all students achieve positive learning outcomes. The authors provide a compilation of strategies that serve as blueprints for instructional design and directions for using them across a variety of content areas. The many benefits of active learning include: A more engaged and interactive classroom Increased self-directed learning Development of higher-order thinking skills such as analysis, synthesis, evaluation Improved reading, discussion, and writing competencies

**teaching students how to interview someone: *Teaching Students About the World of Work*** Nancy Hoffman, Michael Lawrence Collins, 2020-07-22 Teaching Students About the World of Work argues that educational institutions—especially two-year and four-year public institutions serving low-income students—need to make the topic of employment a central element in their educational offerings. Indeed, the book demonstrates that a far greater emphasis on teaching students about the work world will be necessary if colleges are to give disadvantaged students a realistic chance for professional and economic success. The recommendation is a reconfiguration of postsecondary education that represents a paradigm shift in career preparation and learning. Editors Nancy Hoffman and Michael Lawrence Collins and their authors provide a rich and comprehensive view of both today's work world and the challenges facing many young people who are determined to find a place within it. The book offers detailed accounts of how several community colleges have put employment at the center of the curriculum; provides practical insights into the twenty-first century labor market and ways to improve the choices and outcomes for low-income job seekers; and explores the daunting structural barriers to securing successful and satisfying employment. Throughout all its chapters, the book highlights increasing inequalities—in both opportunities and outcomes—within our society. In order to redress those disparities, it argues, postsecondary educators will need to offer enhanced insights and sophistication to disadvantaged young people preparing to enter and navigate the work world. An urgent but unfailingly reasonable book for our times, *Teaching Students About the World of Work* will be required reading for educators determined to create practical opportunities for young people in search of good employment and

better lives.

**teaching students how to interview someone:** *Writing Instruction for English Learners* Eugenia Mora-Flores, 2008-10-29 Focusing on narrative, expository, and persuasive writing and poetry, this guide provides strategies and tools to facilitate writing development for English learners in Grades 2-8.

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**teaching students how to interview someone: Linguistic Landscapes in Language and Teacher Education** Sílvia Melo-Pfeifer, 2023-04-25 This book offers an international account of the use of linguistic landscapes to promote multilingual education, from primary school to the university,

and in teacher education programs. It brings linguistic landscapes to the forefront of multilingual education in school settings and teacher education, expanding the disciplinary domains through which they have been studied. Drawing on multidisciplinary and placing linguistic landscapes in the field of language (teacher) education, this book presents empirical studies developed in eleven countries: Australia, France, Germany, Israel, Japan, Mozambique, The Netherlands, Portugal, Russia, Spain, and The United States. The chapters illustrate how multilingual pedagogies can be enhanced using linguistic landscapes in mainstream education and are written by partners of the Erasmus Plus project LoCALL "LOcal Linguistic Landscapes for global language education in the school context".

**teaching students how to interview someone: How to Teach Students Who Don't Look Like You** Bonnie M. Davis, 2006 Working with students from diverse backgrounds is one of the greatest challenges teachers face. In addition, teachers and administrators face additional pressure to close the achievement gap between white students and their racial and ethnically diverse counterparts. A former teacher, Bonnie Davis has particular insight into this issue as a white woman with a black son who has successfully taught students of diverse backgrounds. Drawing on the educational literature on the subject, Bonnie has created an interactive workbook for teachers that will help them understand their students and find new and better ways of teaching to them.

**teaching students how to interview someone: Teaching Drama in the Classroom** Joanne Kilgour Dowdy, Sarah Kaplan, 2011-11-02 This book includes strategies for integrating drama in the classroom through the use of creating characters, giving meaning to activities through answering the questions: who, what, when, where, and why about any person and situation under discussion (5 W's), using storyboards, incorporating music, writing radio scripts, and using literature and movies as prompts for improvised enactments. Students will learn how to create characters and apply those creations to different content-area activities, situations, and subject matter. This useful resource describes more than thirty-five scenarios of teachers and students in early elementary grades through graduate school working together to craft drama events that draw out participants' creative energies, interpretations of curricular topics, and investigations of social, political, and personal concerns. In all of these lesson plans, students collectively explore topics, concepts, themes, or tensions that surface as they navigate their way through the conditions and experiences that unfold in a scene, skit, improvisation, or in interrelated episodes. Drama techniques include role play, scripting, dialogue, audience participation, improvisation, and the strategic use of interaction, space, movement, and gesture.

**teaching students how to interview someone: Understanding Everyday Australian - Two Teacher's Book**, 2000

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**teaching students how to interview someone: Because Teaching Matters** Marleen C. Pugach, 2009-01-06 Real challenges. Real choices. And very real consequences. That's what today's classrooms are about. That's why Marleen Pugach's Because Teaching Matter: An Introduction to the Profession 2e is all about depicting today's classrooms as they truly are, while at the same time highlighting the enormous impact teachers have on students' lives. Organized around five professional commitments - from learning from multiple sources of knowledge, using the curriculum responsibly, and embracing diversity, to meeting the needs of individual students and contributing actively to the profession - Because Teaching Matter: An Introduction to the Profession 2e tells the true story of today's complex classrooms. But there's more. It also drives home that though the decision to teach is a serious one, it is one that can be extremely rewarding. Current research; practical discussions; and realistic cases capture the breadth and depth of the modern teaching experience, while a warm, engaging writing style make the text a pleasure to read. Ideal for Foundations of Education and Introduction to Teaching courses designed to provide preservice teachers with an overview of the profession.

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