Job interviews · Lesson plan and answer key

B1 · English · Adults · Lesson Plan

Lesson plan · 56 min in total

Objectives

• Understand and use 12 job interview words, including candidate, interviewer, qualifications, salary, team player and be shortlisted, with correct word stress

• Use the present perfect with since, for, ever and never for experience up to now, and the past simple for finished events with a time reference (in 2019, in March, two months ago)

• Answer typical interview questions about experience, qualifications, strengths and weaknesses in full sentences

• Take part in a short mock job interview as interviewer and as candidate

6 min
Pairs

Warm-up

1. Write 'Job interviews' on the board. Ask the class: 'Who has had a job interview this year?' Ask one student who raises a hand: 'When was it? What job did you apply for?' Do not correct tenses yet. Just listen.

2. Quickly check two key words with mime and questions: 'In an interview, who asks the questions?' (the interviewer) 'Who wants the job?' (the candidate). Say them with stress: INterviewer, CANdidate.

3. Hand out the worksheet. Point to 'Warm-up: Your Job Interview Experiences'. Pairs choose three of the five questions and talk for about 3 minutes. Point to the useful phrases and say: 'Try to use these sentences.'

4. Students with no interview experience talk about a friend or family member, or say how they would prepare.

5. Monitor and write down two or three student sentences: one with the present perfect (e.g. 'I have had three interviews'), one with the past simple (e.g. 'Last year I applied for a job in a bank') and, if you hear one, an error (e.g. 'I have applied for a job last year').

6. Brief feedback: ask two pairs to share one interesting answer. Leave the sentences you collected for the grammar presentation later.

Worksheet: 1. Warm-up: Your Job Interview Experiences

6 min
Pairs

Presentation

1. Point to 'Job Interview Key Words'. Say: 'Match the six words to the definitions. The examples are from Daniel's interview.' Students work alone for 2 minutes, then compare in pairs.

2. Check answers as a class. Say each word and the class repeats it with the correct stress: CANdidate, INterviewer, qualifiCAtions, SAlary, TEAM player, be SHORTlisted.

3. Concept-check questions: 'If you are shortlisted, are you in a big group or a small group?' (small) 'Does a candidate have the job already?' (no) 'Is a salary paid every year or every day?' (every year, usually) 'Is a degree a qualification or a strength?' (a qualification)

4. Quickly add the other lesson words with examples: 'CV' ('I sent my CV to the company'), 'apply for' ('I applied for a job in March'), 'strengths and weaknesses' ('My strength is that I'm calm. My weakness is that I sometimes miss a deadline'), 'deadline' ('the last day or time to finish something'). Write them on the board.

Worksheet: 2. Job Interview Key Words

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10 min
Individual

Presentation

1. Set the context: 'Daniel Moreno is a candidate. Sarah Collins is the interviewer at Greenline Travel in Manchester. What job does Daniel want?' Students look at the first lines of 'Daniel's Interview at Greenline Travel' and find it (customer service team leader).

2. Students read the interview and answer the five questions in full sentences (4 minutes). They compare in pairs, then you check answers as a class.

3. Grammar focus: write two sentences from the text on the board: 'I have worked at Brightway Mobile since 2021.' and 'I graduated in 2019.' Draw a timeline. Mark 2019 as an X in the past, and draw a line from 2021 to NOW.

4. Concept-check questions for sentence 1: 'Does Daniel work at Brightway now?' (yes) 'When did he start?' (2021) 'Is it finished?' (no). Concept-check questions for sentence 2: 'Is Daniel at university now?' (no) 'Do we know when he graduated?' (yes, 2019) 'Is it finished?' (yes).

5. Elicit the rule and write it: present perfect (have/has + past participle) = from the past up to now, or life experience with no time. Use it with since, for, ever, never. Past simple = finished action at a finished time. Use it with in 2019, in March, last year, ago.

6. Ask students to find more examples in the text: 'I've been the HR manager here for six years' (present perfect, still true), 'I applied in March' (past simple, finished time).

7. Go back to the warm-up sentences you collected. Ask: 'Right or wrong? Why?' For example, 'I have applied for a job last year' becomes 'I applied for a job last year', because 'last year' is a finished time.

Worksheet: 3. Daniel's Interview at Greenline Travel

7 min
Individual

Controlled practice

1. Point to 'Talking About Your Experience: Present Perfect or Past Simple?'. Say: 'Look at the time words first: since, for, ever, in 2019, in March, ago. Then choose from the word bank. You will not use every word.'

2. Do sentence 1 together. Ask: 'Since 2021: is it finished?' (no) So the answer is 'has worked'.

3. Students complete sentences 2–6 alone (3 minutes), then check in pairs.

4. Check answers as a class. For each answer, ask: 'Which time word helped you?' Answers: has worked (since), graduated (in 2019), has been (for six years), applied (in March), been (ever, after 'Have you'), left (two months ago).

5. Point out sentence 5: 'have you ever + past participle', so the answer is 'been', not 'has been'.

Worksheet: 4. Talking About Your Experience: Present Perfect or Past Simple?

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8 min
Pairs

Controlled practice

1. Point to 'Answering the Interviewer's Questions'. Say: 'Write Daniel's answers. Use information from the reading. Listen to the tense in Sarah's question.'

2. Model the first gap. Ask: 'Sarah asks how long have you worked. Which tense will Daniel use?' (present perfect) Elicit: 'I have worked there as a customer service assistant since 2021.'

3. Students write the other three answers alone (4 minutes). For the strengths and weaknesses answer, encourage them to use 'deadline'.

4. Pairs read the dialogue aloud: one is Sarah, one is Daniel. Then they swap roles.

5. Ask one or two pairs to perform for the class. Check the tenses: 'When did you finish university?' needs the past simple 'I graduated in 2019'. 'I have always enjoyed working in a team' uses the present perfect for experience up to now.

Worksheet: 5. Answering the Interviewer's Questions

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14 min
Pairs

Freer practice

1. Point to 'Mock Job Interview'. Put students in pairs: Student A is the interviewer, Student B is the candidate. Give B 1 minute to choose a job (e.g. nurse, IT assistant, shop manager) and think of their experience and qualifications. A reads the prompts on Card A.

2. Model the opening with a confident student: 'Good morning. Which job have you applied for, and why do you want it?' Then: 'How long have you worked in this area? Where did you work before?'

3. Pairs do the interview for about 5 minutes. Remind them to use the useful phrases and at least five key words. At the end, A decides whether to offer the job and explains why.

4. Students swap roles and do the interview again for about 5 minutes, with a different job.

5. Monitor and note good sentences and tense errors (e.g. 'I work here since 2020', 'I have finished university in 2018') for the wrap-up.

6. Ask two or three interviewers: 'Did you offer the job? Why or why not?'

Worksheet: 6. Mock Job Interview

5 min — Teacher – class

Wrap-up

1. Write four sentences from your monitoring on the board: two correct and two with errors. Ask pairs to decide which are wrong and correct them, e.g. 'I work here since 2020' becomes 'I have worked here since 2020'.
2. Praise good use of the vocabulary and read out one or two strong student sentences.
3. Quick review: ask 'Since 2021 or in 2021: which tense goes with each?' and 'What's another word for the person who wants the job?' (candidate)
4. Explain the homework.

Board work

Warm-up: the title 'Job interviews' in the centre. In a corner, keep the two or three student sentences you collected for later. Presentation 1: a vocabulary column on the left with stress in capitals (CANdidate, INterviewer, qualifiCAtions, SAlary, TEAM player, be SHORTlisted, CV, apply for, strengths, weaknesses, deadline). Presentation 2: in the centre, a timeline with 'I graduated in 2019' (X in the past) and 'I have worked at Brightway Mobile since 2021' (line to NOW). Below it, two boxes. Present perfect: have/has + past participle, with since, for, ever, never, up to now. Past simple: finished time, with in 2019, in March, last year, ago. Controlled practice: write the gap-fill answers next to their time words. Wrap-up: on the right, four sentences from the role-play (two correct, two with errors) for students to correct.

Anticipated problems

• Students use the present perfect with a finished time expression, e.g. 'I have graduated in 2019'. **Solution:** Point to the timeline and ask: 'Is 2019 finished?' Remind them that a finished time needs the past simple. Keep the time-word boxes on the board all lesson.

• Students use the present simple instead of the present perfect with since/for, e.g. 'I work here since 2021'. **Solution:** Ask: 'When did you start? Do you still work there?' Then reformulate: 'I have worked here since 2021.' Drill it chorally.

• Students confuse since and for. **Solution:** Write 'since + start point (2021, March)' and 'for + period (three years, six years)' on the board. Give quick prompts: 'two months?' (for) 'Monday?' (since).

• Students mispronounce the vocabulary, e.g. stress on the wrong syllable in qualifications or interviewer. **Solution:** Drill chorally and individually with stress marked in capitals on the board: qualifiCAtions, INterviewer.

• Some students have no work or interview experience and feel uncomfortable in the warm-up or role-play. **Solution:** Let them talk about a friend or family member, or invent a realistic job and experience for the role-play.

• In the role-play, candidates give very short answers. **Solution:** Tell interviewers to ask follow-up questions such as 'Can you give me an example?' and 'When was that?' Model this before the role-play starts.

Fast finishers

Write five interview questions of your own: three with the present perfect (e.g. 'Have you ever managed a team?', 'How long have you lived in this city?') and two with the past simple (e.g. 'When did you start your last job?'). Then write Daniel's answers to them, using facts from the reading.

Homework

Write a short email (100–120 words) to Sarah Collins at Greenline Travel. Apply for a job there (choose any job) and introduce yourself. Use at least three present perfect sentences (since, for, ever, never) and three past simple sentences (in 20XX, last year, ago), and at least six key words from the lesson (e.g. CV, qualifications, experience, strengths, team player, apply for). Underline the verbs and write PP or PS next to each one.

1. Warm-up: Your Job Interview Experiences

1) Teacher Notes: Use this as a 5-minute warm-up before the Daniel Moreno and Sarah Collins material. Pre-teach or check: candidate (the person who wants the job), interviewer (the person who asks the questions), CV (a document about your education and work experience), salary (the money you get for your job, usually per year or month), qualifications, strengths and weaknesses, team player, apply for and be shortlisted. While students talk, listen for the grammar focus: present perfect for life experience with no specific time (I have had three interviews; I have never applied for a job abroad) and past simple for finished events with a time reference (Last year I applied for ...; The interviewer asked me ...). In feedback, write two or three student sentences on the board and ask the class to decide whether the tense is correct and why. Students without interview experience can talk about a friend or family member, or describe how they would prepare.

2. Job Interview Key Words

2a) candidate = f)

2b) interviewer = d)

2c) qualifications = e)

2d) salary = a)

2e) team player = b)

2f) be shortlisted = c)

3. Daniel's Interview at Greenline Travel

3a) He studied business at the University of Leeds and graduated in 2019.

3b) He is a customer service assistant, and he has worked there since 2021.

3c) He applied in March, and four other candidates were shortlisted with him.

3d) He says he is a team player, he listens carefully to customers and he stays calm when there is a problem.

3e) The salary is £32,000 a year.

4. Talking About Your Experience: Present Perfect or Past Simple?

4a) has worked

4b) graduated

4c) has been

4d) applied

4e) been

4f) left

5. Answering the Interviewer's Questions

5a) Daniel: I have worked there as a customer service assistant since 2021.

5b) Daniel: I graduated from the University of Leeds in 2019. I studied business there.

5c) Daniel: I am patient and good with customers, but I have sometimes found it difficult to meet deadlines.

5d) Daniel: Yes, I have always enjoyed working in a team. I applied for this job in March because I want to become a team leader.