CAP 10: The Job Interview

Learning targets:

- I will learn about job interviews.
- I will learn what to do and not to do during a job interview.
- I will recognize and demonstrate effective interview skills.

What is a job interview?

A job interview is a meeting between the employer and a person seeking a job. Interviewers ask questions and are looking for answers that indicate how an applicant might perform on the job. The interviewer (employer) may not ask these questions directly during the interview, but they want to know:

- Will this person be reliable (on time, rarely absent from work)?
- Is this person able to be trained, and capable of learning new skills?
- Will this applicant be able to work with others and get along well with employees?
- Is this person a team player? Are they cooperative?
- Is this person healthy? Will they be able to handle the work?
- Will the applicant represent our company well? Do they dress appropriately? Are they courteous? Do they have good manners?
- Will this person go beyond what is asked, or do only what they are told?

Although the above questions may never be explicitly asked, through your appearance, your body language, the way you speak, and your manners, the interviewer will be able to tell what kind of worker you probably will be.

What to DO for a job interview:

- Be prompt for the interview. Arrive 15 minutes before your appointment.
- Dress appropriately and be well groomed. Dress or skirt and blouse for women. Slacks and dress or polo shirt for men. Wear shoes.
- Be polite.
- Stand until you are asked to sit down.
- Look the interviewer in the eyes.
- Use proper English. Don't use "yeah," "nah," "ok," etc.
- Tell the truth.
- Ask questions about the company and the job.
- Do not be overly ambitious. If necessary and appropriate, be willing to take a lower paying job at first.
- Make sure the employer knows you are a serious worker and that you really want to work for the company.

What NOT to do for a job interview:

- Mumble, chew gum, smoke/vape, etc.
- Play with your hair, clothes, jewelry, etc.
- Slouch in your chair.
- Say bad things about anyone you have worked for in the past.
- Try to hide something about yourself.

Before the job interview:

- Be approximately 15 minutes early for the interview.
- Dress in professional attire or what the job calls for.
- Make sure your hair and nails are groomed.
- Be prepared ahead of time by knowing some information about the company.

During the job interview:

- Introduce yourself with a firm handshake and make eye contact.
- Speak clearly and use appropriate language. Do not use slang or pidgin.
- Be yourself during the interview. The employer will want to know the "real" you.
- Be relaxed and think of the interview as a conversation between you and the employer.
- Show enthusiasm; let the employer know that you are the right person for the job.
- Smile, add a little humor if the situation calls for it.
- Give examples of your interests, accomplishments, and abilities. This will help the employer to understand you and your experiences.
- Ask questions of your employer, show interest in the position and business/industry.
- Thank the interviewer at the end of the interview and shake their hand firmly.

After the job interview:

- Send a thank you letter immediately following the interview to let the employer know you are interested and thank them for their time.

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Imagine you are applying for a job that is appropriate for a high school student. Answer the following common interview questions according to how you would reply in a job interview setting. Use complete sentences; write exactly what you say out loud.

What type of job are you seeking?

What are your weaknesses? What are your strengths?

What salary do you expect?

Why do you want to work for our company?

What do you want to be doing in five years?

What jobs have you had? Why did you leave?

How do you feel about working overtime, evenings, or weekends?

Do you prefer working alone or with others?

Are you willing to move? Are you willing to travel?

What do you do in your spare time?

Why do you think we should hire you for this job?

What extracurricular activities did you participate in at school?