

Interview Questions

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Lesson Objective

Have you ever had a job **interview**? In this lesson, you will learn common questions and useful responses to use at job interviews. Throughout this lesson, you will also see and practise using the **present perfect tense**. Let's begin!

Warm-Up

A. Discussion

Get into small groups. Discuss the following questions.

1. Have you been to an interview in Canada before?
If you have, what was it like?
2. Have you been to an interview in your home country before? If you have, what was it like?
3. How can you prepare for an interview?
4. Have you ever researched interview questions on the Internet?
5. What kinds of questions might be asked in an interview?
6. How should you dress for an interview?
7. Do you know any cultural expectations in Canada about interviews?
8. Have you ever been late for an interview?
If you have, what happened?
9. How do you feel about interviews?
10. What should you bring to an interview?

B. Matching

An **interviewer** is the person who asks the questions. An **interviewee** is the person who responds. Your next interviewer may be one of the following people in a company. Try to match the person to the role.

- | | | |
|-------|----------------------------|---|
| _____ | 1. owner | a) an employee in charge of hiring, training, support, etc. |
| _____ | 2. human resources manager | b) a person who owns a business or company |
| _____ | 3. supervisor | c) a person who shares ownership with another/others |
| _____ | 4. CEO | d) the chief executive officer, the highest manager |
| _____ | 5. co-owner | e) an employee who leads others in a certain sector or department |

Common Interview Questions

Here is a list of common interview questions and answers.
Practising them will help separate you from the rest of the job applicants!

#	Question	Tip	Example Answers
1	Why do you want to work for us?	Talk about the company briefly and highlight things the company has accomplished that you admire. Also speak briefly about how you can contribute to this kind of accomplishment.	You are a very environmentally friendly company. Last year when you won the “greenest restaurant” award, I looked into what you have done for the environment and was very impressed. I have a background in environmental studies as well as a passion for food, so I feel I can really contribute to this side of your business.
2	What is your greatest strength?	Be honest and give a concrete example. Make sure you identify a skill that is related to the job you are interviewing for.	I am an award-winning baker and my creative personality increases sales. Last year, the bakery I worked at saw a 25% increase in custom designed cakes under my leadership as head decorator.
3	Why have you left / are you leaving your job?	Be honest, but do not say anything bad about your previous employer. Instead, talk about your own desires to grow and move forward.	I have enjoyed my time there, but would like a more challenging job with more room to grow. or My family and I decided to move to this city for personal reasons, so I had to make the career choice to find new employment here.



Common Interview Questions cont.

#	Question	Tip	Example Answers
4	What is your greatest weakness?	Talk about something you have improved on or a skill that is not essential to the job you are applying for.	<p>I used to really struggle with organization, but since my last position was a management position, I have really improved in this area.</p> <p>or</p> <p>I'm not a great public speaker, and that is why I love baking so much. Most of the time, interactions are one-on-one or in smaller groups.</p>
5	Tell me about yourself.	This is usually asked at the beginning of an interview. Don't say too little, and don't say too much. Say something personal and transition to professional.	I really love running and volunteer at a local running club in my community. In addition to this, I love baking, which is what has led me down this career path.
6	What are your career goals?	Show ambition but also a desire to learn. Giving a time frame also shows dedication and planning skills.	I hope to learn as much as I can about _____ so I can move forward in this industry and be a manager within three years.
7	What are your hobbies?	Be honest, but definitely highlight anything that relates to the job you are interviewing for.	I love to hike and be outdoors, but I especially love baking, and that is why I have chosen it as a profession.
8	How do you handle pressure?	Stay positive and do not say "not very well." If it is something that you are not great at, explain that you are working on it and have improved a lot.	Like anyone, I feel the stress it causes, but I remain calm and use the pressure to help me work as efficiently as possible.

Exercise 1

CLASS SURVEY

Use the following words to make questions in the present perfect to ask your classmates. Then walk around and interview them. When someone says "yes," write his/her name beside the question.

#	Prompt	Present Perfect Question	Classmate
1	have / you / ever / go / interview		
2	have / you / ever / go / career fair		
3	have / you / ever / arrive / late / interview		
4	have / you / ever / network / your / community		
5	have / you / ever / find / job / Internet		
6	have / you / ever / work / for / family		
7	have / you / ever / volunteer		
8	have / you / ever / have / difficulty / understanding / interview / question		
9	have / you / ever / quit / job		
10	have / you / ever / get / promotion		

Exercise 2

READING PRACTICE

A. Reading

Read the following interview and underline all of the uses of the present perfect.

Mrs. Elliot: Hello, Mr. Sanchez. Please come in.

Mr. Sanchez: Thank you. Please, call me Marcos.

Mrs. Elliot: Okay, Marcos. Did you have trouble finding us?

Mr. Sanchez: No. I have been here before.

Mrs. Elliot: Have you?

Mr. Sanchez: Yes. I love your bakery and your pastries. I think I have tried them all now!

Mrs. Elliot: Oh, that's wonderful. I must say I am very proud of my business. Well, let's get started. Do you have any baking experience?

Mr. Sanchez: Yes. I have worked in two bakeries. In my home country, I owned a specialty bakery that made custom wedding cakes. When I moved to Canada, I got a job at the Bread Basket. I worked there for two years.

Mrs. Elliot: Why did you leave that job?

Mr. Sanchez: I went back to school full-time to improve my English.

Mrs. Elliot: I see. That's great. Your English is very good!

Mr. Sanchez: Thank you. I have lived in Canada for five years now, so I have had a lot of practice.

Mrs. Elliot: Have you ever worked in the front with customers?

Mr. Sanchez: In the beginning, I mostly worked in the back because my English skills were weak and I was shy. But, slowly, I started working more and more with customers, and for the last two years I have worked one-on-one with a lot of customers to design custom cakes. I really enjoy that part of the job now, actually.

Mrs. Elliot: We do a lot of that here. I think you would like it.

Mr. Sanchez: I agree. I would love to work here.

Mrs. Elliot: I just have one more question for you. Do you have experience with large orders? Have you ever baked for special events with a hundred guests or more?



Exercise 2 cont.

A. Reading cont.

Mr. Sanchez: Oh, yes. I have catered many events. My bakery in Argentina used to provide baked goods for all the local charity events and political events. Usually there were at least a hundred people at those events.

Mrs. Elliot: Well, that's great, Marcos. I don't have any more questions. I think you'd be a very good fit here. I still have a few interviews left to conduct, but I'm very impressed with your experience. I'll be in touch in the next few days.

Mr. Sanchez: Wonderful. Thank you so much for your time, Mrs. Elliot. I'll look forward to hearing from you.

Mrs. Elliot: Thanks, Marcos. We'll talk to you soon.

Mr. Sanchez: Goodbye!

B. Multiple-Choice

Answer the following questions based on the conversation in Part A.

1. Mr. Sanchez _____.
 - a) has experience with large orders
 - b) has owned a business before
 - c) was fired from his last job
 - d) both a and b
2. Mrs. Elliot _____.
 - a) is a baker
 - b) is the owner
 - c) is an employee
 - d) is hungry
3. Mrs. Elliot and Mr. Sanchez _____.
 - a) are rude to one another
 - b) are polite to one another
 - c) are polite and friendly to one another
 - d) speak very formally

C. True or False?

Read the statements below. If the statement is true based on the conversation in Part A, write T beside the sentence. If it is false, write F.

- _____ 1. Marcos has visited the bakery before his interview.
- _____ 2. Mrs. Elliot is from Argentina.
- _____ 3. Marcos hasn't worked with customers very much.

Exercise 2 cont.

D. Written Responses

Answer the following questions based on the reading in Part A.
Use full sentences.

1. How many bakeries has Marcos worked in?

2. Why did Marcos stop working at his last job?

3. What job-related questions does Mrs. Elliot ask during the interview?

4. Do you think Marcos will get the job? Why or why not?

Exercise 3

DEFINITION PRACTICE

Match these definitions with the words around the room.

#	Definition	Word
1	Right away!	
2	a person or letter that testifies to someone's reliability or ability	
3	in the beginning	
4	you are confident about what you are about to say	
5	a person you run a business with equally	
6	to be in contact with someone	
7	to have warm respect and/or approval for someone or something	
8	a region or part of town	
9	an undertaking or assignment that someone or a group of people works on	
10	a focused area of study or work	
11	to feel admiration and respect for something someone does	
12	the human race	

Exercise 4

LISTENING PRACTICE

Listen to the interview and answer the following questions.

A. True or False?

If the statement is true, write T beside the sentence.

If it is false, write F.

- _____ 1. Rob didn't start working immediately after receiving his degree.
- _____ 2. Rob has a reference.
- _____ 3. Rob has met Janice before.

B. Multiple-Choice

1. The tone of this conversation is _____ .
- a) casual, relaxed, and informal
 - b) polite, friendly, and professional
 - c) unprofessional and rude
 - d) professional and emotional
2. Where did Rob get his degree?
- a) University of Brazil
 - b) Saint Paul's University
 - c) University of São Paolo
 - d) University of Saint Mary's
3. Rob _____ .
- a) has volunteer experience
 - b) has worked in construction
 - c) has owned his own business
 - d) a, b, and c
4. Janice and Eric _____ .
- a) are business partners
 - b) are married
 - c) were both at the career fair
 - d) have been to Brazil

C. Written Responses

1. How many speakers are there? What are their names?

2. What did Rob do at Houses for Humanity? Was he paid for his job?

3. Was this a successful interview? Why or why not?

Assessment

Imagine you are having a job interview for a retail position. With a partner, complete the following script with your own ideas. When you are finished, read it out loud together in front of your teacher. Your teacher or audience will have to be able to answer the questions to the right.

Questions:

1. Who is the interviewer?
2. Why does the interviewee want this job?
3. What is the interviewee's greatest strength?
4. How did the interview go?

A: Hello. You must be _____ . I'm Sam Waters, the _____ .

B: _____ .

A: Thanks for coming on such short notice. So, tell me a bit about yourself.

B: Sure! _____
_____ .

A: Great. And why are you interested in working for _____ ?

B: _____ .

A: Nice. What would you say is your greatest strength?

B: _____ .

A: That's good. Now, I see that you worked at _____
for just a few months. May I ask why you left?

B: _____ .

A: I see. Do you have any career goals for the future?

B: _____ .

A: Okay, great. Is there anything you want to ask me?

B: Yes. _____ ?

A: Good question. _____ .

B: Okay, thank you very much.

A: Well, I think that is it for now. Thanks for coming, _____ . We'll be in touch next week.

B: _____ .

Speaking Assessment Tool

Student: _____

Date	CLB Level	Assessed By	Speaking Task	Skill Competencies
			Asking for and giving information in a job interview	I. Interacting with Others, IV. Sharing Information

Criteria	Goes Beyond	Meets the Mark	On the Right Path	Needs Direction
provides requested information				
asks a relevant question				
uses eye contact and appropriate body language				
takes turns appropriately				
uses polite language for greeting and leave-taking				