

Effective Résumés for Educators

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Other Sections of Your Résumé

Review the original list you created when you began your résumé. Are there experiences that have not fit neatly in your résumé so far? Consider the following section headings, depending on your experience.

- Community Service
- Professional Development
- Extracurricular Activities
- Honors and Awards
- Language Skills
- Technology/Computer Skills
- Leadership Activities
- Professional Memberships
- International Experience
- Special Interests

The résumé represents your skills and experience as they relate to the type of job for which you are applying. As a career counselor, I never review a résumé before I ask for the student's job objective. The student's goals have an impact on the improvements I suggest. Keep the employer's perspective in mind as you create the résumé. For example, you might consider, "If I were a principal, what would I be looking for on a résumé of someone applying for this position?"

The goal of the résumé is very simple: a request for an interview. The résumé acts as a preview; you will have an opportunity to provide much more information during the interview.

Before You Begin

Gather together any old résumés you may have, letters of recommendation, student teaching evaluation forms, and any other documentation you may have from internships or other employment. Write a list of all your jobs, community service positions, student teaching, field placement experiences, and other accomplishments. Put the list aside and return to it if you remember something you left off!

Review materials from your college career center on résumé writing strategies. Inquire about sample résumés from former education students that might be available at the career center or from a faculty member. If you can review samples, notice what you like and don't like about the style, how the positions are described, and the general tone. Are the descriptions upbeat and accomplishment-oriented? Do

they seem unique to the individual or do they sound generic as you read over them?

Sections of Your Résumé

Identifying information: Put your name, address, and telephone numbers with area codes at the top of your résumé. Include your e-mail address if you check your e-mail daily. If you have both current and temporary addresses, include both.

It is essential that you have an answering machine connected to all telephone numbers listed on your résumé. An employer is likely to contact you only once by phone or e-mail, so be sure that the employer can contact you easily.

Objective: This optional section can clarify the type of position you are seeking. Some educators who are just graduating choose not to include an objective since their degree and certification often indicate an objective. Other educators choose to put an objective on their résumés to clarify their grade preferences within a broad certification range or to make it very easy for the employer to find their certification. Be careful not to exclude job options by your objective. Consider Mary's objective below:

- A position teaching English in a suburban high school.

By using this objective, she could not send this résumé to an urban or rural school district since she would likely be eliminated from the applicant pool. Whether or not you use an objective and how it is written is up to you. You may choose to have several résumés that are

the same except for the objective. Following are two acceptable objectives, one more detailed than the next.

- A teaching position in the upper elementary grades.
- A teaching position in the upper elementary grades in which I could utilize my knowledge of learning styles and computer technology to promote students' learning.

Education: If you are about to complete a degree program or are a recent graduate, then you will likely list your college degree in the beginning of your résumé. Your degree and certification are central to the position for which you are applying. An example of how to list your degree follows:

Moorhead State University,
Moorhead, MN
Candidate for B.S. in Math and
Secondary Education, May 2003
Certification: Math (7-12), (plus
effective date)

If you have attended more than one institution or you are working towards a master's degree, always list the most recent degree first. Once you graduate, you can remove the "Candidate for." If you received your degree several years ago and have recent experience, then you may want to list your teaching experience first and your degree(s) later in the résumé.

Teaching Experience: This section will include any type of teaching experience you have had such as student teaching, pre-practicum/field placements, tutoring and/or summer teaching experiences (i.e. arts

and crafts teacher, summer school math teacher).

School hiring officials are very interested in new graduates' student teaching experience. How you describe your unique experiences in the classroom will distinguish you from other applicants. Some principals remain interested in how you describe your student teaching experience even after you have had several years of experience.

Use your letters of recommendation and student teaching evaluations to assist you in writing a summary of your student teaching experiences. You may choose to utilize key terms that are current in your field. Clarity, brevity, and a positive tone are keys to an effective description. Review the following two examples below and then develop a description from your own individual experiences.

Red River Elementary School
Taos, NM
Fall 2002
Student Teacher, third grade
Planned and implemented unit on Africa integrating all areas of the curriculum.

Organized a culminating show for parents, including students' sculptures and poetry. Taught mathematics utilizing computer software, textbooks, and manipulatives. Collaborated with other grade three teachers to organize and implement two-night camping trip to complement unit on geology.

Burnt Hills High School
Burnt Hills, NY
Student Teacher
Taught chemistry classes for eleventh grade students, incorporating experiments and Internet research. Co-taught Advanced Placement students in the twelfth grade chemistry class. Prepared students for statewide exams through whole class review and small group instruction after school.

Presented with cooperating practitioner at regional conference for math and science teachers.

Work Experience: School hiring officials are interested in other experiences you have had with children outside of the classroom. For example, if you have been a camp counselor, a childcare provider, or a coach, you are demonstrating an interest in working with children. This experience complements your educational program and greatly interests hiring officials.

In addition to related work with children, you have work experience in other fields. Some candidates dismiss non-teaching experience as unrelated and choose not to put it on their résumés. However, principals and other hiring officials can learn more about you through reading about your non-teaching experiences. By describing your work outside the classroom, you can take the opportunity to document your skills in areas such as customer service and technology, as well as your ability to take initiative or manage multiple priorities. Experience in an office, at a restaurant, or in retail indicates an ability to work with the public and suggests attributes such as patience and leadership ability.

Résumé Design and Layout

Your résumé should be clear, readable, and well organized. Use a type size and style that is easy to read. In the business field, a one-page résumé is suggested. However, in education, one or two pages are acceptable. It may take more than one page to fully give the employer an overview of your background. The more recent your experiences are, the better. Seniors should focus on what they have done since high school. Master's level candidates may choose to focus on

experiences since they earned their undergraduate degrees.

Moderate your use of bold and italics; the résumé should be "easy on the eye" rather than busy and overwhelming. Ask for feedback from a career counselor and friends on how your résumé looks in terms of both layout and content. It is critical that your résumé be error-free. Look for typos, extra spaces, and errors in spelling or grammar. Think of your résumé as a sample of your professional work.

When your résumé has obtained a "seal of approval," you are ready to print it on a laser printer using a high quality bond paper. Select paper in the conservative tones of white or cream. Be sure the paper photocopies well, as the employer is likely to copy your résumé and disseminate it to the hiring committee members.

Résumés in the Age of Technology

Some school districts are utilizing the Internet to assist with their searches for the most qualified candidates. More and more school districts have their own websites and some of these include opportunities to apply on-line.

When sending your résumé electronically, consider several points. Computer software varies in its ability to read various fonts and other enhancements. Keep your résumé simple in terms of fonts and margins. Read the instructions carefully on each website before you transmit. Contact the district if you have questions.

Some vacancy listings request candidates to fax their résumés and cover letters to the school. Use white or a light shade of paper when faxing your résumé and be sure the transmission was successful. You may choose to follow-up an electronic transmission of your résumé with a copy sent through the U.S. mail.

Success Tips

- *Your résumé represents the accumulation of all your hard work over the past four years, or more if you are a master's candidate. Be sure to give your résumé the time and attention it deserves.*
- *Don't disqualify yourself from the process! Errors of any sort will find your résumé in the recycle bin.*
- *It is likely that you'll receive lots of advice from well meaning friends and family. Check out those "Someone told me . . ." statements with a career counselor or faculty member.*
- *As you gain more experience, add it to your résumé. Keep your résumé up-to-date on your computer, and save it on a disk. You may need it when you least expect it!*
- *Review your résumé with pride! Be prepared to talk in an interview about all of the aspects of your résumé as if the experiences happened yesterday.*



The Challenge of Cover Letter Writing

Thomas J. Denham, Director of the Career Center
Siena College, New York



“ . . . COVER LETTERS DO MATTER AND THE EMPLOYER WILL EVENTUALLY READ THE LETTER WORD FOR WORD TO SEE IF YOU CAN WRITE.”

Cover letter writing is an important, but often neglected, part of the job search. Updating a résumé is, for most people, a manageable task. A résumé is a list of your accomplishments. Why then do so many job seekers have a hard time when it comes to the cover letter? Persuading others and selling your education and experience creatively with words can be a real challenge. Even for education students, writing an argument about why you should be granted an interview can often be time consuming.

If you ask 10 career counselors about the “right” way to construct a letter, you will probably receive 10 different answers. Most people spend hours writing their résumés, but often send out form cover letters with only minor changes; employers can spot these letters a mile away. Each time you send your résumé, you send a cover letter in order to elaborate on your qualifications. A cover letter is one more way for you to sell yourself. Its purpose is not to get you a job, but to get you an interview.

There are many conflicting opinions about how to write cover letters, but some general rules do exist, and this article will give you a reality-based approach.

Take It From the Top

There are two schools of thought on length. The “short” school believes that cover letters should be brief and to the point since recruiters do not have a lot of time to read them. I went to the “long” school of cover letter writing that believes the employer is going to read the résumé first to screen out

candidates. However, cover letters do matter and the employer will eventually read the letter word for word to see if you can write. This is a sample of your writing skills and style, and so you will want it to flow in an organized manner. It is your one-minute commercial and you will want it to stand out from the rest of the pack. There are no two cover letters alike, but here are 10 general guidelines to keep you focused:

10 Rules of Cover Letter Writing

1. Don't draft generic letters; make each letter unique to a specific school district.
2. Address your letter to a specific person at the school district, with the correct spelling of that person's name and title.
3. Communicate something unique to that person.
4. Show how you can meet the needs of the school, rather than what you hope they will do for you.
5. Use the body of the letter to highlight your education and experiences that are relevant to the job.
6. Qualify and quantify your experiences and achievements using examples.
7. Ask for a meeting to discuss your qualifications in more detail.
8. Keep to a minimum sentences that begin with “I.”
9. Write a one-page letter; spell check, proofread, and laser print it so you don't produce a “sloppy copy.”
10. Sign the letter (make a copy for your files) and paperclip it on top of your résumé. Send your letter and résumé in 9 x 12 manila envelope.

All cover letters are different. However, each should have the following parts: an introduction, a body, and a closing.

Introductory Paragraph

In the opening paragraph, you want to explain to the reader why you are writing, what position you seek, and how you heard about the job. Don't make the reader guess which school vacancies interest you. When possible, include the name of a referral within the first two sentences.

A classified ad or job description can be highlighted to target the key points; you can then match your general skills and what you offer to what they seek. In the second and third paragraphs you will back up your generalizations with examples. You may also want to prove your knowledge of the district and show why you specifically want to work at that school; focus on the facts. Be sure you are attracting the recipient's attention to read on.

A sample opening might be: “Jane Doe suggested I write to you regarding a position as an English teacher at Bethlehem Central High School. She felt my organization, communication, and technical skills along with my two student teaching internships, would be an excellent fit for your growing school district. Bethlehem is known for its use of technology, and I have been able to integrate the Web into my courses.”

Second Body Paragraph

This is where you state your qualifications in detail. You should “sell and tell” both your education and experience, including your major, certifica-

tions, and internships or jobs that have transferable skills and add value to your candidacy. Give depth as to why you should be considered an ideal candidate. By using examples and specific accomplishments that relate to the employer, show the recruiter that you have the skills the school district seeks.

Here is a brief sample: "As part of my certification program at Siena College, I taught high school English at both an inner-city school and at a suburban district where I implemented some innovative teaching methods. For example, my class at Guilderland participated in a live satellite hookup with the International Space Station to discuss science fiction literature with the astronauts. In addition, . . ."

Third Body Paragraph

You may decide to add another paragraph that provides further examples of your relevant experience. Emphasize your abilities and personal qualities as they relate to the job. Many schools desire teachers who are creative and inspiring; use an example that proves your ability. Be sure to mention your research, your knowledge of the particular school district, and how you can meet their specific needs.

The following is a short sample: "In addition, my communication skills have been further developed as a result of having worked as a peer tutor in the Siena College Writing Center. As a camp counselor, for the last 4 summers I have had extensive experience supervising and working with people ages 10 to 16 which will help me lead a lesson in British literature at the Bethlehem Central High School. For example, . . ."

Closing Paragraph

Finally, refer the reader to your general qualifications on your enclosed résumé, and if required

your references, transcripts, certifications, or salary requirements. Be proactive in this paragraph and ask the reader for action by stating that you will be following up within a reasonable amount of time to discuss an interview at their convenience. A positive response is harder to ignore than a vague hope. Always thank the person to whom you are writing for his or her consideration and don't forget to sign the letter.

Here is a sample closing statement: "Enclosed is my résumé for your review. My plan is to be in the Albany area the last week of March, and I would like to discuss this opportunity in more detail. I will follow up with a phone call in the next two weeks. If you need to reach me my number is (555) 987-1234. Thank you for your consideration, and I look forward to speaking with you soon."

Cover Letter Do's & Don'ts

- Don't wait to send your letter out until weeks after the position has been advertised.
- Don't mass mail letters; send out résumés and letters to a small number of school districts at any one time.
- Do single-space your letter and match the font and size with your résumé.
- Do center your name, address and phone number at the top of the page, and be sure to leave ample margins on all sides.
- Do use standard type fonts like Times or Palatino and sizes from 10 to 12 points.
- Do include the date.
- Do find the name, job title, and address of the contact person. (See page 69 for the *AAEE Directory of Public School Systems in the United States*.)
- Don't send out a letter addressed "To Whom It May Concern."
- Do use a colon after the

salutation, not a comma.

- Do balance your confidence with humility.
- Do keep the interests of the reader in mind; the letter is about you, but it is written to get someone else's attention.
- Do highlight three to five key points from your résumé and use key words and phrases.
- Don't ramble on.
- Do give some "breathing room" between paragraphs by double spacing.
- Do excite the contact to call you in for an interview by the time he or she finishes reading your letter.
- Do use white or off-white résumé paper for both the cover letter and résumé.
- Do send your letter via overnight or priority mail if the situation warrants immediate attention.
- Do attach the ad for the job to a copy of your cover letter for accurate record keeping.
- Do make follow-up phone calls after a reasonable amount of time to check the status and to explore the possibility of an interview.

Be sure your letter is critiqued at least once by your career center counselor, by a faculty member in your academic department, or by your student teaching supervisor. Cover letter writing does not have to be painful. With proper planning, your polished cover letter can help you secure many interviews. Happy job hunting!

"BY USING EXAMPLES AND SPECIFIC ACCOMPLISHMENTS THAT RELATE TO THE EMPLOYER, SHOW THE RECRUITER THAT YOU HAVE THE SKILLS THE SCHOOL DISTRICT SEEKS."



Six "Ps" of Perfect Interviewing

Joyce Hardaway, Personnel Director
Hamilton County Schools, Tennessee



**"... THE INTERVIEW
IS STILL THE MOST
IMPORTANT
INSTRUMENT USED
IN MAKING HIRING
DECISIONS ..."**

You are ready to snare that teaching job that you have dreamed about. You are committed and ready to teach. All that stands in your way is the interview.

Despite the questions raised about its validity, the employment interview is still the most important instrument used in making hiring decisions, and many teachers are not hired because they do not know how to sell themselves well during an interview. Make sure that you have done your homework and have mastered the first five "Ps" of perfect interviewing.

The First P: Be Prepared

Do your research. You need to know about the school district. There are many ways to find information: call district offices, visit schools, interview teachers, read the local newspaper for information regarding the schools, or read district publications. Check the district's website for:

- ☼ professional development opportunities,
- ☼ test data,
- ☼ school community collaboration,
- ☼ employee benefits,
- ☼ dropout and attendance data,
- ☼ salary information,
- ☼ technology,
- ☼ new teacher support,
- ☼ opportunities for administrative positions,
- ☼ leadership development opportunities, and
- ☼ mentors and mentor training.

Research the district so that you are informed about the board of education's goals, student achievement levels, and growth or lack thereof. Learn

how many schools are in the district and any special programs or grant opportunities available. Armed with this information, you will be able to ask questions that show the interviewer that you have done your homework.

The Second P: Practice

Recruit a good friend, spouse, child, or career center staff member to listen to you as you communicate your strengths and reasons you want a career in education. If you cannot convince people who know you, you won't be able to convince an interviewer.

Districts are interested in teachers who want and have the ability to make a difference in students' lives. Draw on your strengths from your student teaching, internships, and other experiences.

Sell yourself. Practice your delivery regarding things that you want to communicate about yourself. Nearly every interview will provide an opportunity for you to communicate something about yourself and why you have selected the teaching profession. Focus on areas in which you have excelled. Learn to listen to the question and the message behind the question.

Be clear, yet concise. The initial interview is often about 30 minutes long and your interviewer will ask several questions. If the interviewer stops writing, you should stop talking.

Be prepared to ask your questions. Take notes of the answers and be sure to determine any follow-up procedures the district suggests.

The Third P: Be Prompt

It is rude for an applicant to be late for an interview. Some interviewers will cancel the appointment if the applicant is late. Recognize that interviewers want to hire teachers, and because there are many jobs to fill, they work long hours and every minute counts. Plan to arrive at least 15 minutes early. This allows you time to relax, find your parking place, check your appearance in the mirror, and do some positive self-talk prior to the interview.

The Fourth P: Be Polite

It is important to understand that the interview does not begin when you shake hands with the interviewer. It begins when you drive onto the property. Make sure that you drive slowly. You don't want to nearly run over the person you soon discover is your interviewer! It is also important to observe parking rules. Someone will notice if you have parked in a handicapped-parking place, and that fact will get back to the interviewer.

Do not be rude or presumptuous with the receptionist, who is often part of the interviewing team and is asked to share his or her perceptions of and interactions with teacher candidates. Those who are rude and uncooperative as applicants will probably be the same types of employees. Applicants who demonstrate these behaviors tend to remain applicants, not employees.

The Fifth P: Be Professional

Make a favorable impression within the first minute. Always dress for the job that you would like to have in the future, not

the job you currently have. Even if you plan to be a kindergarten teacher and sit on the floor with the kids, it is not appropriate to wear play clothes to an interview. Avoid dangling earrings and other facial jewelry that take the interviewer's attention away from what you say. Make sure that your shoes are clean and shined. Running shoes are not appropriate footwear for an interview.

Keep strong fragrances to a minimum. Interview rooms may be small, and your lotion or cologne should not be overpowering. Many people have allergies, and you do not want to be the one to make your interviewer ill.

Give a good handshake. Do not crush the interviewer's hand, but make sure your grip is firm.

Remember people's names. Be sure to stand with professional presence and wait until the interviewer asks you to be seated. Avoid nervous fidgeting, shaking of legs, tapping on desks, or pulling at hair.

Make sure your contact information is available. The interviewer will want to be able to reach you, so your e-mail address, telephone number, cellular number, and/or pager should be indicated on your résumé or application. Listen to your own answering machine. Does the message sound professional? It should. Be sure that your e-mail address portrays an applicant looking for a position. Words such as "Virginkiller," "Sexymomma," or "Pimpman" in your e-mail address tend to diminish your credibility as a professional.

Write a thank you note or e-mail message within a week of the interview. This keeps your name in front of the interviewer in a pleasant way.

The Last P: Be Persistent

Your persistence can get you the specific job that you want. Make sure that your application has every required document and all references so that you are qualified for employment.

Send an e-mail message or

call to let the personnel director or your interviewer know that you are still interested. Your e-mail messages or calls should always be polite, non-threatening, and gentle reminders of your interest. They should not be long. You have already had the interview.

If you reach an answering machine, a short message like, "Dr. Jones, This is Jane Smith, the biology applicant whom you interviewed on April 15. I was just calling to let you know that I am still interested and look forward to working in District County Schools. Please let me know of any possible opportunities."

If districts have additional procedures, follow the directions provided to you during the interview.

The perfect interviews are those in which both the applicant and the interviewer end the session very pleased. Make this happen with the "Six P's of Perfect Interviewing."

"THE PERFECT INTERVIEWS ARE THOSE IN WHICH BOTH THE APPLICANT AND THE INTERVIEWER END THE SESSION VERY PLEASED."



Behavioral Interviewing for Educators

Ellen Nagy, Assistant Director of Career Services, Bowling Green State University, Ohio

Behavioral or competency-based interviewing is quickly gaining popularity among employers, because unlike traditional interviewing, behavioral interviewing focuses on specific examples of past behavior that can be used to predict future actions and attitudes.

A behavioral interview is a structured, goal-oriented interview process that helps a school district evaluate applicants and improve the "fit" between people and jobs.

How Can I Best Answer Behavioral Interview Questions?

Candidates can prepare for behavioral interviews by reviewing the position qualifica-

tions and identifying examples from past experiences that relate to those requirements. A complete answer to a behavior-based question must explain the task or problem for which you were responsible, the specific actions you took, and the results of your actions.

The S.O.A.R. model provides an easy framework to help you organize your responses and articulate your skills.

Situation: Think of a situation in which you were involved having a positive outcome.

Obstacle: Describe any obstacles you encountered in this situation.

Action: Specify what actions you took in this situation to overcome the obstacles and achieve your results.

Results: Highlight the positive outcomes.

With an understanding of the behavior-based interview technique, with good preparation, and by remembering the S.O.A.R. model, you will be a candidate who interviews with confidence and leaves a good impression.

Sample Behavioral Questions

Describe a situation where you had to "think on your feet" to handle an emerging, unexpected situation.

Describe the process you would use to deal with a student who was disrupting the class.

What provisions do you make for meeting the range of skills and needs commonly present in a classroom?

What steps have you taken prior to a parent-teacher conference to ensure its success?

Explain a difficult situation, how you handled it, what you learned from it and what would you do differently now.

Commonly Asked Interview Questions

Thomas A. Kersten, Assistant Professor of Educational Leadership, Roosevelt University, Illinois

School district administrators who hire teachers typically place a great deal of emphasis on how candidates respond to interview questions. If you are like most candidates completing teacher education programs, you may be unsure what you will be asked and how best to respond. To help you prepare for interviews, we present here the most frequent responses from 260 elementary, middle school, and high school principals from two states who were asked to identify the one question they would be sure to ask.

Getting to Know You

- ▶ Why did you choose this profession as a career?
- ▶ What makes you the best candidate for this position?
- ▶ What research have you done about our school?
- ▶ Describe a personal experience which had an impact on your teaching.
- ▶ What are your interests outside teaching?
- ▶ What would your worst critic say about you?
- ▶ What would you like us to know about you?

Interpersonal Skill

- ▶ If I spoke with your students (cooperating teacher, university supervisor, principal, colleagues, or friends), what three words would they use to describe you?
- ▶ How would you facilitate collaboration between home and school?
- ▶ If confronted by an angry parent (colleague) on an issue, how would you best respond?
- ▶ How would your students know that you genuinely care about them?

- ▶ How important is it for you to be well liked by your students?
- ▶ How would you respond to a student who asked for your advice on a difficult personal situation?

Instruction

- ▶ Describe a typical class period.
- ▶ What instructional strategies have you found most effective?
- ▶ What are the components of an effective lesson plan?
- ▶ Describe a lesson which was particularly successful by walking me through each stage from planning through delivery.
- ▶ Explain what a strong balanced literary program would look like in your classroom?
- ▶ What research-based teaching strategies have you used?
- ▶ What specific strategies would you use to assist students who are struggling in reading and mathematics?
- ▶ Describe how you have differentiated a lesson to accommodate varying student needs.
- ▶ What would you do to actively engage your students?
- ▶ What do you do when you see some students are not learning?
- ▶ How would you motivate the reluctant learner?
- ▶ What would you do with students who fail continually to complete homework?

Assessment

- ▶ How do you measure student success?
- ▶ What would you do to improve student achievement?
- ▶ How do you know whether

your curriculum is appropriately matched to your students' needs?

Classroom Management

- ▶ What type of classroom management plan would you implement?
- ▶ How would you set up a student management system?
- ▶ How do you handle children who are difficult to manage?
- ▶ Describe the toughest discipline situation you encountered and how you handled it.
- ▶ If you were having classroom management difficulties, when and who would you ask for help?

Self-Analysis

- ▶ During your student teaching experience, what did you find most challenging?
- ▶ Describe a time that you were in a difficult situation and explain how you resolved it.
- ▶ If you were doing something for students that you knew was right and your principal told you to stop, what would you do?
- ▶ Tell me a story from your experience that keeps you up at night.
- ▶ Describe in detail your best and worst days in a classroom.
- ▶ Describe the best lesson you ever taught and explain why it was great.
- ▶ Describe a challenge you encountered during student teaching. What did you learn from it?

Other

- ▶ What are your long term goals?

- ▶ What new ideas would you bring to our school?
- ▶ Give an example of a time you went above and beyond to accomplish a task.
- ▶ What does loyalty mean to you?
- ▶ Is there anything that I didn't ask you that you were hoping I would?

Questions to Ask

Candidates are often asked at the end of the interview if they have any questions. This is an opportunity not only to learn more about the school, but also to demonstrate professionalism. You should avoid any negative-toned or salary/benefit questions. You will have the opportunity to ask financial questions when the position is offered. Here are several questions you may want to consider.

- ▶ What are you most proud of about your school?
- ▶ What would faculty, students, and parents say are the strengths of your school?
- ▶ What were your school's goals for last year?
- ▶ How do teachers integrate technology into the classroom?
- ▶ What priorities would you have for me as a new faculty member?
- ▶ Do you offer a mentoring program?
- ▶ How does the school district support professional development?
- ▶ What extracurricular activity opportunities might be available?

Interviewing Tips

Dress neatly

Be prepared - know about the school you are interviewing for -
check out the school website

Use the first question - background information to demonstrate your
love for teaching and care for kids by what you have done in the
past and the connections to education in a variety of forms

Show you are both independent and collaborative (enjoy developing
curriculum, willing to share and team)

Weave in knowledge of pedagogy and child development in your
answers as well as content knowledge

Have a lesson that went really well in your head that demonstrates
high levels of student engagement, assessment, monitoring and
adjustment, closure

How did this lesson reach a diverse group of learners?

Be able to assess/self reflect on what you would change next time.

Welcome admin and colleagues into your classroom.

Appreciate feedback

Student management - yes - kids should like you - good rapport
leads to better instruction, different than being their buddies.

How do you develop this? Greet kids as they walk in the door,
be well organized and not waste their time/have down time in
class; structures to assist students to be independent learners -
websites, notes posted, turn in bins etc. Be available - show
them you care and you have high expectations and know they
can achieve them. Here to help.

Use your science experiences background to bring real life
experiences into the classroom making text material come alive

RESPONSES DISTRICTS LOOK FOR IN TEACHER INTERVIEWS

THREE GOLDEN RULES

1. STUDENT SUCCESS: IS IT BEST FOR KIDS?
(MOST IMPORTANT)
2. TEACHER GROWTH: STAFF DEVELOPMENT
(FOR BENEFIT OF KIDS)
3. INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS: THE GLUE

ALMOST ANY QUESTION CAN BE ANSWERED THE
WAY A DISTRICT WANT TO HEAR IT IF YOU USE
THESE THREE AREAS OF FOCUS!

FOR ANY QUESTION:

- TAKE A MOMENT
- THINK
- RESPOND FROM THE “GOLDEN RULES”

AREAS OF FOCUS:

Concepts, Ideas, Themes

USING THE "GOLDEN RULES," THE FOLLOWING ITEMS OF INFORMATION SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN YOUR PHILOSOPHY.

A. Mission Statement

- I love kids
- I believe they can all learn and grow
- I can make a significant contribution to my students
- My primary satisfaction comes from their success, not mine
- I believe that education is the most important thing – it is our future

B. Organization

- You are highly organized
- You plan well

C. Work Ethic

- Hard worker
- Long hours
- "Work on your mind"

D. Extra-Curricular Activities

- You want to be involved, a part of the school and larger community.
- You want to work with kids

E. You Are Innovative

- Willing to try new ideas
- Willing to try new techniques

F. You Have the Ability to make Students Think

- Stretch their learning
- Reach for higher levels.

G. You Are a Motivator

- Interesting
- Creative
- "Alive" for students

H. You Are Objective

- A facilitator for kids -They don't have to always agree with you

I. You Have Goals and a Plan

- For everything!

J. You Understand the Uniqueness of Each Student

- We are all different
- Work with individuals
- Flexibility (Willingness to "give"-- from a little to a lot)
- Feeling level (the inside of a student)

K. You Are a Good Listener

- You Really Are!

INTEREST IN TEACHING PUPILS

- A Heart for Kids - Love working with students and helping them succeed and grow, academically and socially.
- Believe that all students can learn
- Demonstrating visible support of students outside of class
- Co-curricular activities
- Have high expectations for students and are willing to help students achieve expectations
- Empathy, versus sympathy, for students

PROFESSIONAL PREPARATION AND SCHOLARSHIP

- Knowledge of effective schools research, technological applications in education, recent educational literature you have read
- Understand motivation, behavioral and human growth/development theories
- Emerging trends and issues in education

SELF-ASSESSMENT OF STRENGTH/WEAKNESSES

- Areas of strengths
- Areas for growth

TYPES OF INTERVIEW QUESTIONS:

- **MISSION/PURPOSE**--A teacher with a high sense of mission or purpose possesses a clear sense of personal meaning and relates this understanding to his/her role as a teacher.
- **INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES** -- A teacher skilled in instructional strategies thoroughly understands principles of instruction and is able to clearly demonstrate the application of those principles in the classroom.
- **CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT**--A teacher who skillfully manages his/her classroom organizes the classroom and instructional materials while providing the necessary leadership and guidance for students in order to maximize learning for all.
- **HUMAN INTERACTION**--A teacher who is highly skilled in human interaction values, relates to, understands and communicates with others in order to develop harmonious relationships and human support systems.
- **KNOWLEDGE OF CURRENT EDUCATION CONCEPT** -- A teacher who possesses current knowledge is able to intelligently discuss current ideas or notions and has thought sufficiently about them to be able to offer opinions about their relative worth and how he/she applies them in the classroom.

- Why are you interested in a position at _____ school district?
- What is your experience thus far in education?
- What would an excellent classroom look like?
- Describe elements of a lesson plan.
- Who is it important to build relationships with in a schoolth environment, and how do you intend to accomplish this?
- Do you believe that all students can learn? What indicators do you look for to determine if learning has taken place?
- How would you bring in multi-cultural awareness?
- Why do you want to be a teacher? .Do you have any grade level preferences?
- Do you have any questions for us?
- When I walk into your classroom, what will I find? What will you be doing?
- How would you handle a conflict between students?
- How would you handle a conflict between yourself and a parent?
- How would you adjust a lesson so that it is appropriate for all levels in your room?
- What would you do if a child had trouble separating from a parent for the school day?
- If there were parents in your classroom, what would they be doing?
- How would your students describe you?
- How would their parents describe you?
- What would you do if a child refused to cooperate with you?
- Describe a teachable moment you have had.
- Describe your most successful lesson.

What Your Interviewer is Looking For:

- Prescribed responses. A rubric of desired answers.
- Themes woven throughout the answers. Think about the big questions.

Know Yourself

Do you "have it together?"

Does what you say clearly derive from a consistent underlying set of values and beliefs that are deeply felt and radiated in every response?

- Be a compassionate servant.

10 Positive Principles of Interviewing

1. Give yourself adequate preparation and duration time for this interview.
2. Relax
3. Be honest and consistent. Know what you believe.
4. Demonstrate a range of emotions -- enthusiasm, seriousness, compassion, charisma.
5. Take time to think -before responding.
6. Answer directly and follow up with supporting examples or explanations, but NO RAMBLING!!!! (Sometimes, one or two words are more powerful.)
7. Non-verbal clues are equally important.
8. Be prepared to ask one or two thoughtful questions.
9. Be prepared to synthesize jf given the opportunity.
10. Communicate that you LOVE AND CARE for kids.

Sample Interview Questions:

1. Teachers have the opportunity to make a positive difference in children's lives. We are very interested in hearing a little about two or three students whom you have worked with.
2. Describe how you teach 6th graders to read. What specific teaching strategies do you use to help children read?
3. How have you worked with parent volunteers in your classroom? How will you make it easy for parents to participate in your classroom?
4. What is the most memorable thing that has happened in a class you were teaching?
5. A student is a continual classroom disruption, talking, off task, and uncooperative. What do you do?
6. You become aware of unprofessional conduct of a teacher who is very popular with the staff and community. You haven't witnessed any of the unprofessional behavior, but you are very concerned. What do you do?
7. If you were given a \$15,000 budget to purchase technology for your 6th grade classroom, then what would you purchase and how would you use it?
8. You are teaching students how to simplify fractions. How would you teach the lesson in a creative way?
9. Can all children learn to read? (Follow-up question: the state will test second graders to assure that all students can read by the end of the second grade. Can all children learn to read by the end of second grade?)
10. Describe how second graders learn to read. What specific teaching strategies do you use to help children read?
11. What is the funniest thing that has happened in a class you were teaching?
12. How have you worked with parent volunteers in your classroom? How do you make it easy for parents to participate in your classroom?
13. Did you do Running Records with all of your students last year? Follow-up question: what did you learn about your children by listening to them read?
14. What is your all time favorite children's book and why? What is the best book you read this year?
15. Describe your education and experience that has prepared you for a teaching position.

16. Describe the steps you would take to prepare yourself prior to the first student day at the beginning of the school year.
17. Tell us how you would individualize instruction to meet the varying needs of the different abilities of the students in your classroom.
18. Describe a successful lesson you developed and taught and what made it effective. How did you assess that the lesson was effective?
19. Tell us about an example of inappropriate student behavior in the classroom and what did you do to address the issue?
20. What experience do you have in working with students of diverse backgrounds?
21. How would you solicit and involve parents in the classroom?
22. How should you effectively work with one or more classroom para-educators to help with instruction and student behavior?
23. What personal, academic, and professional strengths would you bring that would contribute to the success of all students.
24. When we enter your classroom, what will we see happening that indicates good instruction and how will you know you have been effective?
25. How do you work with students that are experiencing difficulties in your classroom? Difficulties may include *lack* of academic achievement, unacceptable classroom behaviors, excessive absences or tardies, etc.
26. Our mission is to make the school district a place where every single student receives the education of an advanced level student. What will you do to help your students achieve this goal?

Here are some additional topics covered during interviews. Questions in an interview for a teaching position will be asked in different ways, but they usually relate to the following issues:

- Student's growth (or positive impact on student learning)
- Classroom management
- Teamwork
- Quality lesson design
- Working effectively with other staff members and parents
- How open are you to change '
- "Tell me about yourself" and "why you became a teacher" type questions
- Washington state EALR's/GLE's

As you can imagine, each of these areas can take on multiple layers of questions and, in addition, each school site will have their own questions based on their needs, goals, and context.

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Interview Questions for UW Bothell Intern Practice

Interviewer Name _____ Candidate Name _____

1. What are your top three priorities as a teacher? How do you put those priorities into action?
2. Describe your approach to behavior management.
3. Describe your process for developing a unit of study, including your plan for assessment.
4. What do you personally and professionally bring to this position and/or to our school?
5. What are you passionate about as a teacher?
6. How do you balance the needs of the individual and the needs of the group?
7. In what ways do you want to grow as a teacher next year, and how will you accomplish this?
8. Do you have any questions for us?

INITIAL INTERVIEW

Interview Location _____

Applicant's Name _____

Date _____

Interviewer _____ Certification/Endorsements _____

QUESTIONS:

?

+

PTS

1. What are your three most important reasons for wanting to be a teacher?	Self-concerns or academic concerns only	Some people focus but vague on student growth--OR interaction and communication with students	Focus upon student growth PLUS other reasons which focus upon people	
2. How much do you want to know about your students in order to be most helpful to them?	Only relating to school ways of dealing with the incident	Wants to know some things	As much as possible	
3. How would you deal with special needs students in your class?				
4. What do you need to know in order to begin your lesson planning for a class?	Vague on overall plan OR teacher self-centered	Specific plan but vague on awareness of students	A specific strategy which focuses upon student needs or awareness of student readiness level	
5. What four key components do you believe you must include in your plan?	Vague on core components of the lesson	Specific components, but vague on student practice or checking for understanding	Describes specific orderly plan, including student practice and checking for student understanding	
6. When you think about your students, in what major ways do you most want to influence their lives?	Vague or unclear	Specific affective area or specific cognitive area only	Specific affective and cognitive areas	
7. What two core teaching strategies do you most use to achieve this result?	Focus upon teacher behaviors only	Strategies which may seek active student involvement	Specific teaching strategies which include student active involvement	
8. How would you respond to an incident in the classroom in which several students were ridiculing a student of different color or ability?	Difficulty in providing ways of dealing with incident	Refer to others or try not to make an issue of the incident	Provides clear explanation of dealing with both immediate and long term problem	

TOTAL OF PLUSES: _____

INSTRUCTIONS: Score each response with a "+" in the "PTS" column if the response directly answers the question. Questions 13-18 need only be used for candidates who you believe are of top quality and who you wish additional information from regarding their skills and philosophy.

QUESTIONS	-	?	+	PTS
9. Give me some examples of how you would communicate with parents who speak little or no English.	Has no response or ideas on how to deal with the situation	Vague answer not directly related	Cites several ways of communicating with parents and involvement in classroom	
10. Is there anything else you would like to add to help us know your basic views about teaching?				
<u>Additional Questions:</u> 11. How will you establish discipline in the classroom?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Students involved in setting rules -Clear expectations -Teaches expected behavior -Reinforces appropriate behavior -Effective parent communication -Involves parents/guardians 			
12. What do you feel your responsibility is to a student who is failing your class?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Describes a process for dealing with failure -Adjusts instruction -Deals with students individually -Looks for other ways to motivate students 			
13. Tell me what you do to cause students to be successful?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Listening (probe for meaning) -Use various teaching strategies -Positive attitude toward learning 			
14. Describe the parent communication system you would use.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Positive P.R. to parents -Variety of communication techniques -Create two-way communication 			
15. What is your experience with technology, and how would you use it in the classroom?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Describes equipment/software used -Gives examples of how to use technology -Describes how equipment enhances learning 			
16. Do you have any skills or interest in extracurricular activities?				

Additional Comments/Impressions:

Total Points: _____