



: UNIT STRUCTURE :

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12.0 OVERVIEW

This unit targets at preparing learners to apply for jobs and face interviews. The unit will guide them about ways to emphasize their accomplishments and contributions to prove value added worth to the employers. First, the learners will learn about what actually the interviews are. Then, the focus will be on preparing for interviews. They will examine the different stages of interview: the opening, the exchange of information, the closing, and the follow up. Finally, the learners will look at the ways to present themselves professionally through dress code and behaviour.

12.1 OBJECTIVES & OUTCOMES

The main objective of this unit is to furnish the learners with knowledge and techniques to effectively tackle the interview process, and leave a positive impression with their prospective employer by boosting their strength, experience and suitability for the job in question.

By the end of this unit, the learners will be able to:

- Practice interview skills either as a viewer, an employer, or a candidate.
- Understand interview questions according to job requirement.
- Use mock situations to develop attention on interviewing techniques to get ready for coming interviews.

12.2 INTRODUCTION

“Find a job you like and you add five days to every week.”

H. Jackson Brown, Jr.

Interviews are a reality of present working life and the skills needed to do well at an interview will be used by us all many times throughout our lives. Most jobs are filled using these one-to-one meetings between the employer and the best applicants, but interviews are needed in a variety of other situations too. Whether applying for a job, a promotion, a training programme, a college course, or even a bank loan, we all need to know exactly what is involved in the process of interviews, and about how to impress people at first meeting and in a short space of time. With part-time and temporary work increasing, we will all be attending interviews more commonly from now on and the sort of interviews we have will be varied.

In recent years, thousands of fresh graduates get frustrated searching for a job. Many graduates carrying impressive mark sheets are not able to get through the interviews because of the lack of preparedness. Some graduates think that appearing for an interview doesn't need any preparation and underestimate its significance, and as a result they fail to make an impression on the panel.

An interview is a conversation with a purpose – for an employer to assess the candidate and for a job seeker to convince the employers. The interview enables the employer to learn about the candidate, his/her personality, social skills and general abilities, potential and whether he/she will fit in the organization. The interview enables candidate to learn more about the organization, the position, and the people working within it. Before going to an interview, candidates need to prepare thoroughly. One can succeed in interview only if he/she is prepared.

12.3 INTERVIEW SKILLS

12.3.1 What is an Interview?

The dictionary defines an interview as a face-to-face meeting for the purposes of an appointment. In additional words, it is a discussion between two or more people for one reason or another. Organisations, companies and institutions use this method of meeting and discussion to help them select the best candidates to hire.

The employers spend a pretty good time and money trying to ensure that they choose the right person for each job. In this context, the right person means the one who will contribute most to the good of the organisation and who will pay back the time and money invested in them as an employee by

being with the company for a long period of time with good performance.

The Résumé/CV and/or the application letter submitted before the interview contain relevant facts and information about the candidate's education, experience and other accomplishments. The interviewer may seek to verify these during the interview. They want accurate examples of how and when the applicant has utilized the skills mentioned in his/her résumé. The interview enables applicant to learn more about the organization, the post and the people working within the organization. Before going to an interview, one must be highly prepared.

12.3.2 Structure of the Interview

Now, here is the structure of the interview and methods to respond to them. An interview usually follows three stages:

- Opening
- Information Exchange
- The Closing

Stage One- Opening: Generally, interviewers use the opening of the interview to set the candidate at ease with flexible questions. The questions may not be applicable to the post. Interviewers make primary evaluation based on candidate's arrival, character, manner, tone of voice, etc. The first five minutes can set the stage for the rest of the interview.

Stage Two- Information Exchange: Interviewers try to find out more about the candidate's abilities, characteristics, and interests for the position, how he/she fits in with others in the organization etc. Keep in mind that they are looking the most appropriate applicant for the post. The most appropriate applicant is not necessarily the best qualified academically. Academic accomplishment is only one measure, but others also include work experience, social skills, capability, and zest.

Stage Three- The Closing: At this stage, it is important for the candidate to leave a final positive impression. It is just as significant as the primary impression and includes non-verbal and verbal messages.

12.3.3 Types of Interview

There are several types of interview, which one should be aware of:

One-to-one: It is considered to be the easiest to deal with.

- It is considered easier to shape bond with the interviewer.
- It could be one of a series of interviews as different panel members take turns to evaluate the candidate.
- It could be pretty precise and focused as the interviewer could be directly involved in the candidate's future work.

Panel: It is considered to be more challenging than one-to-one interview.

- It could have facing between three to six interviewers.
- It is popular with large organisations.

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Group: It consists of certain candidates answering questions either individually or as a part of the group.

- The candidates could be given a topic to discuss as a group.
- The candidates could be asked to make a presentation either as a group or individually.

Competency Based:

- To a greater extent, it is used by organisations which look at essential abilities and aspects such as communication, problem solving and team work.
- Here, questions based on providing examples of how the candidates possess these competencies.
- It could have accurate and continuous questioning, so one needs to be prepared for a challenging one.

Assessment Method:

- It has a multi-disciplinary approach of evaluating the candidates.
- It could have up to two days of profound interviewing, examining and activities.

Telephonic & Online Video Calling:

Due to the organization's geographic location, travel costs, and diverse schedules, a telephonic interview and video interview may often be candidate's primary contact with a prospective employer. Therefore, here are telephonic interview tips.

- The idea behind a telephonic interview is to gain an invitation for a personal interview, and to gain more information for future steps in the process.
- Have a pad, pen, and a copy of résumé near the phone. Use a phone in a quiet area. Avoid any background noise. Also avoid using a cordless phone, because sometimes they don't transmit well.

As appointment becomes worldwide and more employees work remotely, video interviews have become common. It saves transportation costs, and gets the interview process started much faster than in-person interviews.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS 1

You will be the interviewer. You have very little time to interview the candidates and find out if they are fit for the position. You need to have an exceptional understanding of the position and make questions to ensure you collect necessary information about the candidates efficiently. Ask as many questions as you can. Avoid asking yes/no questions. To get prepared for the interview, you need to predict the questions as well as the answers. Look at the job advertisement and try to predict what the questions will be and which answers should be expected. Also keep in mind the three stages of the interview- The opening, the information exchange and the closing. To get prepared here are some questions:

1. **What qualifications and certifications should the candidate have?**
2. **What characteristics should the candidate have to fit the company culture ?**
3. **What characteristics would a good candidate have?**
4. **What previous experience should the candidate have had?**

Design questions that will help you decide if the candidate has the experience, capabilities and competence needed.

Pre-Interview:	In the 1st Column	In the 2nd Column	in the 3rd Column	
	List the chief knowledge, capability and competence needed for the post	Note down possible questions	Note down the words on/about answers expected	
Post-Interview:	Rate each question and comment.			
Experience, capabilities or competence needed	Questions or evaluation method	Expected Answer (main words)	Rating and comments	Example Given
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excellent • Satisfactory • Unsatisfactory Comments:	
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excellent • Satisfactory • Unsatisfactory Comments:	

12.3.4 Being Successful in Interview

The interview is an only opportunity for the candidate to present his/her potential to the employer. There is very limited time for them to get to know about him/her, understand what he/she can do, and be convinced that he/she is the most appropriate candidate. The candidate has to understand the position and then make sure his/her profile agrees to the needs. After gathering solid understanding of the position, be well prepared to answer the questions the interviewers are supposed to ask.

Three Golden Rules:

The most productive way to prepare for the interview is to keep in mind the ‘Three Golden Rules’:

- Know the organization

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- Know yourself
- Know your job

Know the Organization:

In internet era, there is no reason for the candidate not to collect information about the organization. The candidate must try researching as much as he/she can about the organization, such as their web site and annual reports. The candidate should read about their founders and organization hierarchy. Candidates should endeavour to understand why the organization is growing and its role. When there is a new post, organizations generally search for someone to fill very particular role in the company. Relevant press clippings should be read. The candidates must research the company's competitors and their products.

Know Yourself:

One's personal characteristics are very important. How do you work under pressure? What strategies do you use? What are your strengths? What type of management style do you prefer working with? What keeps you motivated? How do you know when you have been successful? How did you come to choose your course of study? Knowing one's self will help assess if he/she is fit for the job.

Know the Job:

Candidates must fully understand the job description of an announced post/vacancy. Details such as following must be kept in mind:

- Hierarchy
- Work environment
- Skills required
- Performance expectations
- Team structure
- Accountability level
- Management style

Candidate may even talk to someone working in a similar job. This knowledge will help him/her highlight the skills matching with the position.

12.3.5 Pre-Interview

"Before everything else, getting ready is the secret of success."

Henry Ford

One needs to keep a printout of application form/CV with him/her in a folder, a pen and paper, and the interview contact number. Make sure to arrive in plenty of time, but not too early. About 15-20 minutes is perfect as this gives time to freshen up, to get calm, perhaps with deep breathing exercises and to take the opportunity to get a 'feel' of the place.

Be amiable to the receptionist. When waiting for interview, mark what is occurring around. Turn off the mobile phone. Get a feel of the ambience of

the organization. An interview is not just about the company finding out about the candidate, but it is a two-way process as he/she should also be finding out about what it would be like to work there.

Dress Code:

Although it is said ‘do not judge the book by its cover’, the first impression someone has of the candidate will often be decided by the way he/she looks. Dress code is very significant. In advance, the candidate should prepare what he/she is going to wear. What is to be worn does not have to be new, but it does have to be clean and neat. Dress smartly in an outfit which is convenient to wear and fits. It is likely preferable for men to wear a suit of a dark, plain colour and wear a tie. Women can wear a skirt or smart trousers with a matching jacket. Shoes should be comfortable and clean. Hair should be neat, and remember to keep any jewellery to a minimum. The visual appearance is very significant and right impression should be made. Sometimes, looking good also boosts confidence.

Practice Interviews:

Note down a list of possible questions that could be asked, then have a friend act as an interviewer and direct them to you in a practice interview situation. Don’t stop until you feel comfortable answering each question. Practicing in advance will make you feel more comfortable and relaxed during the interview.

Arrival:

Try to arrive at the interview place a little early. This gives time to determine where to go, and will give a few minutes to collect thoughts. Don’t arrive late. Nothing destroys a chance at impressing an employer more than arriving late. If one learns at the last minute that he/she is going to be arriving late at the interview, he/she should call and let the interviewer know. Interviewers understand that things can come up unexpectedly.

12.3.6 During the Interview

Opening Introduction with an Impact: Self introduction is an essential part of an interview. The employer may have seen the candidate’s résumé and a cover letter, but that may not reflect the aspects of communication skills. Introduction speech reflects confidence, communication skills, and provides an opportunity to create a favourable first impression.

First Impressions: First impressions take just thirty seconds. Building bond, direct and continuous eye contact, a gentle handshake, a warm smile, good posture, and introducing yourself in a confident way are important factors. A well-groomed, professional appearance is very significant. Greet the interviewer with a firm handshake, whether it is a woman or a man. Always have an eye contact while shaking hands.

Smile: A smile denotes confidence in a candidate. Try to smile often. Also, don’t be afraid to use some hand animation while answering questions. This suggests enthusiasm in a candidate.

COMPULSORY
ENGLISH

Body Language: Use good posture, and look the interviewer right in the eye. Sit up straight.

Never slouch.

Speak Clearly: Don't mumble. It shows a lack of confidence. Speak with assurance. This indicates confidence.

Previous Employers: Never, ever say anything negative about the present or previous employers. No matter how much disliked is someone, find a way to give your experiences a positive spin.

Be Truthful: The candidate shouldn't lie when asked about something he/she hasn't done. The next question will be "tell us about it." The candidate should admit that he/she doesn't know the answer.

12.3.7 Post-Interview

Back in Touch: Candidate must ask the interviewers when he/she is expected to get back to them on their decision.

Following Up: Once the candidate is done with the interview, within two working days, he/she should write a "thank you letter" to each person who interviewed him/her. Basically, each letter can follow the same format. Make sure that there aren't any typing and spelling mistakes in the thank you letter. Do show appreciation for the interviewer's interest. Don't ever fail to send a thank you letter, even if you are sure that the job is not for you.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS 2

Instructions:

You will walk up to your teacher/trainer/experienced person in a professional manner and shake his/her hand. For demo, search internet to get information or ask an experienced person.

Aim:

Aim of this activity is to learn the importance of good posture and how your posture and handshake can give a lasting impression.

ACTIVITY- IDENTIFY YOUR THREE UNIQUE STRENGTHS

Instructions:

Identify 3 unique strengths which you can apply at your job.

STRENGTH 1

STRENGTH 2

STRENGTH 3

Note: You should also know your weaknesses. If asked about the weaknesses, admit it without any hesitation, but ensure that you are trying to overcome it.

ACTIVITY- INTRODUCTION SPEECH

Introduction:

You will prepare a 2 minutes introduction speech and present it before the trainer/ teacher/experienced person.

Objectives:

By the end of the activity, you will have the ability to convey your knowledge, experience, and skills in a precise way mandatory for a successful interview.

12.3.8 Interview Checklist:**DO's:**

- Keep in mind that first arrival counts – how you dress and behave.
- Have a decent smile, maintain an eye contact and acknowledge all interviewers.
- Shake hands in a firm but gentle way, not crushingly strong.
- Wait to be asked to sit down.
- Make sure you sit correctly and comfortably before starting.
- Show interest.
- Answer only the questions asked.
- Be positive at all times.

DON'Ts:

- Be late.
- Be nervous or look at your watch.
- Argue.
- Put anything on the interviewer's desk.
- Say anything negative.
- Be indifferent
- Be aggressive or behave in a superior way.
- Show too much interest in money and holidays.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS 3**(1) Tell me/us about yourself.**

This is the most often asked question in interviews. Tell your academic record, your skills, qualifications, certifications etc. Talk about things you have done, and jobs you have held that relate to the position you have applied for. Also mention some things which are not mentioned in your Résumé/CV.

(2) What do you have to offer us?

Answer in terms of the skills and personal qualities you have matching to the job. You may refer to your academic qualification, relevant sections of university courses, experience in the workplace, leisure activities, or personal activities.

(3) What has promoted you to apply for this position?

Explain why you are interested in the organization. If you have had a long-term interest in them, say so. If location is important, you could mention this after talking about your interest in the organization. Fo-

cus on the qualities you will bring to them. You could mention that you see the position as offering challenge, a change to learn new things from the position. But be specific. Say which skills and abilities and what new things you are likely to be able to apply immediately.

(4) What do you want from us?

This is a right time to talk about training or promotion chances and give idea of long-term career plans. There may be aspects of the firm's work that really interest you, and you may wish to move into that area later on. The interviewer is probably trying to assess your goals.

(5) What attracts you about this position?

The interviewer knows there are number of factors which draw to this position. There is a right way and a wrong way to answer this question. The wrong way is to see matters entirely from your own point of view, and needs. The right way is to make sure that you identify the needs of the position, and place importance on how to meet the needs of the organization.

(6) What are your long term plans?

If you are flexible about your long-term plans, you must give a general picture of what interests you now, and how you see that growing. You should not commit yourself to a long term period with an employer if you do not honestly feel that you can do so. Avoid answering 'I don't know' by shrugging your shoulders, since the interviewer is usually trying to evaluate how interested and motivated you are.

(7) How long do you expect to stay with us?

Do not commit yourself to a specific time unless you are very clear. Mention that you would be interested in experiencing other opportunities within the organization as your abilities and interests change. After sharing your thoughts, you can always turn this question back to the employer and ask how long they would expect you to stay with them.

(8) Why should we appoint you?

Answer in terms of the qualifications, skills, and interests that you have which are relevant to the position: summarize your appropriateness. Where a job description is available before the interview, make sure you have studied it properly as part of your preparation for the interview. Your reply should be based on the required skills outlined in the job description.

Do not compare yourself with other applicants even if you know some of them. If you are invited by the interviewers to compare yourself with other applicants, politely state that you are not in a position to judge others, and leave that side of the interviewing to them.

12.3.9 Some Important Job Websites

- www.naukri.com

- www.linkedin.com
- www.indeed.com
- www.careerbuilder.com
- www.dice.com
- www.idealists.com
- www.monster.com
- www.winentrance.com
- www.jobsahead.com
- www.digitalbhoomi.com
- www.cybermediadice.com
- www.careerbuilder.com
- www.hotjobs.yahoo.com
- www.timesjob.com

12.4 LET US SUM UP

Following all the above rules will enable learners to approach their interviews with confidence. Always understand the objective and the employer's perspective. Don't assume and always read rules and regulations, as well as instructions very carefully.

12.5 KEY WORDS

Competency: The ability to do something successfully or efficiently.

Accountability: The fact or condition of being responsible.

Verbal: Relating to or in the form of words.

Non-verbal: Not involving words or speech.

Body language: The conscious and unconscious movements postures by which attitude and feelings are communicated.

Hierarchy: A system in which members of an organization or society are ranked according to relative status or authority.

Terminology: The body of terms used with a particular technical application in a subject of study, theory, profession, etc.

Curriculum Vitae (CV): A brief account of a person's education, qualifications, and previous occupations, typically sent with a job application.

12.6 BOOKS SUGGESTED

Dictionary for Reference

1. *Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary of Current English* by A.S. Hornby
3rd Edition (Revised and Updated)

Suggested Reading

- 5.0 Eric Kramer: *101 Successful Interviewing Strategies*
- 6.0 Marilyn Pincus: *Interview Strategies that Lead to Job Offers*

12.7 REFERENCES

Corfield, Rebecca. *Successful Interview Skills*. Fifth Edition. Kogan Page. 2009.

Zulfiqar, Atiya. "Training Manual on Interview Skills".

Setch, Fiona. *The Art of Interview Skills*. First Edition. E-book. 2014.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS 4

ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS.

1. What is an interview? What are the types of interview?
2. What are the steps in order to get successful in an interview?
3. What is the structure of an interview?

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS 5

WRITE SHORT-NOTES.

1. Interview Checklist
2. Post-Interview follow-up
3. Pre-interview preparations

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS 6

CHOOSE APPROPRIATE OPTION FROM GIVEN BELOW.

- (1) _____ is one of the stages of an interview.
A. Information passing B. Information exchange
C. Detailing D. None of these
- (2) _____ is not a type of interview.
A. Panel B. Group
C. Unparallel D. One-to-one
- (3) _____ type of interview there could be between three to six interviewers.
A. Panel B. Group
C. Unparallel D. One-to-one
- (4) In an interview, when you don't know an answer, you should.....
A. Admit you don't know the answer
B. Keep guessing
C. Remain quiet
D. Bluff
- (5) If interviewer asks, "What motivates you to succeed?" What would be an ideal reply?
A. A high professional standard of excellence
B. I don't want to disappoint my team
C. Bonuses
D. None of these

ANSWERS

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS 6

1-B 2- C 3-A 4-A 5-A