

## INTERVIEW SKILL BUILDING ACTIVITIES

### Activity One: Identifying Strengths

In this activity, students explore what they are good at, inside and outside of the workplace. Skills and strengths in all areas of life are identified. This activity is especially useful with students who have little work experience, have been out of the workforce for a while, and with students who need to be approach job searching with more confidence.

Pass out copies of the activity 1 list to your students. Ask them to read it over or read it to them.

Ask if there is anything that people are good at that is not on this list. Write down any additions on the chalkboard. Ask people to copy the additions onto their copies of the list.

Ask the students to circle the statements of the list that apply to themselves. They can circle as many as they want.

Break the class up into pairs. Have them read what they have circled to each other.

While the students are still in pairs ask them to pick one statement. Ask them to explain to each other why they are good at that.

- Ask the whole group what they discussed in the small group.
- Ask each person to write about the statements. They can pick one or two, or even more to write about.
- Write these questions on the chalkboard to guide people: Why are you good at this?  
What makes you better than other people at this?  
Give an example of you being good at this.

After students are finished writing, they can read to each other in groups, pairs, or with the entire class.'

**Part 2** Talk about the activity 1 list.. Tell them that these are traits of good workers. They are also the traits of good parents, good friends, good sisters and brothers, etc.

Ask if anyone wants to add anything to this list of what makes a good worker. Write additions on the chalkboard. Have students add the additions to their lists.

Have students circle statements on the list that are true for themselves. They can circle as many as they want.

Break up into pairs and read the lists to each other.



Bring the group together and ask for volunteers to read their lists. Ask questions along the way such as "What makes you good at that?" "Why did you circle that one?" Etc.

Now write a little bit about these. Here are a few ideas:

- Fill in the blanks in statements like this: I said that I am \_\_\_\_\_, because \_\_\_\_\_.
- Ask students to write an example of something they once did that relates to one of the statements they circled.
- Give each student several index cards. Ask them to write some of the statements that are true for them on the cards. Write one statement on each card. On the back of the card write why this statement is true.
- Write a longer piece describing strengths and weaknesses.

Now make the connection to interviewing. The statements the students circled on the cards are the answers to the questions:

- What are your strengths?
- Why should I hire you?
- What are you good at?
- What will make you a good employee?

Practice asking students those questions. Have them use the cards to support their answers.

For example:

"Why should I hire you?"

"Because I am organized; I like to be busy; I am a Self starter; I finish what I start; I am honest and loyal; and I like to be the best at what I do."

## INTERVIEW SKILL BUILDING ACTIVITY 1

I am a good friend	I am a good baby sitter
I am a good parent	I am a good boyfriend
I am a good son	I am a good girlfriend
I am a good daughter	I am a good husband
I am a good sister	I am a good wife
I am a good brother	I am good at making friends
I am a good shopper	I am good at making friends
I am good at fixing things	I am good at taking care of other people
I am a good cook	I am good in an emergency situation
I am a good member of my community	I am good when everybody else is out of control
I am a good member of my church or other house of worship	I am good at taking care of sick people

### Activity Two: Interview Questions and Answers:

In this activity, students start to think about the questions they are likely to hear at interviews. They get a chance to share their experiences and start to talk about what makes for good answers at an interview.

- Ask the class to brainstorm questions that they have been asked at interviews. Come up with a big list of questions.
- Review this [list](#) with the class.
- Talk about whether their list matches this one or is different.
- Add any questions you like to the list below
- Discuss which questions are hard and which ones are easy
- Discuss good answers and bad answers in general and for specific questions.

### Activity Three: Preparing Good Answers

In this activity, students dig into interview questions and answers. They get to look at examples of good and bad answers, analyze those examples, and come up with their own examples of answers to common interview questions.

Here's a Tip: In every answer you should find a way to tell the interviewer something good about you

Part One:

Here are some examples of good and bad answers. The point of this activity is to discuss the examples. "Why is this an effective answer?" and "Why is this an ineffective answer?" are the questions to drive your lesson. Everyone doesn't always have to agree. There are many different opinions about what makes for a good impression at an interview. By the way, some of the answers are a little exaggerated to make a point.

You could use the list below in several ways:

1. You could discuss the entire list as a whole group. Why are some answers better than others?
2. Ask the group to read over the list. Ask which examples the class wants to discuss. You could only discuss a few.
3. Break up into pairs or small groups. Have each pair or group discuss a few examples and report back to the whole group.
4. Ask the group to read over the questions and answers then ask them to write about the examples. What makes an effective answer and what makes an ineffective answer.

Question	Example of a Good Answer	Example of a Bad Answer
1. Tell us about yourself	"To the point, bringing in your	"Too long, talking too much about

	strengths and your work history."	your personal life and not at all about anything related to this job."
2. Why do you want this job?	"I think it will challenge me. I enjoy this kind of work. I think I would be good at this because ..."	"I think I will make more money."
3. Why should we hire you?	"I will do a good job for you. I have the experience. I work really hard. I like a challenge and I like to learn new things"	"I need this job"
4. Why do you want to work for this company?	"I think you are a good company. You do good work and I hear it's a nice place to work."	"You are hiring people."
5. What experience do you have that relates to this job?	"I have done a lot of phone work at my last three jobs. I have worked with computers a lot at my current job. I also do data entry and filing."	"I don't come in late. I don't get into fights. I don't steal. I don't come to work drunk or high. That's about it"
7. What are your weaknesses?	"I work too hard sometimes and get too tired I expect that others will always do as good a job as I will"	"I am hard to get along with. Sometimes I don't want to work hard, especially if I was out late the night before."
8. Tell about a successful experience you had on a job.	"I reorganized the filing system to make it more efficient."	"I figured out how to get the time clock to not notice if I was late."
9. Why did you	"I needed a new	"I couldn't get

leave your last job?	challenge"	along with them"
10. Why do you want to leave your current job?	"I have learned a lot there, and it is time to move on"	"I think they are going to fire me soon"
11. Tell about a problem you had at a job and what you did about it.	"I had a disagreement with my boss and we sat down, talked about it and worked it out."	"I had a disagreement with my boss and I hit him."
12. Tell about a mistake you made at work and what would do differently?	"I used to get angry at other people if they weren't doing their best and once I hurt someone's feelings by saying something. I would be more diplomatic and understanding now."	"I stole money once. If I had it to do again I wouldn't get caught."
13. What is your career plan?	"I would like to be working for this company at a management level in five years."	"I have no plan"
14. Where do you see yourself in five years?	"I would like to be sitting on the other side of this table, having moved up in this company"	"I don't know"
15. Do you have any questions for us?	"Is there much opportunity for growth and training in this job? Is there much evening or weekend work in this job? I have no questions right now, but can I let you know later if I think of any?"	"Do you think you are going to hire me?"

## Interviewing Activity 2

In your small group, come up with their own good and bad examples for the questions below. Make sure to include any addition questions that the class came up with.

Question	Example of a Good Answer	Example of a Bad Answer
1. Tell us about yourself		
2. Why do you want this job?		
3. Why should we hire you?		
4. Why do you want to work for this company?		
5. What experience do you have that relates to this job?		
6. What are your strengths?		
7. What are your weaknesses?		
8. Tell about a successful experience you had on a job.		

9. Why did you leave your last job?		
10. Why do you want to leave your current job?		
11. Tell about a problem you had at a job and what you did about it.		
12. Tell about a mistake you made at work and what would do differently?		
14. Where do you see yourself in five years?		
15. Do you have any questions for us?		



### **Activity Four: Practicing**

In this activity, students put all of the preparation work into action. They get to practice interviewing, and discuss, analyze and improve along the way.

Here's a Tip: Take your time, if you need to. If a question surprises you, you can say "I need a minute to think about that one." Don't make them wait forever, but it's okay to take a minute to get your thoughts together.

1. Everyone prepares a list a questions. They will ask these questions when they play the role of employer. They don't have to stick to the lists that have been used so far. In fact, it's good to add new ones.
2. Split up into small pairs. One person starts as the interviewer and one as the job seeker. Tell the class what the job is in this practice session or ask them to tell you what it is. Take about fifteen minutes and then let the groups switch. Tell them it's okay if they don't get through all their questions. (If a pair finishes really fast, you might want to work with them. The "job seeker" is probably giving answers that are way too short.)
3. Come back together as a whole group. Discuss what was easy, what was hard, what surprised them, what was good, and what was bad...
  - Ask for volunteers to demonstrate.
  - Ask the class to suggest a scenario. (what is the job here?)
  - Tell the volunteers that they can call "time out" whenever they get stuck or need help
  - Start the practice interview. Whenever one of the volunteers asks for help, encourage suggestions and discussion. If no one ever calls "time out," you can call time out to get discussion going.
  - Discuss the whole interview when it is over.
  - Ask for other volunteers to get more practice and more discussion.