

# English

## Preparing for the Future

Subject Area: English

Grade Levels: 9-12

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Author: Pamela Shimabukuro

### Lesson Overview

Driving Question: How do students prepare for and successfully obtain a post-high school job?

Juniors and seniors in high school must be prepared for the rigors of the competitive job world. Regardless of whether students are entering a four-year university or immediately transitioning into the workplace, they need to be able to navigate the job application, interview and post-interview process. These lessons teach students how to write a resume, prepare for an interview and follow up after an interview.

### Materials Included in this Lesson

- Worksheet on Interview Techniques
- Worksheet on Writing the Resume
- Worksheet on Professional Communication Techniques
- Worksheet on Respectful Interaction in the Workplace
- HD Flip Cam
- Computers

### Other Materials for this Lesson

- Videos of Behavior Based Interview Techniques/Possible Speaker
- Sample Professional Resume
- Sample Professional Emails
- Workplace Conflict Scenarios

## Skills the Student will Learn

Students will learn to:

- Present his/her skills in a professionally formatted resume
- Prepare for a behavior-based interview
- Communicate professionally through email/phone

## Student Deliverables

- Professional Resume
- List of employee skills employers value
- Participate in Professional Interview and Follow Up
- Sample Professional Emails

## Length of Lesson: 1-7 Days

### Activity Day One

1. Discuss student plans for post-graduation. Write all ideas/options on the whiteboard so that students who are undecided understand all of their choices. Then ask students if they feel prepared to apply for and interview for a job.
2. Ask students to list the steps they think they need to follow in order to apply for a job.
3. Students will then look at the list compiled by the North State Building Industry Association and conduct their own research to discover the qualities valued by employers.
4. Take the “Are You Ready Quiz?” on page 6 of the Career Planning Guide.

### Activity Day Two

1. Students will review professional resumes and strong resume verbs in the UC Davis Career Planning Guide. Discuss with the students possible experience they could include such as leadership and volunteer positions, awards and job experiences. Remind students that they will be adding and deleting information as they gain more experience in the work world.
2. Students will highlight strong verbs used in the sample resumes then begin a draft of their own resume while consulting the strong resume verbs list.

### Activity Day Three

1. Students will peer edit resumes, make final corrections and print them. They will also post the resume in their online professional portfolio after they remove all personal information.

## Activity Day Four

1. Now that students have prepared their resume, they must research two potential careers. They must identify the following information: career overview, education, salary and job opportunities.

Job and Career Search Link

[http://www.scc.losrios.edu/Current\\_Students/From\\_Enrollment\\_to\\_Graduation/Counseling/Job\\_and\\_Career\\_Search.htm](http://www.scc.losrios.edu/Current_Students/From_Enrollment_to_Graduation/Counseling/Job_and_Career_Search.htm)

2. Once the research has been completed, students will identify two potential places of employment and do preliminary research on the goals and mission of the company.
3. Students will find all contact and employment information needed to apply for a job at the company.

## Activity Day Five

1. Students learn the rationale behind behavior-based interviewing techniques that many companies currently use.

Summary of Behavior-Based Interview - Based on the belief that past behavior and performance predicts future behavior and performance. You may use work experience, activities, hobbies, volunteer work, school projects, family life - anything really - as examples of your past behavior.

2. Review videos on behavior-based interviews to introduce students to the questioning format and possible responses.
3. Students will review a list of behavior-based interview questions and construct possible answers using the S.T.A.R. (situation, task/problem, action, result) format.
4. See Behavior-Based Interview Worksheet.

Questions:

- a. Describe a work situation when you interacted with people from different cultural, social and economic backgrounds. Were you effective? How?
- b. What strategies would you use in a small group meeting if there were divergent opinions or solutions proposed to solve a problem?
- c. Describe a situation in which you had potential barriers to success in a project. How did you overcome the barriers? Did you succeed?
- d. Recall a difficult work problem you have encountered within the last 12 months. Explain how you identified the critical issues. What solutions did you develop?
- e. Describe a situation when a project you were working on did not meet established deadlines. What caused the delay(s)? What did you do?

- f. What steps do you take to correct your employees' performance or work habit problems?
- g. Describe a situation in which you and another member of a work group had different opinions about a topic. What happened?
- h. Have you ever served on a team that had experienced problems? What happened? How did you solve the problem?

#### Overview of Behavior-Based Interviewing

[http://www.uwec.edu/career/online\\_library/behavioral\\_int.htm](http://www.uwec.edu/career/online_library/behavioral_int.htm)

#### Complete List of Questions

[http://www.performancesolutions.nc.gov/staffingInitiatives/selection/docs/Selection\\_InterviewFormats\\_BehaviorBasedInterviewQuestions.pdf](http://www.performancesolutions.nc.gov/staffingInitiatives/selection/docs/Selection_InterviewFormats_BehaviorBasedInterviewQuestions.pdf)

### Activity Day Six

1. Students will interview one another, or if possible, the teacher will interview each student using behavior-based questions while the remaining students observe. One student should be designated to film the interview for later review.
2. Students will then analyze the film and list strengths and areas for improvement.

### Activity Day Seven

1. The class will discuss formal and informal methods of communication. Who would you communicate with informally and whom do you communicate with in a more formal manner?
2. Students will review sample thank you and follow up letters to prospective employers. Refer to the UC Davis Career Planning Guide.
3. Students will compose their own professional thank you and/or follow up note to the prospective employer.
4. In addition to the email, students will review professional communication to teachers, professors, potential employers and employers. Students will brainstorm a list of situations in which they have had to communicate with the various types of people.
5. Students will then review the email etiquette instructions provided by the links below in order to construct their own professional emails for several of the situations listed in the previous brainstorm.

#### Email Etiquette

Corporations: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/636/01/>

Students: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/694/1/>

## Activity Day Eight

Students will review their “Are You Ready?” Quiz and check off any new points they have fulfilled. Students construct a list of “Next Steps” in preparation for high school graduation and beyond. Students will share their next steps with their peers.

## Student Resources

Behavior Based Interview -

[http://www.uwec.edu/career/online\\_library/behavioral\\_int.htm](http://www.uwec.edu/career/online_library/behavioral_int.htm)

[http://www.performancesolutions.nc.gov/staffingInitiatives/selection/docs/Selection\\_InterviewFormats\\_BehaviorBasedInterviewQuestions.pdf](http://www.performancesolutions.nc.gov/staffingInitiatives/selection/docs/Selection_InterviewFormats_BehaviorBasedInterviewQuestions.pdf)

Workplace Writing - <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/681/01/>

Career Spots - <http://www.kent.edu/career/career-spots.cfm>

## Foundation Academic Standards

Communications 2.5 – Write job applications and resumes, Career Planning and Management, 3.6 – Know important strategies for self-promotion in the hiring process, such as job applications, resume writing, interviewing skills and preparation of a portfolio, Leadership and Teamwork, 9.5 – Understand how to interact with others in ways that demonstrate respect for individual and cultural differences and for the attitudes and feelings of others, 9.3 – Understand how to organize and structure work individually and in teams for effective performance and the attainment of goals

## California Content Standards

Include a bulleted list of CTE Pathway Standards by number with an abbreviated description of the standard: (<http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/st/ss/>)

## Lesson Plan Relevance To Externship

During my Externship at SMUD, the various people I spoke to emphasized the importance of professionalism within the organization. I also learned that they provide classes for their employees that focus on behavior-based interview techniques which many corporations use during the hiring process.

I feel that it’s important that my students are prepared to present themselves professionally during an interview, especially since the job market is so competitive and since many of my students will be entering the workforce upon graduation rather than attending a four-year university.

## Behavior-Based Interview Questions

**What is it?** It's an interview technique based on the belief that past behavior and performance predicts future behavior and performance. You may use work experience, activities, hobbies, volunteer work, school projects, family life—anything really—as examples of your past behavior.

Look through the list of possible Behavior-Based Interview Questions and formulate some potential answers.

- i. Describe a work situation when you interacted with people from different cultural, social and economic backgrounds. Were you effective? How?
- j. What strategies would you use in a small group meeting if there were divergent opinions or solutions proposed to solve a problem?
- k. Describe a situation in which you had potential barriers to success in a project. How did you overcome the barriers? Did you succeed?
- l. Recall a difficult work problem you have encountered within the last 12 months. Explain how you identified the critical issues. What solutions did you develop?
- m. Describe a situation when a project you were working on did not meet established deadlines. What caused the delay(s)? What did you do?
- n. What steps do you take to correct your employees' performance or work habit problems?
- o. Describe a situation in which you and another member of a work group had different opinions about a topic. What happened?
- p. Have you ever served on a team that had experienced problems? What happened? How did you solve the problem?

Your responses should follow the S.T.A.R. (situation, task/problem, action, result) format.

1. Explain the situation.
2. Explain the task/problem.
3. Explain what action you took.
4. Explain the result of your actions.