

## English Job Interviews

By Matthew W. Blake, Shanghai, China

**Teacher notes:** As globalization continues, students from around the world have more and more opportunities to work in companies that use English as the means of communication in the work place.

I've found this lesson plan created a lot of interest and enthusiasm amongst my Chinese university students in Shanghai. As China opens up and more foreign companies are entering the market, university students are particularly interested in learning 'English for employment' skills.

**Aim:** Provide university-level students with an opportunity to practise job interviews in English using discussion and role play.  
**Skills:** speaking, listening  
**Level:** intermediate to advanced  
**Age:** university students  
**Resources:** blackboard and handouts  
**Time:** 45 mins

### Introduction: 5 mins

1. Begin the lesson by talking about foreign companies which operate in the country where you are teaching. Write some examples on the board (e.g. Microsoft, Disney) and elicit further examples from the students.
2. Explain to the students that the lesson will be based on job interviews.

### Main activity: 30 mins

#### Stage 1) Employment vocabulary (5 mins)

1. Write the words 'employer' and 'applicant' on the board. Check students understand the meaning of each term.
2. Distribute copies of handout A among students. Go over the vocabulary as a class.
3. After you have defined each word, get the students in small groups to classify the vocabulary according to whether it would be used by an 'employer', an 'applicant' or 'both' during a job interview.

#### Stage 2) Interview questions (5 mins)

1. Elicit from students an example of the type of question an employer would ask in an interview and an example of the type of question an applicant would ask. Write down any useful suggestions on the board under the headings 'employer' and 'applicant'.
2. Distribute handout B (questions) to students. Ensure the students understand the meaning of each question. In groups, ask students to decide which questions would be asked by an employer, and which would be asked by an applicant.

### Stage 3) Job interview role play (20 mins)

1. Divide the class into two groups: **employers seeking to hire employees** and **applicants seeking to find jobs**. Arrange the desks (if possible) in a row. Ask employers to sit along one side, and applicants to sit along the other side.
2. Explain to the employers that they are going to conduct an interview. Explain to the applicants that they are going to attend several interviews.
3. Give students five minutes per interview. Indicate to students when their first interview is finished, and encourage applicants to attend their second interview (employer to their left).
4. Circulate and help students with vocabulary and pronunciation related issues.
5. After 10 minutes (two interviews) ask employers and applicants to change roles.
6. Ensure students have access to the questions on the handout or on the board. Ensure they are aware that they should ask and answer each question and use the vocabulary given in their answers.

Note: If there is any confusion amongst the students, model the role play with a student first prior to beginning the lesson.

### Conclusion: 5 mins

Go over the questions with the entire class. Ask each student a different question and get them to give their answer to the whole class.

### Extension

If time permits, ask the employers who they would like to hire and why.

### Key to questions

1. What is your current salary? (employer)
2. What is the salary range on offer? (applicant)
3. What is your work experience? (employer)
4. Where is your company located? (applicant)
5. What did you study in school? (employer)
6. What languages can you speak? (employer)
7. Is there a chance for promotion? (applicant)
8. What are the benefits of working here? (applicant)

## HANDOUT A

work experience      vacation      medical insurance

bachelor / masters / MBA degree

training      salary      overtime

housing      promotion      work environment

transcripts      experience      personality

language abilities      references

letters of recommendation

honesty      equality      grades

office work      schedule      breaks

## HANDOUT B

1. What is your current salary?
2. What is the salary range on offer?
3. What is your work experience?
4. Where is your company located?
5. What did you study in school?
6. What languages can you speak?
7. Is there a chance for promotion?
8. What are the benefits of working here?