

Describing your skills at interview

Topic: Employability

Level: SfL Entry 3 / SQA National 4 / CEFR B1

Time: Approx. 1¼ hours

Aims

- To develop learners' awareness of the qualities and skills expected by employers.
- To develop learners' vocabulary to describe personal qualities and skills.
- To give practice of describing learners' own qualities and skills in a job interview.

Introduction

This lesson is based around employability and deals with the personal skills and qualities expected by employers. It provides learners with practice describing their skills and qualities in job interviews.

You may want to teach 'Using a person specification' before this lesson as it will reinforce the content covered here.

You will need:

Flipchart paper and pens

Worksheet 1 (image of employer): 1 copy to display either on paper or via data projector

Worksheet 2 (text with new vocab): 1 copy per learner

Learner dictionaries, 1 per pair

Worksheet 3 (word and definition cards): 1 set per pair, cut up, and one sheet per learner not cut up

Class set of learner dictionaries (optional)

Worksheet 4 (question cards): 1 set per small group, cut up.

Procedure

Warmer – Acrostic vocabulary game (10 mins)

- Write OCCUPATION on the board and elicit the meaning (another word for job).
- Put learners in teams of 3 / 4 and give each team a sheet of flipchart paper and a pen.
- Ask a team scribe to write the word OCCUPATION vertically down the left hand side of the paper. Then ask them to cross out the second C and O.
- Explain they have 3 minutes to think of a job which begins with each letter and write it down, the more unusual the better.
- Invite a volunteer from each team to display their poster.

Describing your skills at interview – Lesson plan

- For each letter, ask the volunteer to give the job title, explaining the meaning if necessary. Award a point to each team with a valid answer, and a bonus point for answers which no other team got.

Differentiation: Group stronger and weaker learners together and give quieter learners the scribe or feedback role to get them more involved.

Task 1 – Pre-reading (10 mins)

- Show the image from **Worksheet 1** and invite the class to give the woman a name.
- Elicit / explain that she is a manager of a large company and wants to recruit somebody to work in her office.
- Ask what kind of person she wants for the job (e.g. *polite, hard-working*).
- Write a few ideas on a mindmap on the board.
- Give pairs 5 minutes to discuss more characteristics, making notes if they want.
- Take an idea from each pair and add to the mindmap.
- Ask pairs to explain any new words to the group as needed.

Differentiation: Group stronger and weaker learners together to support each other. If necessary, stimulate discussion by suggesting the opposite of what the manager wants. E.g. *'Does she want someone who comes to work late? So what does she want?'*

Task 2 – Presentation of new vocabulary (15 mins)

- Hand out **Worksheet 2**.
- Ask learners to read what the manager says individually and see if any of their ideas from the mindmap are the same as what she is looking for.
- As a group, identify similar ideas and tick them on the mindmap, even if worded differently.
- Ask pairs to use the context and discuss the meanings of the words in bold.
- Ask pairs to explain the words to the rest of the group.
- Provide any further explanations and examples as needed.
- Drill the pronunciation of the words, chorally and individually.
- Ask the learners to record any new lexical items in their notebooks.

Differentiation: Put learners who share the same first language together and allow them to discuss the meanings in their own language. Allow weaker pairs to use a dictionary.

Tip: When learners record new words in their notebooks, make sure they don't just translate into their own language. E.g., they could also record the pronunciation, an example sentence, an explanation in English, the word stress etc.

Task 3 – Vocabulary consolidation (15 mins)

- Hand out the word and definition cards from **Worksheet 3** to each pair.
- Ask the pairs to match the words and definitions.
- As pairs finish, give them the non-cut sheet to self-check. They can take this sheet away with them so they have a record.
- Show the learners how to use the sheet to memorise the new words by hiding the word, looking at the definition and seeing if they can remember the word, then give them some time to do this.
- Ask pairs to test each other with one person looking at the master sheet and giving a definition and their partner trying to remember the word.

Differentiation

- Pair stronger learners together and let pairs work through the stages of this activity at their own pace. Support weaker pairs as necessary.
- When pairs test each other, make sure stronger pairs have put away the cards, but allow weaker learners to look at the word cards.
- Ask stronger pairs to test their partner's spelling as well.

Task 4 – Speaking activity – describing own skills and qualities (15 mins)

- Return to the picture of the manager and ask the class how she can find out if someone applying for the job has these skills and qualities in an interview, elicit possible questions.
- Demonstrate how you might do this in an interview (E.g.: *'I am punctual. I come to class every day and I always arrive five minutes early'*).
- Give the class five minutes thinking time to think of personal examples they could use.
- Put the learners into small groups and give each group a set of question cards from **Worksheet 4**.
- Explain that each card is a potential interview question.
- Ask the learners to take it in turns to take a card and read the question for another learner to answer.
- Monitor the groups and make notes of errors.
- Delayed correction: share some of the errors you noticed, orally or written on the board, and ask learners to suggest corrections.

Alternative: Some learners might enjoy doing this activity competitively: One learner asks the same question to all the learners in the group and decides who gave the best answer. Keep a score and at the end of the activity, the learner with the highest score 'got the job'.

Differentiation:

- If doing the competitive alternative, group stronger learners together.
- Alternatively, ask weaker learners to ask all the questions, or rig the activity, giving stronger learners easier questions to ask weaker ones and the other way round.

Cooler – Vocabulary game (10 mins, or as long or as short as needed)

- Split the class into teams.
- The first member of the first team comes to the front of the class and sits with their back to the board.
- Write a word from today's lesson on the board behind them.
- The team needs to describe the word without saying the word.
- If the learner at the front gets the word, their team gets a point.
- Continue with the next learner from the next team and so on.

Extension activities / Homework

- Hand out a range of job adverts, job descriptions and person specifications and ask learners to find and highlight new words from today's lesson. You could ask them to do this for homework, finding their own adverts and sharing what they found in the next lesson. In addition, learners could find vocabulary which hasn't been covered today, to share with the rest of the group in the next lesson.