

Interview Skills Workshop

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Age group

14 – 16

16 – 18

Curriculum focus

Careers, Interpersonal, Business Studies

Learning objectives

Students will:

- learn why large corporations look for common skills and qualities across all the roles they need to fill
- reflect on and record their ability to demonstrate qualities of 'ability to build relationships', 'drive for excellence' and 'passion for knowledge and learning'
- discuss some helpful and unhelpful interview behaviors
- practice their interview behaviors and ability to describe useful skills and qualities in role-played and observed mock interviews
- reflect on their performance and consider how they could improve.

Time needed

60 - 90 mins

About this activity

- This activity uses both role-played and observed mock interviews to help students explore how large organizations recruit, behave well at interview, and practice explaining how they can demonstrate important skills and qualities.

- Students first discuss three qualities that BP looks for: their ability to demonstrate qualities of 'ability to build relationships', 'drive for excellence' and 'passion for knowledge and learning'.
- They discuss some key aspects of interview behavior and the importance of making a good impression.
- Students spend a few minutes gathering notes for how they can demonstrate the three qualities using examples from their lives.
- In pairs, students then use a simple script and form to role-play an interview to discuss these qualities, observing each other and rating each other's performance.
- Students then watch one or more student volunteers as they are interviewed by a BP volunteer, pausing to discuss what happens and comment on the interviewer's technique and how the volunteers respond with their body language, behavior and answers.
- Students share what they learned from their mock interviews and how their perception of their performance compares with the feedback they received. They share ideas for how to improve their interview performance and can optionally discover more about BP's selection processes.

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What you will need

- ▣ Student workbooks (one set per student)
- ▣ Slide presentation on your laptop
- ▣ Projector or interactive whiteboard
- ▣ Paper and pens

Timings and structure

Total time: 60 - 90 mins

Activity	Time (mins)
Introduction and Q&A	5
Activity 1: Why have interviews?	5 - 10
Activity 2: What is BP looking for?	15 - 20
Activity 3: First impressions	10 - 15
Activity 4: Practise an interview	10 - 20
Activity 5: Observe an interview	10 - 15
Round up	5

Prior knowledge and preparation

- ▣ Students do not need to prepare their interview responses in advance for this version of the Interview Skills activity.
- ▣ Students will practice a role-played mock interview in pairs, and the room and layout will need to be suitable for this.
- ▣ Rehearse or agree with your BP colleague a few interview questions you will use in your 'good v bad' role-play of interview behaviors in activity 3.



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Deliver the activities

Introduce yourself and the topic of interview skills.

1. Introduce yourselves, what you do at BP. If you wish, answer students' questions about your job.
2. Explain why you're here today – to help students learn about the interview process and practice their interview skills.
3. Use slide 2 to review what will happen during the session.

Activity 1: Why have interviews? (5 -10 mins)

Discuss why BP uses the idea of competencies to recruit the best people for different roles.

1. Show slide 3 and outline how BP is interested in recruits that have a passion for any of these disciplines. You might want to link back to the relevant subjects that students are studying (this will link to when you mention the importance of qualifications, in the round-up).
2. Go through slides 4 – 5, which introduce the idea of shared characteristics and why they are important for BP and other large organizations, and how interviews are used to separate and identify the best candidates.
3. Emphasize (perhaps using examples from your own experience) the importance of shared characteristics and how these have been developed after being identified by BP as important to the business.
4. At the same time, recognize the importance of specific skills and experience for each role, and make the point that BP isn't recruiting identical people: employees are varied but can demonstrate these shared characteristics.

Activity 2: What is BP looking for? (15 - 20 mins)

Help students understand and identify their ability to demonstrate three key BP competencies vital for a successful application.

1. Show slide 6 and introduce each element on the diagram. Clarify that the bottom left rectangle, 'technical excellence' is where what an applicant must demonstrate at interview will differ for every position, but the other three rectangles in green show the areas where every applicant must demonstrate their qualities if they are to be successful. (We are not going to look at technical excellence in this session.)
2. Discuss each point in more detail. Ask students for their ideas on what each one might mean, and to share examples of how they might successfully demonstrate each one. They should choose one competency and brainstorm potential interview questions relating to it (e.g. Give an example of a situation in which you've related well to others). You could also add examples from your own interview history (either as interviewee or interviewer). You could list these questions on a flip chart or white board at the front.
3. Show slide 7 and ask students to spend time making notes on the examples they will use to demonstrate each quality. They should use the STAR tool on slide 8 to help them to frame their answers.

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Activity 3: First impressions (10 - 15 mins)

Students discuss the importance of using the right body language and behavior to make a good first impression.

1. Show slide 9 and briefly discuss the meaning of each point. Split students into groups of four and get them to discuss one of the four elements and identify some good and bad approaches. Share ideas as a whole group.
2. With your BP colleague, briefly demonstrate to the class some good and bad interview behavior, building on students' ideas and using the examples in the table below. Set up two chairs at the front. The 'interviewer' should be seated ready and the 'interviewee' should 'come in' each time.

Bad example	Good example
Scruffy or casual appearance	Neat and formal appearance
Little or no eye contact – look clearly at the floor or elsewhere but not at the interviewer	Good eye contact, looking clearly at the interviewer most of the time, unless thinking before a response
Unclear, mumbling voice, arrogance, sarcasm, rudeness	A clear voice, and a tone that is seeking to impress, show interest and respect
Poor body language: weak handshake (or too strong), sloppy posture, fidgeting, defensiveness, slouching, aggressive pointing etc.	Good body language: poised, relaxed, using gestures to help get the point across and show interest and friendliness

Activity 4: Practice an interview (10 - 20 mins)

Students role-play a mock interview to practise demonstrating each quality, and good body language and behavior.

1. Show slide 10 and split students into groups of three – an 'interviewer', an 'interviewee' and an 'observer'. Make sure that each group member has the sheet he or she needs and go through these sheets if necessary. Run through the 1 – 5 scale on the score card.
2. When the interviews have started, circulate between groups to observe and ask questions (you may use this time to identify suitable volunteers for the next activity). Interviewers should give their interviewees about 30 seconds to answer each question using their notes to help them.
3. After four minutes at most, ask groups to swap roles and repeat twice so that each student tries each of the roles.
4. Give pairs a couple of minutes at the end of each interview to point out each other's ratings and good/weak points (remind them to be constructive).

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Activity 5: Observe an interview (10 – 15 mins)

Students reinforce their understanding of strong responses, positive body language and good behavior by observing interviews between a BP volunteer and selected students.

1. Congratulate the class and invite a few students to share what they learned and what it felt like. Explain that you're going to use a few student volunteers to demonstrate an interview, while the class observes.
2. Show slide 11. Split the class into five groups and assign one of the five bullet points to each group.
3. Invite a student volunteer to sit at the front, bringing their notes with them. Using your own questions (e.g. not the same script that students used), briefly interview the volunteer about one or more of the same qualities. Student groups provide constructive feedback on the volunteer's performance. Where something negative is pointed out, invite that student to come up and demonstrate a better approach or performance. Make this constructive and fun!
4. Repeat as time allows or until a student can complete their interview without any negative observations. Congratulate and thank all the volunteers.

Round up (5 mins)

1. Show slide 12 and briefly invite students' ideas.
2. Optionally, show slide 13. Link qualifications to the fourth rectangle, 'technical excellence'. Briefly review the other skills students are likely to need to demonstrate and remind students how a large company like BP uses a structured approach to identify the right candidates for each role.
3. You could also talk about the career opportunities BP offers:
 - Graduates - those intending to go to a University to study a degree, Masters or PhD can access a wide range of options within BP, depending on subject
 - Apprenticeships – for those interested in Science and Technology who want a hands-on approach to problem-solving but are not expecting to go to university
 - Internships – BP offers a range of award-winning internships for university graduates, enabling them to explore career options and develop skills needed for a successful career
4. Thank students for listening and for their effort.
5. Wish students well for the future and remind them to put their learning into practice – their career depends on it!