

Guideposts for Success: Lesson Plans and Activities

Developed by the Institute for Educational Leadership

LESSON 5: KNOW WHAT YOU WANT...AND WHAT YOU HAVE TO OFFER!

AT-A-GLANCE

It is critical for young people to realize that when they say they will “take any job,” they might as well say “I’ll take no job.” It is important that they have a direction or a focus (or at least pretend to)—as it is very difficult, if not impossible, to get assistance with a job search without one. Some employers may perceive a lack of direction as a lack of a positive work attitude...or a lack of self-knowledge. This may or may not be true—but it’s always better to be prepared.

ICEBREAKER

If I were a... This is an activity in which participants imagine they are someone or something else and discusses the reason for their choice. (See Activity 5.1 - **If I were a...** word list)

Put the list of words below on slips of paper, fold the papers and place them into a paper bag. Pass the bag around and ask each person to choose one piece of paper and not to open it! One at a time, each person opens his or her paper and completes the following sentence: If I were a [read item on the index card], I would be a(n) [fill in the blank]. [Explain].

Use the following examples:

- “If I were an animal, I would be a cheetah. Cheetah’s are fast and seem to always be focused on their objective—just like me.”
- “If I were an animal, I would be an eagle. I’ve always wished I could fly!”

ICEBREAKER DISCUSSION

Being able to put describe why you would make a choice is a skill that is not necessarily easy to develop...especially when it comes to talking about why you might like, want or enjoy a certain job. Telling an employer that you’ll take any job simply because you want to earn money might be YOUR reason, it doesn’t explain what you have to offer and why you would be a good candidate for a specific job.

LESSON/ACTIVITY

This activity requires student participation. It is adapted from the South Dakota Teachers as Advisors program from the South Dakota Office of Career and Technical Education.

Who Gets the Job? – (See Activity 5.2)

1. Introduce the lesson by pointing out to students that the first impression a person makes during a job interview often determines whether they get the job. Mention that people can get ready for job interviews by practicing. They can learn to dress appropriately and display good grooming habits; and practice answering interview questions to help them feel more confident.

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2. Distribute both interview scripts and have students read them. Tell students that each script is an example of how jobseekers might choose to conduct themselves during an interview.
3. Ask for volunteers to role play each script in front of the class. Have volunteers read one script at a time and follow it up with a class discussion, or do both scripts and hold one discussion session.
4. Discuss at least three qualities and characteristics that are important to the employer. (Hint: think about the questions the interviewer asks the job applicant.)
5. List and/or discuss the characteristics of the job applicant that would ruin his or her chances for employment.
6. What are some recommendations to help the job applicants with their next interview? (Hint: Think about the characteristics that ruined the applicant's chances. How can these be changed?)

REFLECTION

Ask students to review their own thinking about entry-level jobs. What would be the best job to have while in high school? Are there any jobs students would not do (why or why not)? What are the benefits to working while still in high school? What are some of the things you learn that you don't necessarily learn in school?

EXTENSION

Who Gets the Job: Have students write and act out a new and improved interview script for a job applicant and a Director of Personnel (maybe something a little more realistic 😊). Be sure the script includes the recommendations made based on the previous discussion.

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LESSON 5.1 - IF I WERE A(N)....

Appliance
Article of clothing
Automobile
Beverage
Cartoon character
Color
Dessert
Food
Foreign country
Fruit
Item in an online catalog or store
Item of footwear
Key on a computer keyboard
Machine
Magazine
Musical instrument
Piece of furniture
Piece of jewelry
Piece of sports equipment
Plant
Superhero
Toiletry or grooming accessory
Toy
TV/movie character

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ACTIVITY 5.2 - INTERVIEW SCRIPT 1 - GABRIELA GOGETTER

Setting: Roy's Rockin' Sports Shop
Cast: Ms. Boss, Director of Personnel
Gabriela Gogetter, job applicant

Ms. Boss is seated at a desk, reading job applications while waiting for the interview. Gabriela enters, dressed in a navy-blue suit with a silk blouse and red scarf, walks in confidently. She smiles at Ms. Boss and extends her hand for a handshake.

Gabriela: Good Morning, Ms. Boss, I'm Gabriella Gogetter.

Ms. Boss: Hello, Ms. Gogetter. Please be seated?

Gabriela: Thank you.

Ms. Boss: I've been reading your application and I see you're interested in the opening we have in our data entry department.

Gabriela: Yes ma'am, I have been interested in clerical work for some time.

Ms. Boss: When did you become interested in it?

Gabriela: I began thinking about different types of work a few years ago and investigated them. This is one type of work I really enjoy.

Ms. Boss: Are you looking for a job just for fun?

Gabriela: Oh, no (She smiles) But I do think you can do a better job if you enjoy the work you do.

Ms. Boss: I see. What training have you had to prepare you for a clerical position?

Gabriela: I took two years of word processing and one year of spreadsheets in high school. And I practice with word processing programs in the computer lab and at home.

Ms. Boss: What about other business courses?

Gabriela: I felt that spreadsheets and word processing would prepare me for this kind of job and still allow me to follow other interests.

Ms. Boss: That sounds very good. Do you have any job experience?

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- Gabriela : Yes, I worked part-time this past year for Athletic Fitters. I have a recommendation from Mr. Shoes. (She hands him the letter.)
- Ms. Boss: Hmm. Mr. Shoes speaks very highly of your work as an office assistant. But do you realize that our position will be for the summer only?
- Gabriela: Yes ma'am, that is one reason I applied for this job. I'll be going to college in the fall.
- Ms. Boss: It sounds like you have made some very definite plans, Ms. Gogetter. What career are you planning to pursue?
- Gabriela: I'm planning to go into journalism. I thought that the clerical experience, as well as working for a well-organized company, would be a good background for me.
- Ms. Boss: That sounds terrific. Well, I do have a few more interviews scheduled for this afternoon. I will have my associate will show you around the building. Feel free to ask him any questions. We will be making our decision later this week and will let you know your status.
- Gabriela: Thank you very much for this opportunity. I look forward to hearing from you! (shakes hands)
- Ms. Boss: Thank you. It's a pleasure to meet a young person with realistic goals.

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ACTIVITY 5.2 - INTERVIEW SCRIPT 2 - WILMA WHOCARES

Setting: Employment office of Roy's Rockin' Sports Shop

Cast: Mr. Boss, Director of Personnel
Wilma Whocares, job applicant

Mr. Boss is seated at a desk, reading job applications while waiting for the interview. Wilma enters, dressed in white shorts with an obvious ketchup stain on the right pocket, a red striped shirt with a torn pocket, and mud-splattered tennis shoes.

Wilma: (loudly) Hi, there!

Mr. Boss: Would you be seated, Ms. Whocares.

Wilma: Sure!

Mr. Boss: I've been reading your application letter. You seem a little unsure about what you want. What position do you have in mind?

Wilma: Oh, I don't care – I'll take anything. I just want to earn some money to go to college next year. (Chews gum loudly and smacks it).

Mr. Boss: That sounds like a fine idea. We have several types of jobs available. Perhaps one of them would suit your interests. What do you plan to study?

Wilma: I don't know, I think college would be fun and exciting.

Mr. Boss: Well, what are your interests?

Wilma: My interests, Oh.....dating, sports, and movies.

Mr. Boss: No, Ms. Whocares, I meant *job* interests.

Wilma: Oh, yeah, well maybe if you would tell me what jobs are available, I could tell you which one I want. I never even thought about it.

Mr. Boss: Let's consider what you've done in high school, then. What classes were interesting to you?

Wilma: Oh, they were all kind of BOR-R-R-R-ING. We had a cool math teacher, but his tests were too hard so I only took one year. Hey! I did get an A in freshman word processing!

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Mr. Boss: How much training have you had in word processing? We do have a position for a data entry specialist.

Wilma: Well.....(holding her head down) I only took one semester. You know the scene—the teacher always picked on me and I didn't like the other kids in the class.

Mr. Boss: Did you think about what you want to do after graduation? Did you train for any specific job?

Wilma: Not really! I just figured I'd get a good job with the courses I took—I got good grades in them. My career counselor said something about goals, but I thought she was talking about football or something. She wasn't too swift, anyway.

Mr. Boss: Well, thank you, Ms. Whocares. I have several others to interview. You'll be hearing from us if we have a position for you. But don't call us—we'll call you.