

MONDAY MORNING ECONOMIST STUDENT HANDOUT

Is the Gen Z Stare Hurting Their Job Prospects?

Part One. Multiple Choice Questions (15 minutes)

This article explores the so-called “Gen Z stare” and how it might unintentionally affect young workers’ job prospects through the lens of signaling and asymmetric information in labor markets. Employers rely on small, often costly signals—like professional appearance or enthusiasm—to screen candidates, especially when resumes and qualifications appear similar. The piece also touches on other real-world communication and employment challenges: generational workplace norms, screening processes, and the impact of AI on hiring.

Instructions: Read [Is the Gen Z Stare Hurting Their Job Prospects?](#) from *Monday Morning Economist* and then answer the following multiple choice questions.



1. In a job interview, what impact might the “Gen Z stare” have on how an employer views a candidate?
 - A. It signals enthusiasm and strong interest
 - B. It comes across as a blank, neutral facial expression
 - C. It clearly communicates frustration with the process
 - D. It shows the candidate is thinking deeply about their answers
2. In the hiring process, when employers interpret cues, traits, or information—like education or demeanor—to decide which applicants to move forward, this is called:
 - A. Signaling
 - B. Screening
 - C. Opportunity cost
 - D. Comparative advantage
3. In labor markets, where job candidates and hiring agents meet for exchange, what does “asymmetric information” mean?
 - A. Information is always false
 - B. Everyone hides information intentionally
 - C. One party has more information than the other
 - D. Employers and employees have the same information
4. What is the article’s main point about who gets to define the meaning of a signal?
 - A. Signals don’t have fixed meanings
 - B. The receiver determines the meaning
 - C. The sender always decides the meaning
 - D. The meaning is negotiated in each interaction
5. Why might the Gen Z stare make it harder for candidates to stand out in job interviews?
 - A. It shows they lack AI skills
 - B. It makes their resume look incomplete
 - C. It fails to send a strong or positive signal
 - D. It proves they are dishonest about experience

What do you think? *“In a job interview, small nonverbal cues—like facial expressions—can shape how an employer perceives you. If an interviewer interpreted your neutral expression as disinterest, how might that impact your chances of getting the job, and would you adjust your approach?”*

Part Two. Signals vs. Non-Signals: Standing Out Before You Even Start

In a job or internship search, small actions can send big messages to employers. Economists call these **signals**—clues that help employers decide whether to invite you for an interview or offer you the role. Not all actions are signals, and some can even send the wrong message. Today you'll learn to spot the difference and start building your own list of intentional, positive signals.

Step 1: Is that what you meant to communicate?

- **Signal** – An intentional or unintentional clue that gives an employer information about you. Effective signals reduce uncertainty and show traits like professionalism, interest, or reliability. Signals build trust with a hiring agent.
- **Non-Signal** – A behavior or action that does not send meaningful information—or might send a confusing or negative impression. Non-signals may compromise trust between applicants and hiring agents.

Step 2: Brainstorm Your Signals

Instructions- Think about a job or internship you might apply for. **List 3–5 actions or behaviors** you could prepare ahead of time—beyond your resume and cover letter—that would help you stand out in a positive way.

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____

Step 3: Signal or Non-Signal?-

Review real-world examples of applicant behaviors. Decide whether each one is a Signal or Non-Signal and briefly explain why an employer might interpret it that way.

#	Behavior	Signal or Non-Signal	Why might an employer see it that way?
1	Maintaining balanced eye contact during the interview (engaged, not staring)		
2	Showing up 15 minutes early to the interview (5 mins early to virtual interview)		
3	Sending a handwritten thank-you card afterward		
4	Fidgeting with a pen or touching your face repeatedly		
5	Asking thoughtful, research-based questions about the role		

#	Behavior	Signal or Non-Signal	Why might an employer see it that way?
6	Using lots of filler words like “um” or “like”		
7	Talking about mistakes and what you learned from them		
8	Dressing too casually for the interview (e.g., hoodie)		
9	Staying calm when asked an unexpected question		
10	Giving over-rehearsed, robotic answers		
11	Smiling naturally when greeting the interviewer.		
12	Checking your phone during the interview.		
13	Using the interviewer’s name during conversation.		
14	Bringing a printed copy of your resume to an in-person interview.		
15	Repeating or rephrasing the interviewer’s question to show active listening.		

Step 4: Partner Discussion- Partner with another student and discuss the following:

- A. Which signals from today’s activity were ones you hadn’t considered as being important to an interviewer? Why might these be viewed as credible by employers?
- B. Which signals from the list would require extra time, preparation, or resources to demonstrate—and why might these be viewed as more credible by employers?
- C. How could you adjust your natural habits or communication style so the signals you send in an interview are received in the way you intend?

Part Three. Screening Sort: Hiring Manager Simulation

Instructions- You and your group members are the Hiring Committee for the BrightWave Creative Marketing & Communications Intern position.

Step 1: In groups of four, review the provided **Candidate Profile** sheets for Candidates A–D. (See [Appendix A](#).)

Step 2: Familiarize yourself with the layout of the profiles. Each profile includes:

- **Education & Relevant Experience** – The candidate’s background.
- **Skills** – Divided into Hard Skills (technical) and Human/Soft Skills.
- Interview Team Rankings – Rated 1 (low) to 5 (high) on Preparedness, Engagement, Professionalism, Communication, and Confidence.
- **Interview Team Notes** – Observations provided by the interview committee from before, during, and after the interview.
- **Additional Hiring Details** – ‘Overall Fit’ Comment, Key Signal Observed, Potential Training Needs.
- **Recommendation Status** – Where you will mark your decision.

Step 3: Read each candidate’s profile & Discuss as a group and decide which one or two candidates you will recommend for the next interview round.

Step 4: On each **Candidate Profile sheet**, place a checkmark in the Advance to next round, Hold, or Do not advance box.

Step 5: Be ready to explain your choices, using evidence from the candidate’s signals and your group’s screening process.

After reviewing each candidate’s profile and interview report, work with your group to decide which one or two candidates you would invite to the next round of interviews. For each candidate, mark ‘Advance to next round,’ ‘Hold,’ or ‘Do not advance’ on their profile sheet. Then, summarize your group’s final choice below by circling the candidate(s) you recommend:

Circle one or more: **Candidate A** **Candidate B** **Candidate C** **Candidate D**

Reflection Questions-

After your group decision, discuss and record answers to the following:

1. Which positive signals most influenced your decision to advance or hold a candidate? Why did these stand out?
2. Which negative signals or non-signals created concern, and how heavily did they weigh in your final choice?

Appendix A.

Completed by: _____ Date: _____							
<p>CANDIDATE PROFILE: MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS INTERN</p>	<p>CANDIDATE A</p>						
<p>Education: Sophomore, BA in Communications, 3.7 GPA</p>							
<p>Interview Team Rankings of Valued Traits: (Ratings Scale: 1-5; 1- Low, 5- High)</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 33%;">Preparedness: 5</td> <td style="width: 33%;">Communication: 4</td> <td style="width: 33%;">Professionalism: 5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Engagement: 4</td> <td>Confidence: 4</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>		Preparedness: 5	Communication: 4	Professionalism: 5	Engagement: 4	Confidence: 4	
Preparedness: 5	Communication: 4	Professionalism: 5					
Engagement: 4	Confidence: 4						
<p>Relevant Experience:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Managed social media for a campus club with a 40% increase in engagement over one semester Completed one marketing class project creating blog content that received positive peer and instructor feedback Assisted at a local charity event by live-posting updates on Instagram and Twitter 	<p>Hard Skills: Social media content creation, blog writing, basic analytics, event promotion</p> <p>Human (Soft) Skills: Time management, active listening, curiosity, adaptability</p>						
<p>Interview Team Notes:</p> <p>Before interview: Arrived 10 minutes early, dressed in business casual, brought printed copies of resume and a small notepad to jot down points.</p> <p>During interview: Maintained balanced eye contact, smiled when appropriate, and asked two thoughtful questions about company culture and opportunities for learning; stumbled slightly when discussing technical design tools and admitted needing more practice.</p> <p>After interview: Sent a thank-you email the next morning, referencing a topic discussed in the interview and expressing excitement about contributing to the company's social media strategy.</p>	<p>Additional Hiring Details:</p> <p>Overall Fit Comment: Strong communicator with solid foundational skills and a clear interest in the role; would integrate well into the team.</p> <p>Key Signal Observed: Positive – Arrived early with printed resumes and asked thoughtful, role-specific questions. Negative – Limited technical skills with design software.</p> <p>Potential Training Needs: Design tool proficiency; advanced content formatting for digital platforms.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>Recommendation Status:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Advance to next round</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Hold</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Do not advance</p>						

Completed by: _____ Date: _____

<p>CANDIDATE PROFILE: MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS INTERN</p>	<p>CANDIDATE B</p>						
<p>Education: Junior, BA in Business Administration, 3.2 GPA</p>							
<p>Interview Team Rankings of Valued Traits: (Ratings Scale: 1-5; 1- Low, 5- High)</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 33%;">Preparedness: 3</td> <td style="width: 33%;">Communication: 4</td> <td style="width: 33%;">Professionalism: 2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Engagement: 3</td> <td>Confidence: 4</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>		Preparedness: 3	Communication: 4	Professionalism: 2	Engagement: 3	Confidence: 4	
Preparedness: 3	Communication: 4	Professionalism: 2					
Engagement: 3	Confidence: 4						
<p>Relevant Experience:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interned last summer at a local nonprofit managing email campaigns and producing monthly performance reports Created promotional flyers using Canva and basic Photoshop edits Served as treasurer for a student business club, tracking budgets and creating event promotions 	<p>Hard Skills: Email marketing, social media analytics, basic graphic design (Canva, Photoshop)</p> <p>Human (Soft) Skills: Verbal clarity, analytical thinking, budgeting, teamwork under guidance</p>						
<p>Interview Team Notes: Before interview: Arrived exactly on time but attire was overly casual (hoodie and sneakers); greeted the receptionist warmly but seemed rushed.</p> <p>During interview: Communicated confidently and clearly with strong knowledge of social media analytics and how to use data for targeting campaigns; avoided eye contact for long stretches, especially when answering questions about teamwork challenges.</p> <p>After interview: Did not follow up after interview; no thank-you note or email received within a week.</p>	<p>Additional Hiring Details:</p> <p>Overall Fit Comment: Brings valuable analytics experience but presentation and follow-through could impact client-facing work.</p> <p>Key Signal Observed: Positive – Confident communication of technical skills and data use. Negative – Overly casual attire for an interview.</p> <p>Potential Training Needs: Professional presentation standards; improved follow-up etiquette.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>Recommendation Status:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Advance to next round</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Hold</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Do not advance</p>						

Completed by: _____ Date: _____

<p>CANDIDATE PROFILE: MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS INTERN</p>	<p>CANDIDATE C</p>						
<p>Education: Freshman, BA in Graphic Design, 3.5 GPA</p>							
<p>Interview Team Rankings of Valued Traits: (Ratings Scale: 1-5; 1- Low, 5- High)</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 33%;">Preparedness: 3</td> <td style="width: 33%;">Communication: 3</td> <td style="width: 33%;">Professionalism: 3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Engagement: 5</td> <td>Confidence: 3</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>		Preparedness: 3	Communication: 3	Professionalism: 3	Engagement: 5	Confidence: 3	
Preparedness: 3	Communication: 3	Professionalism: 3					
Engagement: 5	Confidence: 3						
<p>Relevant Experience:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Designed posters, logos, and infographics for local community events and student organizations No prior marketing internship experience, but completed a high school senior project on branding Volunteered at a small business to redesign their menu and signage 	<p>Hard Skills: Graphic design, branding, portfolio presentation, visual content creation</p> <p>Human (Soft) Skills: Creativity, enthusiasm, flexibility, storytelling</p>						
<p>Interview Team Notes:</p> <p>Before interview: Arrived 5 minutes late; apologized for traffic; brought a tablet to show portfolio work and offered a printed leave-behind of sample designs.</p> <p>During interview: Highly enthusiastic and passionate about design; portfolio showcased strong visual skills and creative range; answers sometimes veered off topic, and one answer contradicted earlier comments about preferred work style.</p> <p>After interview: Sent a short thank-you email with a link to portfolio, but email contained two spelling errors and a broken hyperlink to one project.</p>	<p>Additional Hiring Details:</p> <p>Overall Fit Comment: Highly creative with strong design talent; needs more focus and polish in professional communication.</p> <p>Key Signal Observed: Positive - Brought a professional portfolio and showcased strong visual work. Negative - Spelling errors and broken link in follow-up email.</p> <p>Potential Training Needs: Email professionalism and proofreading; interview response structure.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>Recommendation Status:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Advance to next round</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Hold</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Do not advance</p>						

Completed by: _____ Date: _____

<p>CANDIDATE PROFILE: MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS INTERN</p>	<p>CANDIDATE D</p>						
<p>Education: Senior, BA in English, 3.8 GPA</p>							
<p>Interview Team Rankings of Valued Traits: (Ratings Scale: 1-5; 1- Low, 5- High)</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 33%;">Preparedness: 5</td> <td style="width: 33%;">Communication: 5</td> <td style="width: 33%;">Professionalism: 5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Engagement: 4</td> <td>Confidence: 4</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>		Preparedness: 5	Communication: 5	Professionalism: 5	Engagement: 4	Confidence: 4	
Preparedness: 5	Communication: 5	Professionalism: 5					
Engagement: 4	Confidence: 4						
<p>Relevant Experience:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Edited campus newspaper articles and wrote a weekly opinion column for two years Freelance blog writer for three local business websites, specializing in lifestyle and community topics Coordinated a small team of volunteer writers for a nonprofit newsletter 	<p>Hard Skills: Editing, blog writing, content development, publication coordination</p> <p>Human (Soft) Skills: Interpersonal communication, active listening, organization, reliability</p>						
<p>Interview Team Notes:</p> <p>Before interview: Arrived 15 minutes early, appeared nervous but clearly prepared; brought a leather folder with extra copies of resume and writing samples.</p> <p>During interview: Excellent verbal skills and thoughtful answers with vivid examples; used interviewer's name several times in conversation; openly admitted limited knowledge of social media strategy but expressed willingness to learn quickly.</p> <p>After interview: Hand-delivered a thank-you card the next day, personalized with a note referencing the interviewer's advice on content planning; card was professionally formatted and error-free.</p>	<p>Additional Hiring Details:</p> <p>Overall Fit Comment: Excellent writing and interpersonal skills with strong preparation habits; would require social media training.</p> <p>Key Signal Observed: Positive - Hand-delivered a personalized, error-free thank-you card. Negative - Limited understanding of social media strategy.</p> <p>Potential Training Needs: Social media campaign planning; analytics basics.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>Recommendation Status:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Advance to next round</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Hold</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Do not advance</p>						

TEACHER GUIDE

Teachers may choose to use all or part of this lesson. Each part is meant to exist on its own. The approximate time to complete each section is provided and will vary.

KEY CONCEPTS: Signaling, Screening, Asymmetric Information, Labor Markets, & Incentives

Related FEE.Org Commentary: [5 Reasons Gen Z Will Elevate America's Workforce](#)

Teacher Note: For more information on generational differences in the workplace, visit Purdue Global's [infographic](#) and analysis.

[National Voluntary Content Standards in Economics & Benchmarks.](#)

Standard 4: Incentives – The article and lesson show how nonverbal cues, like the “Gen Z stare,” can create incentives for applicants to adjust their behavior to improve hiring outcomes.

Standard 13: Income – The discussion explains how employment opportunities, and thus potential income, can be influenced by the way employers interpret applicant signals.

Standard 16: Government and Market Failure – The article highlights asymmetric information as a form of market failure in labor markets, and how signaling and screening are used to address it.

[Is the Gen Z Stare Hurting Their Job Prospects?](#)

Part One. Multiple Choice Questions (15 minutes)

This article explores the so-called “Gen Z stare” and how it might unintentionally affect young workers’ job prospects through the lens of signaling and asymmetric information in labor markets. Employers rely on small, often costly signals—like professional appearance or enthusiasm—to screen candidates, especially when resumes and qualifications appear similar. The piece also touches on other real-world communication and employment challenges: generational workplace norms, screening processes, and the impact of AI on hiring.

Instructions: Read [Is the Gen Z Stare Hurting Their Job Prospects?](#) from *Monday Morning Economist* and then answer the following multiple choice questions.

- In a job interview, what impact might the “Gen Z stare” have on how an employer views a candidate?
 - It signals enthusiasm and strong interest
 - It comes across as a blank, neutral facial expression***
 - It clearly communicates frustration with the process
 - It shows the candidate is thinking deeply about their answers
- In the hiring process, when employers interpret cues, traits, or information—like education or demeanor—to decide which applicants to move forward, this is called:
 - Signaling
 - Screening***
 - Opportunity cost
 - Comparative advantage
- In labor markets, where job candidates and hiring agents meet for exchange, what does “asymmetric information” mean?
 - Information is always false
 - Everyone hides information intentionally
 - One party has more information than the other***
 - Employers and employees have the same information
- What is the article’s main point about who gets to define the meaning of a signal?
 - Signals don’t have fixed meanings
 - The receiver determines the meaning***
 - The sender always decides the meaning
 - The meaning is negotiated in each interaction



5. Why might the Gen Z stare make it harder for candidates to stand out in job interviews?
- A. It shows they lack AI skills
 - B. It makes their resume look incomplete
 - C. It fails to send a strong or positive signal***
 - D. It proves they are dishonest about experience

What do you think? *“In a job interview, small nonverbal cues—like facial expressions—can shape how an employer perceives you. If an interviewer interpreted your neutral expression as disinterest, how might that impact your chances of getting the job, and would you adjust your approach?”*

Suggested Answer: *In labor markets, employers rely on **signals** to reduce **asymmetric information** about a candidate's work ethic, attitude, and fit. A neutral expression could be misinterpreted as low engagement, lowering the employer's perceived expected value of hiring that candidate. From a free-market perspective, signaling enthusiasm through nonverbal cues is a low-cost, high-return investment that can differentiate an applicant in a competitive market. Adjusting to employer expectations—without being inauthentic—can help align your signals with the preferences of those making hiring decisions, improving your chances of securing the job.*

Part Two. Signals vs. Non-Signals: Standing Out Before You Even Start

*In a job or internship search, small actions can send big messages to employers. Economists call these **signals**—clues that help employers decide whether to invite you for an interview or offer you the role. Not all actions are signals, and some can even send the wrong message. Today you'll learn to spot the difference and start building your own list of intentional, positive signals.*

Step 1: Is that what you meant to communicate?

- **Signal** – An intentional or unintentional clue that gives an employer information about you. Effective signals reduce uncertainty and show traits like professionalism, interest, or reliability. Signals build trust with a hiring agent.
- **Non-Signal** – A behavior or action that does not send meaningful information—or might send a confusing or negative impression. Non-signals may compromise trust between applicants and hiring agents.

Step 2: Brainstorm Your Signals

Instructions- Think about a job or internship you might apply for. **List 3–5 actions or behaviors** you could prepare ahead of time—beyond your resume and cover letter—that would help you stand out in a positive way.

Possible Answers:

- Researching the company's mission, values, and recent projects to reference in conversation.
- Preparing thoughtful, role-specific questions to ask the interviewer.
- Practicing confident body language, such as a firm handshake and balanced eye contact.
- Bringing a portfolio or work samples that demonstrate relevant skills.
- Following up with a personalized thank-you email within 24 hours to reinforce interest and professionalism.

Step 3: Signal or Non-Signal?-

Review real-world examples of applicant behaviors. Decide whether each one is a Signal or Non-Signal and briefly explain why an employer might interpret it that way.

#	Behavior	Signal or Non-Signal	Why might an employer see it that way?
1	Maintaining balanced eye contact during the interview (engaged, not staring)	Signal	Shows confidence, attentiveness, and engagement—traits valued in team settings and client interactions.
2	Showing up 15 minutes early to the interview (5 mins early to virtual interview)	Signal	Demonstrates punctuality, preparation, and respect for the employer's time.
3	Sending a handwritten thank-you card afterward	Signal	Indicates thoughtfulness, effort, and genuine interest—costly signal that's harder to fake.
4	Fidgeting with a pen or touching your face repeatedly	Non-Signal	Can distract the interviewer and may signal nervousness or lack of self-control, reducing perceived confidence.
5	Asking thoughtful, research-based questions about the role	Signal	Shows preparation, curiosity, and initiative, which are desirable in most roles.
6	Using lots of filler words like "um" or "like"	Non-Signal	Suggests poor preparation or weak communication skills, which can reduce confidence in the candidate's abilities.
7	Talking about mistakes and what you learned from them	Signal	Reflects self-awareness, growth mindset, and problem-solving skills—valuable to employers.
8	Dressing too casually for the interview (e.g., hoodie)	Non-Signal	Can signal a lack of professionalism or understanding of workplace norms.
9	Staying calm when asked an unexpected question	Signal	Shows composure under pressure, a highly valued workplace trait.
10	Giving over-rehearsed, robotic answers	Non-Signal	May come across as insincere or lacking adaptability.
11	Smiling naturally when greeting the interviewer.	Signal	Sends warmth and openness, helping to establish rapport quickly.
12	Checking your phone during the interview.	Non-Signal	Signals distraction and disrespect for the process and interviewer's

			time.
13	Using the interviewer's name during conversation.	Signal	Demonstrates attentiveness, professionalism, and interpersonal skill.
14	Bringing a printed copy of your resume to an in-person interview.	Signal	Shows preparation and ensures readiness if the interviewer doesn't have it on hand.
15	Repeating or rephrasing the interviewer's question to show active listening.	Signal	Confirms understanding and demonstrates strong listening and communication skills.

Step 4: Partner Discussion- Partner with another student and discuss the following:

- A. Which signals from today's activity were ones you hadn't considered as being important to an interviewer? Why might these be viewed as credible by employers?

Suggested Answer: Students may not have considered signals like using the interviewer's name or bringing printed resumes as impactful. These are credible because they require intentional preparation, demonstrate respect for the interviewer, and show attention to detail—qualities that are valuable in most workplace settings.

- B. Which signals from the list would require extra time, preparation, or resources to demonstrate—and why might these be viewed as more credible by employers?

Suggested Answer: Actions like sending a handwritten thank-you card, researching the role to ask thoughtful questions, or preparing a portfolio require more effort and sometimes material resources. In free market terms, these are "costly signals" that are harder to fake, making them more reliable indicators of genuine interest and capability.

- C. How could you adjust your natural habits or communication style so the signals you send in an interview are received in the way you intend?

Suggested Answer: Candidates could practice maintaining balanced eye contact, reducing filler words, or smiling naturally to convey warmth. They might also rehearse answers in a conversational tone to avoid sounding robotic, ensuring their intended professionalism and enthusiasm are accurately interpreted by the employer.

Part Three. Screening Sort: Hiring Manager Simulation


Instructions- You and your group members are the Hiring Committee for the BrightWave Creative Marketing & Communications Intern position.


Step 1: In groups of four, review the provided **Candidate Profile** sheets for Candidates A–D. (See [Appendix A.](#))


Step 2: Familiarize yourself with the layout of the profiles. Each profile includes:

- **Education & Relevant Experience** – The candidate's background.
- **Skills** – Divided into Hard Skills (technical) and Human/Soft Skills.
- **Interview Team Rankings** – Rated 1 (low) to 5 (high) on Preparedness, Engagement, Professionalism, Communication, and Confidence.
- **Interview Team Notes** – Observations provided by the interview committee from before, during, and after the interview.

- **Additional Hiring Details** – ‘Overall Fit’ Comment, Key Signal Observed, Potential Training Needs.
- **Recommendation Status** – Where you will mark your decision.

 **Step 3:** Discuss as a group and decide which one or two candidates you will recommend for the next interview round.

 **Step 4:** On each Candidate Profile sheet, place a checkmark in the Advance to next round, Hold, or Do not advance box.

 **Step 5:** Be ready to explain your choices, using evidence from the candidate’s signals and your group’s screening process.

After reviewing each candidate’s profile and interview report, work with your group to decide which one or two candidates you would invite to the next round of interviews. For each candidate, mark ‘Advance to next round,’ ‘Hold,’ or ‘Do not advance’ on their profile sheet. Then, summarize your group’s final choice below by circling the candidate(s) you recommend:

Circle one or more: **Candidate A** **Candidate B** **Candidate C** **Candidate D**

Teacher Note: *Candidates A and D are likely the strongest candidates.*

Summary of Key Points from Profiles:

Candidate A – Strong communicator, well-prepared, professional demeanor, and clear interest in the role. Weakness is limited technical skill in design software, but follow-up and engagement are strong.

Candidate B – Solid analytics and marketing experience with confident verbal delivery, but presentation and follow-up are lacking, and eye contact was inconsistent.

Candidate C – Highly creative with strong design skills and enthusiasm, but late arrival, off-topic answers, and follow-up errors weaken professional impression.

Candidate D – Excellent writing and interpersonal skills, high preparedness, and strong professionalism. Lacks social media strategy knowledge but shows willingness to learn and provided a personalized follow-up.

 **Reflection Questions-**

After your group decision, discuss and record answers to the following:

1. Which positive signals most influenced your decision to advance or hold a candidate? Why did these stand out?

Suggested Answer: *Signals like arriving early, bringing printed resumes, asking thoughtful questions, and personalized follow-up stood out because they are intentional, low-cost ways to demonstrate professionalism and interest. Employers view these as credible because they require preparation and indicate respect for the process.*

2. Which negative signals or non-signals created concern, and how heavily did they weigh in your final choice?

Suggested Answer: *Issues such as overly casual attire, late arrival, spelling errors in follow-up, or lack of follow-up weighed heavily because they can signal disorganization, low professionalism, or lack of interest—traits that may hurt job performance.*

3. How might differences in workplace norms [between generations](#) (e.g., Gen Z, Millennials, Gen X) shape how these signals are interpreted by employers?

Suggested Answer: *Generational differences may cause neutral or authentic expressions from younger candidates to be interpreted by older employers as disinterest.*

Similarly, expectations for attire, formality, and follow-up methods may differ, creating the potential for misaligned signals.

4. In a real hiring process, what additional information would you want about each candidate to make a more confident decision, given the limits of the interview process?

Suggested Answer: *More details on work samples, references, and past performance under deadlines would help. Observing candidates in a task-based or collaborative setting could also provide more accurate information than an interview alone. Some employers will even evaluate a person's credit score to determine their dependability and decision-making history.*

5. How did you balance hard skills (technical abilities) with human/soft skills when making your selection? Which mattered more for this internship role, and why?

Suggested Answer: *For this role, soft skills like communication, adaptability, and teamwork mattered more because technical skills can often be taught on the job, but workplace readiness and professionalism directly affect client interactions and team productivity.*

6. 💡 After exploring these fictional profiles and learning about the economic benefits of signaling strong character and skills, what is one specific change you would make to your own interview behavior—especially in your nonverbal cues—to ensure your signals are interpreted as positively as possible by an employer?

Suggested Answer: *Students might commit to maintaining balanced eye contact, smiling during greetings, or practicing confident posture. These nonverbal adjustments send clear, positive signals that align with employer expectations and increase perceived employability.*

Extension Exercise- From Advice to Action: Interview Readiness

★ *Apply interview preparation tips from the video to improve how you signal professionalism, skills, and character to potential employers.* ★

1. Watch the Advice from this [short video](#) from a Harvard Career Advisor (5 minutes)
2. Recall and list five key tips from the video that could help you send strong positive signals in an interview. *Use categories like: Research & preparation, storytelling, first impressions, interview types, follow-up etiquette.*

Key Talking Points:

1. Research & Preparation

- *Learn about the position, organization, and industry before the interview.*
- *Know the company's history, products, services, and competitors.*
- *Prepare short, relevant "Show & Tell" stories with a clear beginning, middle, and end to demonstrate skills.*

2. Storytelling

- *Use the Show & Tell method rather than simply listing skills—demonstrate them with examples.*
- *Practice responses aloud to avoid sounding scripted while still being clear and conversational.*
- *Consider a mock interview with a career counselor to refine delivery.*

3. First Impressions

- *Arrive 10–15 minutes early (or 30 minutes in the vicinity) for in-person interviews.*
- *Good eye contact, a strong handshake, and an upbeat, confident tone are critical—first impressions form in seven seconds.*
- *Be authentic but “turn up the volume” slightly to convey enthusiasm.*

4. Interview Types

- *Behavioral interviews ask for specific examples (“Tell me about a time when...”).*
- *Technical interviews test problem-solving skills directly, often on a whiteboard.*
- *Case interviews (common in consulting) require practice with case-style questions.*

5. Follow-Up Etiquette

- *Confirm next steps at the end of the interview if not offered.*
- *Have a closing statement that reiterates your interest and why you’re a strong fit.*
- *Send a thank-you within 24–48 hours, personalized to the discussion, to restate qualifications and enthusiasm.*