

1

Unit

Job Interviews

Learning Objectives

- After completing this unit, Ss should know how to deal with an interview, including:
- how to prepare for an interview;
 - the interview procedure;
 - how to answer questions about personal details, education and work experience;
 - how to deal with inappropriate questions by the interviewer.

Business Profile

General Conduct During an Interview

Opening: Establishing a Friendly Atmosphere

- Introduce yourself.
- Talk about weather, traffic, etc.
- Talk about yourself.

During: Exchanging Information

General questions

Be prepared to talk about

- your personal details.
- your education.
- your training courses.
- your work experience.

Position-related questions

You will be able to discuss

- reasons for leaving last job.
- details of the job and the company.
- qualifications and skills that make you fit for the requirements of the job.
- short-term goals and long-term goals.

Closing: Leaving a Lasting Impression

- Ask one or two questions based on your pre-interview research.
- Arrange a call back to get the result.
- Thank the interviewer.
- Say you enjoyed the interview.

Types of Job Interview

A job interview is a process in which a potential employee is evaluated by an employer for prospective employment in a firm. After the interview, the interviewer will determine whether an applicant is suitable for the position.

There may be different interviews during a job search. It's important that the candidates understand the purpose of each. Three very common types of interviews are telephone screening interview, in-person screening interview and selection interview. Other types of interviews are also covered here. No matter which type of interview, the candidates' goal is to present their qualifications to the decision makers (the people who make the decision to hire or not). Not everyone the candidates come into contact with will be a decision maker. However, the candidates should treat each person as though they have the authority to hire them (from the parking attendant, to the secretary, to the CEO).

1. Telephone Screening Interview. This interview saves the employer time by eliminating candidates based on essential criteria such as particular job requirements, education or required skills. Since these interviews will often occur unexpectedly, it's important that the candidates' job search records are organised and kept where they can be reached at a moment's notice. Therefore it is a good idea to have a particular place in your home for your documents. Keep your resume in view and refer to it as needed.

2. In-person Screening Interview. This interview is used to verify the candidate's qualifications for the position and to establish a preliminary impression of the candidate's attitude, interest and professional style. A professional screener from the employer's Human Resources Department usually conducts the interview. At this stage, the goal is to select the most suitable candidates who will meet the decision makers.

3. Selection Interview. Conducted by the decision maker, the purpose of this interview is to probe the candidate's qualifications and to assess the comfort level with which the candidate might establish working relationships. There may be more than one interview at this stage. As the number of candidates is whittled down, a candidate may be invited back to speak with the same person and/or with other managers or members of the work group. The candidate's ability to establish rapport and present yourself as the right person for the position is critical.

Even if there is only one decision maker, the opinions of the others will be sought and will probably have an effect on the outcome. When you're invited to interview with a number of people, it's important that you present yourself effectively to each one of them. Remember, they will be evaluating your skills and ability to fit in. As always, be yourself,

but sell to each person's individual concerns.

4. Work Sample Interview. This interview is done to allow the applicant an opportunity to “show their wares”. It could be a time for a graphic artist to display his/her portfolio. A salesperson may be asked to make a sales presentation. An office worker may be asked to complete a business letter using a specific type of computer software programme.

5. Peer Group Interview. This interview is an opportunity to meet and talk with prospective coworkers. Just as in other interviews, the peer group will be evaluating the candidate, determining how he would fit in.

6. Group Interview. Sometimes referred to as a panel interview, it usually consists of three or more people, all asking questions. Direct your answer to the individual asking the question, but try to maintain some eye contact with the other members of the group. Don't forget to smile. It shows confidence.

7. Luncheon Interview. “The Meal”—This type of interview assesses how well a candidate can handle himself in a social situation. Employer representatives may include the Recruitment Manager, a person from the Human Resources Department and one or more peer group employees. Meals should be chosen carefully. A spill on a blouse or tie isn't likely to make a favourable impression. Select healthy and easy things to eat so you can answer questions and pay attention to the conversation.

8. Stress Interview. A stress interview introduces you not to an interviewer, but to an “interrogator”. The interview is one in which the candidate is treated as though he is the enemy. The interrogator asks a number of offensive questions that are designed to deliberately cause discomfort. Keep cool, take time in responding to the questions, and when it's all over, reward yourself. Don't take it personally. This is usually a test of how you will handle stress on the job.

9. Videoconference Interview. Some employers today use videoconferences to conduct meetings or carry out other aspects of their business. Conducting an interview via videoconference enables an employer to save travel costs and still have, in effect, a person-to-person interview. If the thought of facing a camera during an interview frightens you, practise before a video camera or a mirror.

Language Expansion

Opening

- Good morning, sir/madam.
Good morning. Please make yourself comfortable. First, tell me something about yourself.
- What do you think of the weather lately?
It's been lovely but I'm not sure it will last until the weekend.
- To start with, can you tell me a little bit about yourself?
Sure.

During: General questions

Personal details

- What is your name please?
May I ask your name?
Please give me your name.
Are you Li Ming?
I'm Li Ming./My name is Li Ming.
- Where are you living now?/Where do you live?
I am living at 88 Zhongshan Road, Guangzhou./I live at.../My address is...
- What's your present/permanent address?
It is 88 Zhongshan Road, Guangzhou.
- Do you hold a Guangzhou ID card?
Yes, I do./No, I don't.
- What kind of personality do you think you have?
I feel that I take initiative to get things done.
I think I'm energetic, aggressive, and enterprising.
I believe I'm imaginative and creative.
- What are your weak points/disadvantages/weaknesses/drawbacks/shortcomings and your strong points/advantages/strengths?
Well, I'm afraid I am.../I suppose my strong points are...
- In your opinion, what personal characteristics (we call these Work Habits) are required of the job holder in order to be successful?
I think a successful person should be tolerant, tactful, empathic, caring and friendly.

Education

- When did you graduate from your university?
I graduated from my university in July, 2005.
- What did you major/specialise in?
I majored/specialised in law./I'm a law major.
- What were your minor subjects?
My minor subjects were English and Finance.
- What is your score on TEM 4/TEM 8?
It was 86.
- Did you get any honours or awards at your university?
I won the first prize in the English Speech Contest of Guangdong Province in 2008.
I won the university scholarship for four years on end.
- Were you involved in any club activities at your college?
Yes. I was a member of the dancing club./I was on the department basketball team.

Work experience

- What work experience have you got?
I've been a sales engineer for three years./I have worked as a training manager for two years.

- Have you ever had any experience in this field/as a tourist guide?
- What was your position?/What position did you hold in that company?/What were your responsibilities?/What were you in charge of?
- What achievements/awards have you got?/Would you like to talk about your awards/achievements?

During: Position-related questions

Reasons for leaving and applying

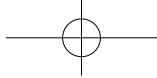
- What made you decide to change your job?
I didn't like the culture of the company and I saw no chance of advancement there.
- Why are you leaving your present job?
Only because the company is going bankrupt.
- Why did you choose/pick our company?
Well, I know your company is an international business, so I thought I would be able to learn some advanced methods of management from foreign staff members.
- Why are you interested in working with this corporation?
Because my past experience is closely related to this job and my major at university is also relevant to this post.

Qualifications and skills

- Have you got any professional certificates?
I've got a teaching qualification/a certificate in computer programming/a Senior Lawyer's certificate/a driving license...
- Do you have any special skills?
Yes, I can operate a word-processor.
- Can you speak Cantonese?
No, I can't. I'm not a local resident.

Job suitability

- What do you know about our organisation?
Everything I've seen and heard makes me want to be a part of this organisation. I understand your industry is... and your main customers are... A particularly exciting part of your business appears to be.../I think this would be an exciting place to work. The experience of working here will help me achieve my career goals.
- Why do you think you are qualified for this job?/What qualifications have you got?
I'm familiar with Western-style accounting because I've worked in an enterprise with foreign capital for four years. So I think I'm qualified for the position.
- What are you looking for in a position?
I'm looking for an organisation that will appreciate my contributions and reward my efforts.
- Are you willing to relocate?
No./Yes, I'm open to opportunities within the company so if that involves



relocation I would consider it./I'd move, but I know your head office is in Alaska and that's too cold for me.

- What are your short-term goals?

Bills are beginning to pile up. In the short run I need to find work so I can keep up with my obligations.

Closing

- You may ask questions about us, if you have any.

Do you have any questions to ask me?

Can you tell me a little bit about the employee benefits such as the health insurance programme?

- Can you tell me what my job will entail?
- How can we contact you about our decision?

You can reach me any time.

Scripts & Key

Part I Warm-up

Key:

DO'S

- Knock on the door and enter the room politely.
- Sit down quietly.
- Look at the interviewer. Make eye contact.
- Sit properly.
- Talk frankly and wise.

Part II Listening Practice

Task 1

Script:

Gary: Good morning, I'm Gary. Please take a seat.

John: Good morning, I'm John. Nice to meet you.

Gary: Nice to meet you. To start with, can you tell me why you are interested in working for our company?

John: First, as far as I know, your company has an impressive growth record. Second, I think my major and my past experience qualify me for the job.

Gary: I see. Which university did you graduate from? And what is your major?

John: I graduated from Peking University and my major is marketing.

Gary: Which company do you work for now?

John: BTC.

Gary: And what is your chief responsibility there?

John: I'm in charge of marketing activities in East Asia, for example, organising trade conferences and arranging exhibitions.

Key:

- | | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------|----------------|
| 1) interested | 2) impressive growth | 3) major |
| 4) past experience | 5) Peking University | 6) marketing |
| 7) chief responsibility | 8) trade conferences | 9) exhibitions |

Task 2**Script:**

Carter: Come in, please.

Yang: Good morning, sir. I'm Karen Yang.

Carter: Good morning, Miss Yang. I am Kevin Carter, the Administration Manager. Take a seat, please.

Yang: Oh, is that your wife, Mr. Carter? She is so beautiful.

Carter: Thank you. Ah—Miss Yang, I've gone through your resume. I'd like to ask you some questions now if you don't mind.

Yang: Not at all. Go ahead, please.

Carter: Well, can you tell me why you would like to work as a medical representative with us?

Yang: I really think I'd like this kind of work, because I've been a doctor for three years. I want to apply for this position because I want a change.

Carter: Don't you think it's a pity for you to leave your present job?

Yang: To some extent, it is. I have learned a lot in the hospital. But I would like to try a different kind of life. By the way, could you tell me how much the job pays?

Carter: Sure. There is a five-month probationary period when you will only get 2,000 RMB a month. After that, we'll determine your salary according to your performance.

Yang: Oh, I see. Then, could you tell me something about the paid holidays, insurance, and things like that?

Carter: Every employee in our company gets life insurance and unemployment insurance. You will get two weeks paid holiday in your first full year.

Yang: That sounds fine. How much time will it take for me to be promoted here?

Carter: Promotion is not certain. It depends on your ability and performance. Maybe we'll send you to one of our branches if you like.

Yang: No problem. I hate staying in one place all the time. But in which cities do you have branches? And, where is your company based?

Carter: Our company is based in New York, with branches in many cities, such as Philadelphia, Beijing and London.

1

Key:

(1) b (2) d (3) e (4) a (5) g (6) c (7) f

2

Reference answer:

<i>Is that your wife, Mr. Carter? She is so beautiful.</i>	<i>Avoid asking your interviewer personal questions or making personal comments.</i>
Could you tell me how much the job pays? What about the paid holidays, insurance, and things like that? How much time will it take for me to be promoted here?	The interviewer might infer from these questions that you are only interested in your own needs and not those of their company. Wait until the interviewer raises the subject of salary to discuss it.
But in which cities do you have branches? And where is your company based?	It is unwise to ask about things you should have already known. You will only tell the interviewer that you haven't done your homework.

Part III Language Focus A

Follow-up Practice

1

Teaching tips:

- Divide the Ss into small groups.
- Ask Ss to do the practice with useful expressions given below.
- Invite three or four groups to act out their conversation.

Script:

Cai: May I come in?

Ms. Smith: Yes, please.

Cai: Good morning. My name is Cai Ning. As requested, I have come for an interview.

Ms. Smith: Fine, thank you for coming, Miss Cai. Please sit down. I'm Anne Smith, the Assistant Manager.

Cai: Nice to meet you, Ms. Smith.

Ms. Smith: Nice to meet you, too.

Key: Open.

2**Script:**

A: What kind of personality do you think you have?

B: Generally speaking, I am an open-minded person.

A: What are your strengths and weaknesses?

B: I'm cheerful and friendly, but sometimes I am not patient enough.

A: How do you get along with others?

B: I get on well with others.

A: What do you do for leisure?

B: I love travelling.

Key: 1) c 2) a 3) c

Part IV Video 1**Viewing****Script:****Applying for the position of financial consultant**

(C: Candidate, Chen Bo; I: Interviewer, Cathy Mandel)

C: Good morning, Ms. Mandel.

I: Good morning. Sit down, please.

C: Thank you.

I: You are Chen Bo, aren't you? I am Cathy Mandel, Director of the HR Department.

C: Yes, I'm Chen Bo. Nice to meet you, Ms. Mandel.

I: Nice to meet you, too. I've gone through your resume and would like to know more about you.

C: Thank you for your interest in me.

I: To start with, would you like to tell me a bit about yourself?

C: Sure. I'm a senior student at Guangdong University of Finance. I expect to graduate this summer. My major is international finance.

I: So, why did you choose our company?

C: As far as I know, your company is one of several leading international consultant corporations which came to China after China entered WTO. I think working here would give me the best chance to use what I've learned at university.

I: As a major in international finance, what do you think you can do in consultancy?

C: Well, I know how to tackle problems. For example, I know I must first analyse the problem and work out its major cause. Then I will be able to search for ways to solve it from the available data.

I: Sometimes data is not enough. Have you got any relevant experience in this field?

C: Last year, during the probationary period, I was involved in the restoration of a factory in Nanjing. I really learned a lot from the experience, especially how to assess people's strengths and abilities.

- I:* Can you cope with hard work under pressure and in a tough environment?
C: No problem. I don't care about pressure or the environment, as long as I enjoy the work.
I: Good. Now, do you have any questions to ask?
C: Yes, I've got one. Are there any opportunities for Chinese employees to be transferred to the head office in New York or other branch offices around the world?
I: Probably. I think you are likely to be sent to work in an overseas branch to get experience later on once when you have proved your worth.
C: Oh, great. If I'm accepted, I will do my best for the company.
I: I wish you luck! We'll notify you of our final decision by Friday.
C: Thank you, Ms. Mandel. Goodbye.
I: Goodbye.

Note:

WTO (World Trade Organisation)

WTO is an international organisation that regulates trade and tariffs between nations in order to ensure that trade flows smoothly, predictably and as freely as possible. Based in Geneva, the WTO functions by negotiating multilateral agreements, which are then ratified by the member nations in order to protect their trading rights.

1

Key:

- | | | |
|-------------|------------|--------------------------|
| 1) yourself | 2) Finance | 3) international finance |
| 4) leading | 5) chance | 6) use |

2

Reference answer:

Reasons for joining the company	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is one of the leading international consultant corporations which came to China after China entered WTO. Working in this company would give him the best chance to use what he has learned at university.
Relevant work experience	He worked on a factory restoration in Nanjing.
Questions	Are there any chances for a Chinese employee to be transferred to head office in New York or other branch offices around the world?
Result of the interview	Chen Bo will be notified of the final decision by Friday.

Post-viewing

Teaching tips:

- Divide the class into groups of three/four.
- Have Ss exchange ideas within groups.
- Ask two group representatives to report to the class.
- Give comments and help Ss summarise the answers.

Reference answer:

Chen Bo's strengths:

- Degree in international finance
- Passion for the job
- Being young and energetic
- Fluency in English
- Good appearance
- Knowing how to tackle problems

Chen Bo's weaknesses:

- Little related experience or training
- ...

Part V Language Focus B

Follow-up Practice

1

Script:

I: Let's start the interview with some questions. Tell me about your past experience.

C: I have six years' experience in the financial industry, working for three companies. For the past two years, I have been working in an investment bank.

I: What qualifications do you have for this position?

C: I graduated from Peking University in 1998 and majored in accounting. I can speak English fluently and I can do bookkeeping and accounting to Western standards.

I: Why did you leave your last position?

C: I want to find a job that is challenging, where I can grow and develop.

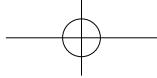
Key:

- | | | |
|---------------|---------------|----------------|
| 1) experience | 2) investment | 3) position |
| 4) accounting | 5) leave | 6) challenging |

2

Script:

I: Well, that seems to be all. Thank you for your interest in this job.



C: You are welcome. Thank you for taking time out of your busy schedule to interview me.

I: May I call you about our final decision?

C: Yes, please. My telephone number is 2974-5328. You can call me at any time during the day.

I: We will get in touch with you by the end of next week.

C: That's good. I will look forward to hearing from you. Will there be a second interview?

I: Probably. We'll notify you if necessary. Goodbye.

C: Goodbye.

Key:

h → f → g → d → a → c → e → b

Part VI Video 2

Viewing

Script:

Applying for the position of Sales Manager

Wang: May I come in?

Mr. White: Yes, please do.

Wang: Good morning, sir. My name is Merry Wang. I've come for an interview, as requested.

Mr. White: Nice to meet you, Miss Wang. I am Harry White, Director of the HR Department. I was expecting you. Please, take a seat.

Wang: Thank you.

Mr. White: Well, Miss Wang, you are applying for the position of Sales Manager, right? How did you know about our company?

Wang: I got to know your company from your TV commercials. They are elaborately designed and produced, and leave me deep impression. And in the summers of 1997 and 1998 I worked as a salesgirl for your company in Guangzhou.

Mr. White: Really? That's good. Then you must know something about our company?

Wang: Yes, a little. Your company is very famous. Your cosmetics and skincare products are very popular with women all over the world.

Mr. White: Huh, that's right. Miss Wang, can you tell me which university you attended?

Wang: Sun Yat-sen.

Mr. White: And what degree have you got?

Wang: I have a bachelor's degree in business administration.

Mr. White: How is your English? You know, some staff members in our company are Americans, so conversational English is very important.

Wang: I passed TEM 8 at college, and I am good at oral English. I think I can communicate with Americans quite well.

Mr. White: Good. I know you are now with United Butter. What is your chief responsibility there?

- Wang:* I've worked there for five years, since I graduated from college. Two years ago, I was appointed Brand Manager—responsible for the Panda line of biscuits.
- Mr. White:* Why do you want to change your job?
- Wang:* I want to change my work environment, seek new challenges and broaden my experience. That's why I want to move into sales.
- Mr. White:* What do you think is the most important qualification for a salesperson?
- Wang:* I think it's self-confidence and quality products.
- Mr. White:* I agree with you. What salary would you expect to get here?
- Wang:* Well, I would leave it to you to decide after you consider my abilities. My current annual income at United Butter is 150 thousand. But, er,... could you tell me a little more about what the job entails?
- Mr. White:* You would be in charge of all the sales activities, for all hair products in northeast China. This would involve market analysis, client service and development, sales promotion, and regular customer satisfaction surveys. You'd report directly to the Regional Sales Director. Do you have any other questions?
- Wang:* Yes, only one. When can I have your decision?
- Mr. White:* I need to discuss with other board members. We'll notify you of our decision as soon as possible. But... to be honest, you seem to be a good candidate with the right kind of experience and personality. You're high on my list.
- Wang:* That's good! Thank you, Mr. White. I look forward to hearing from you. Goodbye.
- Mr. White:* Goodbye.

1**Key:**

(1) F (2) T (3) F (4) F (5) T

2**Key:**

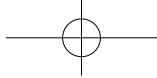
1) Sales Manager	2) Five	3) Brand Manager
4) biscuits	5) Business Administration	6) oral English

Post-viewing

Sample:

Applying for the post of an English secretary

- A:* How do you do, sir? I'm Ye Jinghong. I've come for an interview as requested.
- B:* How do you do, Miss Ye? I'm Luo Jiang, the office director. Please take a seat.
- A:* Thank you, Mr. Luo.
- B:* Now let's get down to talk. First of all, would you please say something about yourself and family?
- A:* It's my pleasure to do so. I come from Dongguan City. My father is a manager of



an import and export company in Dongguan and my mother works as a doctor in a hospital. I have an elder brother. He is in the army. I am twenty-one years old. In 1996, I passed the National Entrance Examination and was admitted into Guangdong University of Foreign Studies. I specialise in English Secretarial Studies.

B: What courses have you taken in English Secretarial Studies?

A: I've taken such courses as Secretarial Principles, Office Administration, Business English, Public Relations, Etiquette Study, Psychology, Computer Programming, Typing, Stenography, and File-Keeping.

B: How are your typing and shorthand skills?

A: I can type 60 words per minute, and take dictation in English at 100 words per minute.

B: Good. But can you operate any other office machines?

A: Yes. I can operate a facsimile machine and a Photostat.

B: Where have you learned to operate these machines?

A: I learned to operate them at The Foreign Trade Corporation of Guangdong Province last summer. I worked there for nearly two months.

B: Oh, very good. You've had some practical experience in office work. What salary would you expect to get?

A: As for salary, I leave it to you to decide after you consider my abilities.

B: Well, I believe we can offer you 2,500 *yuan* a month at the start. Would that be satisfactory?

A: Yes, I am quite satisfied. That would be more than I have expected.

B: What date can you start to work?

A: I won't be able to leave the university until I get my diploma at the end of this month. How about early next month?

B: That'll do. Please come in on August the first. Working hours are from eight to twelve in the morning and from two to six in the afternoon. We usually work for five days a week, but occasionally we have to work overtime.

A: Yes, sir.

B: Thank you very much for coming today. It'll be a pleasure to have you here.

A: Thank you, Mr. Luo. I'm sure I'll enjoy working here, too.

B: I hope so. Goodbye.

A: Goodbye.

Text Bank

On-campus Interviewing Success

"The average person puts only 25% of his energy and ability into his work. The world takes off its hat to those who put in more than 50% of their capacity, and stands on its head for those few-and-far-between souls who devote 100%."

— Andrew Carnegie

Consider the on-campus interview for a moment. You will be spending twenty to thirty minutes in a tiny cubicle with a total stranger. This person will subsequently decide whether you will have a chance to work for his company. The best you can hope for is to avoid being disqualified, which only takes you one step further into the interviewing maze. One little mistake, one little error, and you could be history.

Actually, the entire process seems rather absurd, except for the fact that you will not get a job without playing the interviewing game. And on-campus interviewing is often the starting point for the interviewing process.

On-campus interviewing is not simply meeting with three or five (or even ten) companies and then picking the one you want to work for. To maximise your on-campus interviewing success, you need to first maximise both the quality and quantity of the interviews, and then maximise your interview efficiency. It is not enough to just “show up” for the interviews and hope that someone will miraculously offer you a job. You have to perform at your peak to gain any mileage from on-campus interviewing.

On-campus interviews are a gift. They will be by far the easiest interviews for you to find. But you should not depend exclusively on it to guarantee you after-graduation employment. There are far more companies than just those that are visiting your campus. Many of the best companies may not be visiting any campuses. So be patient and have confidence to learn the ways to reach out to other companies. Remember that: “He who has an art has everywhere a part (有一技之长者到处可以立足).”

Discussion:

1. Have you ever participated in an on-campus interview?
2. How could you maximise your on-campus interviewing success?