# Surviving those scholarship interviews!

This activity is designed to provide an opportunity for students to practice interviewing skills.

## Learning outcomes

Students will:

* learn how to interview more effectively.
* learn what to expect in an interview.
* develop more confidence in their ability to interview.

### Time required for lesson: 90 minutes

### Materials/resources

* Recruit sufficient people to serve as interviewers. Teachers, community members / professionals, college professors are recommended. They should count on 10-15 minutes per pair of students.
* Reserve a conference room or small classroom for interview day.
* **Interviewer Instruction:**
* Email interviewers. Give them interview schedule showing interviewees. Distribute copies of students’ resumes/PEPS report to assigned interviewers. Remind interviewers of what you hope to accomplish for the students. Because it is a learning experience, the interview should not be easy. Distribute sufficient copies of blank scoring rubrics for all interviews and ensure that each interviewer understands how to use it. Ask that during or after each interview they make notes that include:
  + Distracting habits (twisting hair, cracking knuckles)
  + Overall presentation (dress, eye contact)
  + Strong points
  + Suggestions for Improvement.

## Activities

1. Student will come in the classroom and be given an orientation to the workshop
   * Give them information about the mock interview process;
   * Tell the students the expectations (length of interview) and how to prepare (be familiar with their goals/postsecondary and career plans, practice with classmates if time permits, appropriate dress- its ok for this activity to be underdressed, but the students should understand appropriate attire for the future)
   * Give the students a copy of the ***Scholarship Interview Preparation Guide for Students***
2. Students will draw a mock interview timeslot and location card and go to their designated location at their appointed time. Latecomers will be responsible for addressing this matter to the panel themselves. Students will arrive and introduce themselves to the Interviewers. Interviewers will introduce themselves and conduct the interview.
3. Students will report to Workshop Facilitators (WF) in the classroom immediately after the interview for self-review. WFs direct this self-review by asking questions:
   * How do you feel about the interview?
   * Why did you feel this way?
   * Did the interview meet your expectations?
   * Are there some things that you could have done differently?
   * Did you notice any distracting habits?

No more than 5-10 minutes should be spent on this portion.

1. After all interviews are completed, give the students their rubric from the Interviewer and give them time to reflect and ask questions.

## Assessment

* Verbal feedback and rubric from students and panel members. Students, as well as panel members, should be asked if they consider this to be a worthwhile activity and why or why not they feel this way. Students and panel members should also be asked if there are components that should be added or deleted and why. Examples of positive comments include “I’m glad that I had the chance to practice,” “I feel good about my interviewing skills,” “Now I know that I am prepared for the real thing,” “Before the real interview I need to work on my grammar.”
* Real assessment comes when the students have been to a “real” interview and come back to tell you that it was easy compared to the mock interview and that they are glad you gave them the opportunity to practice.

**Suggested Interview Questions: Interviewer Prep**

* **Tell me about yourself:** This is a question common to every interview. The student should introduce him/herself by name, provide some brief family information, say what high school they are graduating from, their postsecondary and career areas of interest and thank you for giving them the opportunity to interview. The student should be confident in answering this question; be able to provide a fluent answer.
* **What are your strengths and weaknesses?:** The student should be aware of their strengths, and not afraid to talk about them, yet still humble. We all have weaknesses. Students who cannot identify one weakness lack introspection. A follow up question could be: **how will awareness of these strengths and weaknesses help you be successful in college and your career**?
* **Who has been your inspiration?:** The student should respond in terms of their academic and career path. It could be someone famous like a former president or other world leader, an athlete, or war hero, or it could be someone in his or her family, community or school whose inspiration has been more personal. The student should be able to articulate how, or in what ways, this person has inspired him/her.
* **Tell us about your goals:** The student should focus on their goals that are related to college and career. Students should be able to articulate *what* they want to be, and *why*. They should demonstrate a clear understanding of what background, classes, skills and talents are needed to be successful in the field they have chosen and that they are capable of it all.
* **What will happen to those goals if you do not get a scholarship?:** Students should demonstrate commitment to their goals, whatever hardships come their way. They should have thought of alternative pathways to reach their goals if they don’t get a scholarship, for example, a) start at community college then transfer to the university b) go to school part time and work part time; c) live with parents while going to school; or d) student loans. The answer, “if I don’t get this scholarship, I won’t be able to go to college” demonstrates a lack of commitment to their goals.
* **Your biggest success:** Students examples should showcase their ability to be leaders, and work with a team.
* **Do you learn from mistakes? Give an example:** Students should be able to describe a specific, real situation that proves that they have learned from their mistake.
* **How do you see yourself after 10 years? :** Students’ responses to this question should relate to their goals described earlier. Students should envision themselves successful in the field of work they have selected, and giving back to others / their community.
* **Why do you think you are the right candidate to receive scholarship? :** Students should be able to describe their ambitions and goals with faith and confidence.

**Scholarship Interview Preparation Guide for Students**

* **Tell me about yourself:** This is a question common to every interview. The interviewer would expect you to introduce yourself by name, give brief family information, school, postsecondary and career areas of interest and thank them for giving you the opportunity to interview. Be confident in answering this question; [interviewers](http://www.bestsampleresume.com/interview/scholarship-interview-questions-answers.html) expect a fluent answer.
* **What are your strengths and weaknesses?:** List several of your greatest strengths, like I’m a hard worker, I’m good at math, or I’m friendly and outgoing and can make friends easily. Be careful while listing weaknesses. Think of weaknesses you have that can sometimes be viewed as strengths, like “Working too hard” or “too forgiving” or “too helpful.” Be prepared to explain how your awareness of your own strengths and weaknesses will help you be successful in college and your career.
* **Your inspiration:** Interviewers who ask this question are looking for who inspired you in terms of your academic and career path. It could be someone famous like a former president or other world leader, an athlete, or war hero, or it could be someone in your family, community or school whose inspiration has been more personal. Be sure to say how, or in what ways, this person has inspired you.
* **Tell us about your goals :** Speak only about goals that are related to college and your career. You need to be able to articulate *what* you want to be, and *why*. To become a doctor, because you are good at, and enjoy science, and would like to help people or eradicate a particular disease, for example. Or, you found you really enjoyed being in robotics club and have figured out that you want to become an engineer and help develop alternative, renewable energy sources that will help slow the pace of climate change. Be sure to show that you have a clear understanding of what background, classes, skills and talents you need to be successful in the field you’ve chosen and that you are up for all of that.
* **What will happen to those goals if you do not get a scholarship:** You want to impress the interviewers with your commitment to your goals, that you will figure out some way to finish your education even if you don’t get a scholarship. You’ll want to tell them that your first choice, of course, would be to get a scholarship and to pursue your goals as planned, but that you have considered your options if you don’t get the scholarship, for example, a) start at community college then transfer to the university instead of going all four years at university, since Community College is cheaper, b) go to school part time and work part time, it’ll take longer but eventually you would still finish; c) live at home instead of in the dorm to save money; or d) last-ditch option, you could take out student loans. Interviewers don’t like the answer, “if I don’t get this scholarship, I won’t be able to go to college.”
* **Your biggest success:** This is a good time to talk about a school function you led and executed successfully. Show how you were a leader, but also a team-player. You may showcase any performance that you feel may impress the interviewer, but it may be best to focus on education- and leadership-related successes.
* **Do you learn from mistakes? Give an example:** This is actually a tricky question and you want to avoid dwelling on your mistakes. Like the weakness question above, you want to spend most of your answer on the positive outcome of the mistake, not the mistake itself. Describe a specific, real situation to prove that you have learned from the mistake.
* **How do you see yourself after 10 years? :** Your response to this question should relate to your goals you described earlier. You should see yourself successful in the field of work you have selected, and giving back to others / your community.
* **Why do you think you are the right candidate to receive scholarship? :** Explain your ambitions and goals with faith and confidence.

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