

A+ Teachers' Interview Edge



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101 Teacher Interview Questions and Answers
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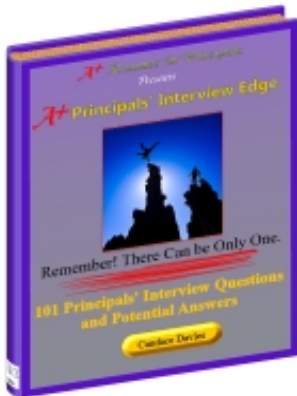
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A girl has got to pay her bills. I am offering this preview of the **A+ Teachers Interview Edge** free. In return if you see any products or services on the left sidebar that interest you please visit the sites. Yes, I do make little if you purchase an item, as I said a girl has to pay her bills. I hope you find this guide helpful. For more information on education specific resumes, cover letters and interview coaching please visit **A+ Resumes for Teachers** at <http://resumes-for-teachers.com>

Candace Davies can be contacted at candoco@telus.net or **Toll-free: 1-877-738-8052**
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The Phone Rings and you are offered an interview

[Research the School District - Don't Skip This Step](#)

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[What are Principals Really Looking for in a Teacher?](#)

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1. Tell me a little bit about yourself. [Answer](#)
2. Let's pretend it's almost the first day of school and you are a first grade teacher. How would you prepare your classroom? [Answer](#)
3. As a grade one teacher, how would you motivate parents to become involved in the classroom and in their child's education? [Answer](#)
4. What are your thoughts on team-teaching? [Answer](#)
5. What are your greatest strengths? [Answer](#)
6. What is your biggest weakness? [Answer](#)
7. Let's imagine an interview for a grade one teaching position wherein the interviewer asks: "Describe your classroom's physical appearance." [Answer](#)
8. Why do you want to work for our school district? [Answer](#)
9. How do you handle classroom discipline? [Answer](#)
10. How would you describe a successful principal? [Answer](#)
11. Do you have any questions for us? [Answer](#)
12. Are you a flexible teacher? If so, explain how. [Answer](#)
13. What did you find to be the most difficult aspect of student (intern) teaching? [Answer](#)
14. What ways do you assess and evaluate students? [Answer](#)
15. What will you do to modify your teaching to meet the needs of a gifted student? [Answer](#)

Thanks for previewing the **A+ Teachers' Interview Edge**. Here are a few more questions included in the full guide which contain the 101 questions and potential answers. You can get the [full version of the A+ Teachers' Interview Edge](#).

Here are a few more of the of questions include in the full version

What is your classroom management plan? **Question #19**

Tell me about the most stressful situation you had in your career and how did you handle it? **Question #28**

How would you deal with an angry parent? **Question #43**

What methods do you use to contribute to your students' ability



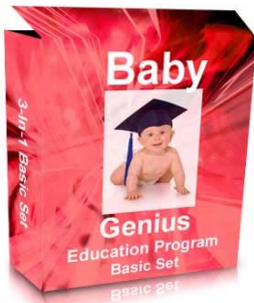
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to retain material? How do you know these methods are successful? [Question #52](#)

How do you teach students higher-order thinking skills? [Question #64](#)

What subject do you most like to teach and why? [Question #73](#)

What is the difference between heterogeneous grouping versus homogeneous grouping? [Question #81](#)

How would you take advantage of resources within the community to enhance education? [Question #94](#)

Don't Miss Your Opportunity to Ask Questions

15 Possible Questions to Ask the Panel or Interviewer

5 Thank-you Letter Templates You Can Customize for Your Own Use

Wrap up

[Research the School District - Don't Skip This Step](#)

Before embarking on an interview, you must take the time to research. Being equipped with the appropriate information can provide you with an edge over your competition. Obtaining additional knowledge about the school district, its goals, and the school will allow you to answer questions about the district that you may be asked during the interview. Check out not only the school district's website, but also recent news or magazine stories about the district and any other information you can find.

Remember, it is not unusual to be asked to describe what you know about the district and the educational mandate. This knowledge will also help you create and ask relevant questions when provided with the opportunity to do so. Knowing the school district, your potential employer, is as important as knowing exactly how you are going to answer specific questions.

Imagine that you are the recruiter: Wouldn't you find it frustrating to interview a potential educator who knows nothing about the school, its district, or its goals?

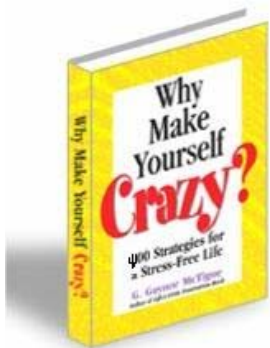
Effectively researching a school district will help you determine whether your career goals and objectives fit within the educational program of that district. Below are three questions that a professional educator should be able to answer before



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going to an interview:

- Why do you want to work for our school district?
- What do you know about our school district?
- Do you have any questions for us?

Keep in mind that the purpose of an interview is to create a positive impression, highlight your talents and skills, and showcase your knowledge. It is also a time to mention your objectives, highlighting how your interests, goals, and personality will fit into the district's program.

Your interview is your only chance to provide a first-time positive impression; therefore, taking additional time and making an effort to research the school district will increase your chances of securing that coveted teaching position.

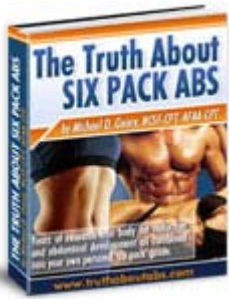
Below is a listing of vital information one should research before embarking on an interview:

- District boundaries, student enrollment and grade levels.
- Future vision.
- Student learning objectives and student achievement in mathematics and reading.
- State or federal recognition for high achievement in academics.
- Extra-curricular and sports programs that are offered.
- Mentoring programs and career development initiatives.
- School and district challenges including budgetary restraints.
- Salary grid.

Interview Questions - Prepare for Anything

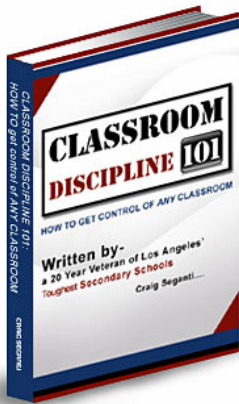
Make a list of the traits and skills you possess that match the job qualifications. Prepare to give examples of work experiences in which you employed those skills.

Develop a list of questions that you may be asked during the interview, and prepare your answers. If possible, practice your answers by conducting a mock interview with a friend or family member and get his or her feedback about how well you did. We coach clients on interview preparation, and you can learn



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Organize a list of questions you want to ask the interviewer. Remember that an interview is a two-way conversation, and you will be provided with an opportunity to ask the interview panel your own questions. Asking your own questions serves two purposes. First, it shows them you truly are interested in the district and the job because you've done enough research to be able to ask intelligent, well-thought-out, and relevant questions. Second, their answers will help you decide whether or not you will accept the position if it is offered to you. Note: this is not the time to ask about benefits and vacation; these questions are better asked after you are offered the position.

What are Principals Really Looking for in a Teacher?

A question often asked when looking for a teaching job is "What are principals really looking for in a teacher?" It is important to understand what school principals want in a teacher in order for you to meet those needs and get hired. Here are some of the most important skills that principals look for in a teacher.

Teaching Skills

The first and most important set of skills are teaching skills. This includes your education and training, as well as any previous teaching experience you have had, and your knowledge of teaching techniques and strategies that foster learning in students. While teaching skills are not the only things that matter in getting a job, they are vital in securing the job. If possible, you should have a B.A. and your completed teaching credential. If you have had student teaching, that is a big plus. Prior experience can also help you get a job, especially if you have good recommendations from your former principals.

Communication Skills

Communication skills are an important part of being a teacher. You need to communicate well with your students, students' parents, administrators, and other teachers and staff. You should have excellent written and verbal communication skills and be able to demonstrate that you can effectively communicate with all types of people, from many different cultural backgrounds.

If you are bilingual in English/Spanish or English/Chinese, you have an extremely valuable ability that will open many doors for



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you. Make sure your resume is free of errors. Use perfect grammar during the interview. Prepare to answer interview questions without saying "Um..." or "I don't know." Speak up in an interview! You have to sell yourself and your abilities.

Passion and Enthusiasm

Every principal wants teachers to have passion and enthusiasm for teaching. Passion is a desire to teach that goes well beyond just a career choice or job. It is a genuine interest and enthusiasm for teaching that invigorates your teaching style and gets you noticed. It is also a willingness to handle the stresses of teaching with grace and common sense. This passion and enthusiasm must be obvious in your voice, body language, and eye contact when you interview.

Lifelong Learning

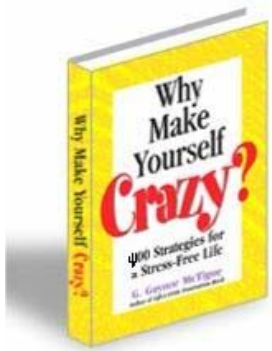
The best teachers are those who not only thrive on teaching others, but also continue their own learning throughout their lives. Principals love teachers who learn new teaching techniques, keep current on technology changes, continue their university coursework, and develop better communication skills. The best teachers are those who understand their own behavior and abilities and are willing to improve. This teaching philosophy means that you will be a great role model for students. When you are interviewed, mention your future plans for ongoing learning.

Flexibility

Principals want teachers who are flexible. In education, change is constant and teachers need to be willing and able to "roll with the punches" as they occur. This is especially important when modifications to curricula occur or when a reassignment of teachers is necessary. It's also vital that you can stay calm and adjust when chaotic things happen in the classroom. Those who are happily willing to accept new challenges are more sought after than those who get stuck in a rut. Be prepared to describe how you will control and manage your classroom to the interview team.

Functioning as Part of a Team

The principal looks at the teachers, administrative staff, and support staff as a team. The team members need to be able to function well together and enjoy collaborating to maximize student learning and develop a positive school community. You probably have heard the old adage that "The sum of the parts is worth more than the whole." This is especially true in a school environment. A united staff creates the best learning environment and exciting things happen as a result. You must convince the principal that you are ready, willing, and able to function as part of the team. One way to do this is to have one



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or two experiences to describe to the interview team about how you have functioned as part of a team in the past.

Attitude

One of the simplest attributes a teacher needs, yet one of the hardest to understand, is attitude. Your attitude goes a long way in making you a great teacher and team member. A teacher with a good attitude understands his or her obligations to teach well, provide a role model for students, and get along well with other faculty members. Your attitude is important in portraying the type of school that the principal desires. Make sure that your positive attitude comes through in your resume, cover letter, and interview.

[Click here](#) to get the **A+ Principals' Interview Edge** and **discover 101 powerful potential answers to the most popular interview questions principals / administrators are asked** and maximize your confidence at your next interview.



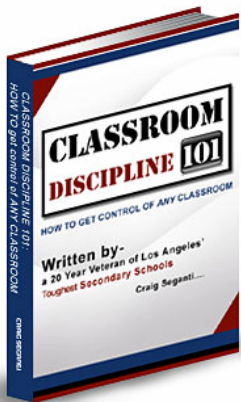
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Behavioral Interviews - Why Many School Districts Use Them

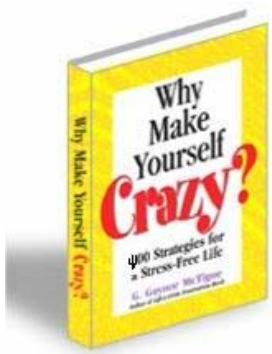
Behavioral interviews are a targeted selection technique that is used by recruiters. The vast majority of districts make use of behavioral-based questioning during the interview process. This new and creative technique was designed with the assumption that past behavior and character traits are the best predictors of future behavior and character. A potential employer will quickly identify the skills and qualities you possess through behavioral interview questions. These skills and qualities are often referred to as competencies, dimensions, and problem solving abilities and can be discovered by asking detailed questions about your thoughts, feelings and actions in past situations. This approach will assist the interviewers in determining whether or not you possess the qualities they are seeking in an educator.

Behavioral interview questions can be described as questions that draw out past experiences in which you encountered potential conflict in an educational environment, how you dealt with the situation, and what the final outcome was. Your responses to these questions should be based upon accurate outlining of the context, actions, and results of your actions. To answer these questions correctly, you must remember experiences that took place during your previous full-time and part-time teaching employment, volunteer work, professional encounters, university or academic work, extracurricular activities, and life experiences.

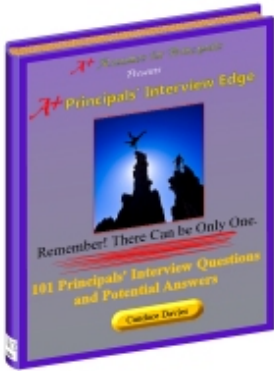
Now that you understand why behavioral questions are asked, and what your responses and answers are to be based upon, it



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is time to learn how to prepare for your interview. In order to effectively plan for the interview, you must uncover as much information as possible about the teaching skills and qualities that the district requires. It is important to tap your memory for stories that will precisely illustrate your skills and successes. Think through each situation and remember who was involved and what role you played in the situation. Most importantly, "LISTEN" to the question being asked of you in order to successfully answer it with detailed and appropriate responses.

There are many attributes and characteristics that a district or school will be seeking in a potential candidate. We have put together a list of typical traits that a district will be seeking:

Competency; the Ability to Teach Effectively

Superior Verbal and Written Communication Skills

Research Skills

Flexibility and Adaptability

Critical Thinking Skills

Analytical Ability

Appropriate Judgment; Good Disciplinary Skills

Problem Solving Techniques

Teamwork

Quick Learner

Enthusiasm/Motivation

Initiative

Innovation

Leadership Ability

All of the above characteristics can be demonstrated when you have mastered the ability to effectively answer behavioral interview questions.

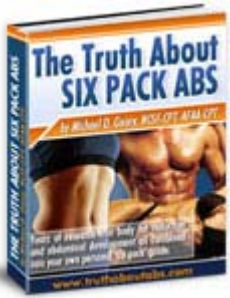
Remember be prepared, recall key situations, and the role you played in them, and listen to the question being asked.

One simple way of recalling keys to an appropriate answer is by being a "STAR".

S - Situation

T - Task

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A - Action

R - Result

Once you have mastered the art of behavioral interviews, you will successfully acquire your dream job.

[Your Final Interview Preparation Check List](#)

Here is an interview check list to ensure that your job interview will make a significant impression on any potential employer.

Know the School. You can obtain a great deal of information by visiting the school's website. Familiarize yourself with the school while paying particular attention to the administration information. You'll often find a letter to the students' parents from the school principal. This can tell you a lot about the expectations of the principal. Learn about the philosophy of the school, as well as the methods used for teaching and discipline. This will help you tailor your teaching job interview answers to the needs of a particular school. Also, logon to the state's educational department website and find the school in which you are interested. It will tell you the student ethnic composition, the poverty level of the students, and how many students are English Language Learners.

Rehearse Your Interview. Prepare for your interview as far in advance as possible. Start by choosing some of the most commonly asked interview questions and write answers for them. Practice your answers until you are confident, but be sure that you don't sound too rehearsed or stiff. Remember that administrators are used to hearing pat responses, so try to think up new or innovative ways to answer questions, especially if you can relate the answer to a specific school.

Visit the school before your interview. This isn't always possible, but, if you live close enough and can fit it into your schedule, it is a great idea. You can view the school from the outside to get a feel for how well it is maintained, if parents are encouraged to visit, and what the area is like. Ask for a short tour of the school so that you can gain a better understanding of it. Talk to some of the faculty to find out how they like teaching at the school and the school's philosophy of education. Read a copy of the student newspaper to learn more about the student population and the school administration. Chat with parents waiting to pick up students and ask them what they like about the school and what they think needs improvement.

Check out the school's rating. You will learn a lot about the school environment. Ratings/state rankings will show you how well the school ranks in educational subjects and overall academic progress compared to other schools. You may be able to find out how parents rated the school to see what areas of

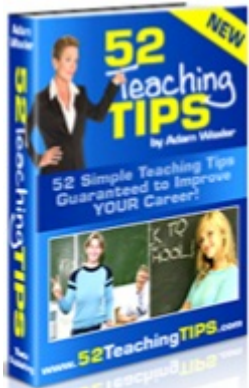
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improvement are needed. Then, include this information in your teaching job interview responses.

Show that you are a team player. During the interview, you will want to stress the fact that you are ready and willing to become part of the team. Administrators like teachers who are able to work together harmoniously to create a great learning atmosphere. Frequently, this means that you will need to tell them that you are willing to spend extra time at school helping students with academic work, sports activities, or new curricula.

Focus on what is important to your interview. For example, it won't do you any good to discuss your interest in helping coach a sports team if the school doesn't participate in sports. Instead, spend time discussing the important goals/activities of a particular school.

Special education teachers should spend time researching how the school implements special education, e.g. the populations served, ages of students in special education, number of classes, etc., so they can answer questions appropriately. Keep in mind that many schools are desperate for special education teachers.

Interview Day - The Look

1. Dressing for a successful interview isn't difficult. Wear clothing that is a little dressier than you would wear to work every day. A sequined suit would be going overboard; likewise, a shirt and jeans would be too casual. Use your common sense.
2. Your appearance tells the district how you see yourself - your clothes, hairstyle, choice of accessories, and makeup will either reinforce or damage your professional image.
3. The best colors for mens' suits are dark grey, navy blue, and black.
4. Don't wear a three-piece suit to an interview - it's too much.
5. Shoes are extremely important - make sure they are polished and appropriate.
6. Select a simple tie - you don't want the interviewer's attention to be on your funny-looking tie - you know what we mean.
7. Strive to dress professionally without over-dressing. A pair of dark, casual pants and a sports shirt will make a nice presentation. Although it is important not to over-dress, it

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is equally important not to be under-dressed for an interview. If unsure, you can always settle for something in between. If you believe you are over-dressed, you can always remove your jacket.

8. For women, a tailored classic suit is always appropriate for an interview. An investment in a good "interview suit" is an investment in yourself and your future career. It will be part of your wardrobe for years to come.
9. Choose woolen fabrics for the cooler months and linen for the warmer months. Stay away from 100% polyester blends.
10. Choose a conservative color - you won't go wrong if you choose a solid, basic color such as tan, brown, or grey. The blouse or sweater you select to accompany your suit should be white, off-white, beige, or a color which complements your suit. For example, a burgundy or red blouse can spice up a grey suit - especially if those are your colors.
11. A tailored, solid-colored dress is acceptable for interviewing. Make sure you choose fabrics that are suited to the season.

Arriving at the Interview

Don't forget to bring an extra copy of your resume, a typed list of your references, a pen, and your portfolio with examples of your work (if applicable).

1. Arrive early. Allow yourself enough time to find the interview site and a parking spot. Having to explain you are late because you couldn't find a parking spot will start your interview off on the wrong foot. Ensure that you arrive in the building, at the place where the interview will occur, at least 5 minutes before your scheduled interview time.
2. Illustrate your energy and enthusiasm for the position by maintaining eye contact and providing non-verbal feedback. Much can be said through your body language, so pay strict attention to how you move and articulate. If there are multiple interviewers, make eye contact with all of them.
3. Emphasize your assets and talents. Show the interviewer(s) you can perform the job and you will fit well in the school. Always speak positively about yourself, others, and previous positions. Never speak negatively about any person you have worked with or any school or organization for which you have worked.



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Four Stages of a Teachers' Job Interview

Even though every interview is different, all teacher job interviews follow a definite pattern. There are different stages of a teacher job interview, and you can benefit greatly if you are aware of the stages and prepare accordingly.

1. The first stage is the introduction stage. This stage is very important because it helps to create a favorable first impression in the mind of interviewer. In addition, this stage will set the tone for rest of the interview, so it is important that you do well. This stage doesn't have too many questions; rather, it has more to do with your appearance, confidence, and the way you speak.

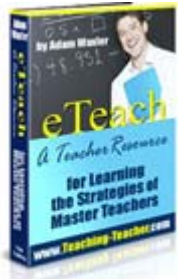
As soon as you are led into the interview room, you are under observation and every little detail about you will be noted. Make sure you appear calm, confident, and alert. Greet the interviewer(s) with a firm handshake and sit only when you are asked to do so. Maintain an upright posture and eye contact with the interviewer. If you can establish rapport with the interviewer in this stage, the next stages will be much easier.

2. The second stage is where your background will be discussed. You can expect questions on your academic background, work experience, accomplishments, and future goals. Apart from knowing more about you, the interviewer is trying to find out if you have the right skills for the position that is available.

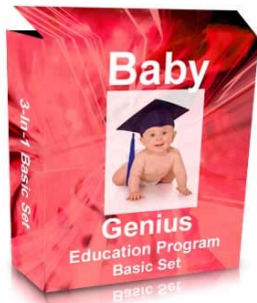
When you answer the questions with confidence, your passion for teaching will show through your replies. When asked about your accomplishments, mention them without sounding arrogant. Your answers in this stage should present you as the candidate having the best skills for the position available.

3. The third stage of the interview is the toughest, and it will determine whether you stand out from the other candidates. In this stage, the interviewer will try to determine whether you are the best candidate available for the job. Expect a few tough questions like why you should be considered for the post, values you will bring to the school, your philosophies of education and discipline, how you deal with discipline, how you deal with parents, how to improve academic results, and many more.

Make sure you answer these questions honestly. It is a good idea to include teaching specific keywords in your replies. You can include some real life examples from your teaching experience to justify your points of view. If you disagree with interviewer, make sure you can explain why (politely).



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If you are aware of the school's philosophies on education and discipline, try to align your answers with them. Your answers in this stage will convince the interviewer that you are the candidate who deserves the job.

4. The final stage of the interview is the conclusion. In this stage you may ask questions, so make use of this opportunity. You can ask questions about the position available, challenges faced by teachers, the school's philosophies on education and discipline, etc. This will show that you are genuinely interested in the job.
5. Before the interview is over, take a few minutes to reiterate your interest in the position and exhibit your excitement and enthusiasm about the opportunity and your confidence in meeting the expectations of the position.

After the Interview

Don't Underestimate the Value of a Thank You Letter

Don't stop the campaign yet. It is a known fact that many hiring decisions rest on which candidate sends a thank you letter. Put the situation in perspective. Imagine a hiring manager, undecided between two "equally" qualified candidates. Then, one candidate sends a well-written thank you letter, and the other doesn't. Who do you think will receive the job offer? Aside from the fact that a thank you letter is a marketing tool, it is common courtesy for job seekers to send a letter to all interviewers. Hiring managers know that those who send a letter are informed and following standard protocol.

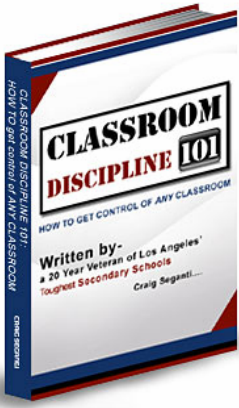
Timeliness is also important. It is best to write your letter and send it within 24 hours of your interview.

So how do you create an effective, unique thank you letter that will show you remain interested in the position? In an effective thank you letter, there are three or four paragraphs. The best advice is to make sure the letter is unique.

Make sure you address the letter to the person(s) who interviewed you. Include the interviewer's name, title, organization, and complete mailing address. Ensure correct spelling of all names; if you are unsure of spelling, you may be able to obtain this information from the district's secretary.

Opening Paragraph - Express your appreciation for the interviewer's time and the opportunity to meet.

Second Paragraph - Reinforce your understanding of the job's requirements and emphasize your qualifications. Include any



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Question 1



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Question 2

information you forgot to mention in the interview, if necessary (but be brief). Include additional information about any research you did after the interview. Express appreciation for any opportunities presented during the interview, such as touring the school, meeting other faculty members, or reviewing specific school situations. Re-emphasize your most important skill and qualification and how you expect to contribute to the school or district.

Third paragraph - Use an additional paragraph if you need to correct any ****significant**** misunderstanding that may have occurred during the interview. Alternatively, use this paragraph to counter any objection the interviewer raised about an aspect of your background or current situation. Be extremely careful wording this information.

Final paragraph - Express continued interest in the position and the school district.

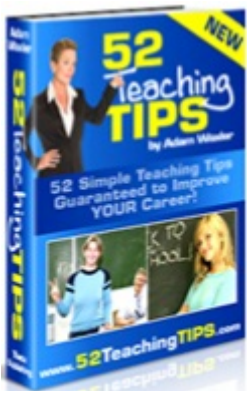
Remember, it could take anywhere from a couple of days to a few weeks before you hear back about the results of the interview.

Tell me a little bit about yourself.

Oh, yes, this is the question that is most likely to be asked first. I call it a two minute commercial about yourself. This is a great opportunity to sell yourself to the school district representatives. Keep in mind, if it is the first question asked, it will set the stage for the interview, so it needs to be extremely strong. Don't be too modest. This will provide an overview, an introduction, to you. You might start by stating, "As you can see from my resume...." and then mention your degrees and certifications and give a quick run down of your relevant experience. The last 1 ½ minutes should be used to communicate your strengths and skills and what you can do to enhance education in their district. In other words, they are asking "Why should we hire you?" Practice this carefully. You need a few sentences that answer that question at the end of your response. Also, at the end, you may want to mention why you would enjoy working for the school district in the position for which they are hiring.

Let's pretend it's almost the first day of school and you are a first grade teacher. How would you prepare your classroom?

This question tests how well you will manage the classroom.

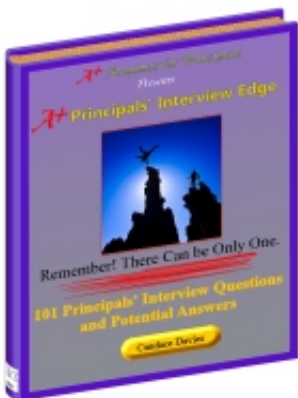


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Question 3



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The philosophy is that the more organized you are, the more well-run your classroom will be. Don't give the panel just a few words... they may be using a checklist to see how many items you mention. Plus, as a teacher, you should be very excited about this question and be able to speak for a while, but limit the response to two minutes.

Your response must provide them with an idea of how nurturing and inviting your classroom will be to students. Come up with some creative decorating ideas, making sure they are student-centered. You could also mention a huge welcome sign, the daily schedule, age-appropriate posters, name tags for students, labeled desks (how will they be arranged?) and lockers, a list of class rules/consequences/rewards, and other labeled areas (e.g., the classroom library, manipulative storage, computer area), etc. Or, mention that you might invite parents and students to visit the classroom the day before school starts, with the administrator's permission. If you have a portfolio with pictures of other first days of school, this is a great chance to share them with the panel.

Next, make it clear that you will have organized the textbooks, your lesson plan book, your grade book and other materials well before school begins. Mention several activities you might include during the first day of school, including an ice-breaker, a trip to the restrooms, and a fun art project.

The real key to this question is to show your enthusiasm, passion, excellent organizational skills, and how you will create a warm and captivating environment in which students will feel safe, where learning will be maximized, so that children will look forward to coming to school each day.

As a grade one teacher, how would you motivate parents to become involved in the classroom and in their child's education?

What is critical to communicate in your response to this question is your understanding of the importance of parental involvement and how you always encourage participation to strengthen student-teacher-parent relationships. (Grandparents can also be encouraged to participate.) Talk about some of the things that parents can volunteer to do in the classroom, such as: reading with students, preparing project materials, creating bulletin boards, sorting materials, setting up learning centers, hanging up students' work, etc.

Parental involvement means much more than just attending parent-teacher interviews. You must set goals to keep the parents abreast of what is going on in the classroom. You can communicate that information and ask for volunteers through weekly or bi-weekly newsletters. You might inform parents



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Question 4



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when you are starting a new unit or specific projects and make sure they clearly understand the homework assignments each week. Make sure that parents are invited to any momentous or appropriate events.

You should contact or speak to parents not just when a child is having difficulty, but also when they are doing well. Tell the hiring panel that you will call parents and send notes home complimenting students on good behavior. Also mention that you try to recruit bilingual parents to help with communication as necessary.

Let the hiring committee know that you coach parents on how they can help their child succeed academically. You may have read some resource book(s) to gain ideas that you could implement. If so, let the panel know. Holding a parent appreciation lunch or tea to acknowledge those who have helped in the classroom is a great idea. Consider attending some of the PTA meetings. If your portfolio contains any past newsletters or parental communication letters, make sure you show these to the panel.

What are your thoughts on team-teaching?

I am sure many of you have participated in team-teaching and realize the benefits of this strategy. The interviewer who asks this question wants to discover if you are flexible, enjoy working in a team environment, have experience in this area, and what your viewpoints are on the subject.

It is always wise to speak about some of the positive aspects of team-teaching, such as:

It is an effective strategy for teaching large groups of students.

Team teaching encourages teachers to collaborate and generate ideas, as well as learn from each other ... two heads are always better than one! Talk about team-teaching experiences you have had, and the positive results that transpired.

If you haven't had any hands-on experience, explain that you enjoy working in a team setting and are excited about the possibility of participating in team teaching. OR, maybe you have done some reading on the subject and can share some of the insights you gained with the interviewers ... this will definitely be impressive!

It is vitally important to be honest when answering all questions during an interview. Organizing your thoughts in advance will help you deliver truthful and concise responses, while highlighting the skills you possess that are most compatible with the needs of the school or district.

Question 5

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Question 6



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What are your greatest strengths?

This question will probably be asked. Your response offers you a terrific opportunity to "sell yourself". Get a lot of information about the institution by using the Internet or your network of friends and then make a list of a dozen personal and professional characteristics that you consider your core assets and relate them directly to the strengths and needs of the school.

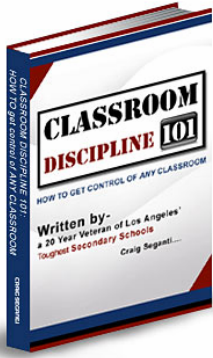
Now, if you researched the district/school and found out what they are looking for in a candidate, you will be able to focus your response on that information, keeping in mind it is important to tell the truth. With every response, you must show your VALUE to the district. This will also give them some idea about how you view your talents and skills as a teacher. Perception is critical... you must be able to confidently discuss your skills in a convincing manner.

This is the time to really show what you have to offer, so don't sell yourself short. It is important that your answers show your hard/tangible skills. For example, classroom management, curriculum development, or technology integration, student motivation, parental communication, differentiated instruction, collaboration with other teachers, organization, flexibility, and how you use a variety of teaching methods are very important.

These skills will show the interviewer(s) what you can do on the job. Don't stop after just listing them; set yourself apart from the pack by backing up your claims with actual stories... examples of what you have done are critical to success. This will build credibility... it shows you really are as good as you are claiming. Tell them about what you have done to incorporate technology into the classroom and what the results were. The result part of the story sells you... and that produces job offers. Examples show you that what you have done in the past, you can do in the future ... past performance dictates future performance. You can use evaluations you've received and lessons you've taught to back up your claims, as well.

What is your biggest weakness?

Your response could include something that may have been a challenge in the past, but which you have taken steps to rectify. It is important to be truthful; they will be testing your honesty. In addition, they will be checking to see if you provide a weakness that is critical to success in the position. For example, the interview will end quickly if you answer that you have a difficult time managing the classroom or controlling students. Make sure you don't say you have trouble with a subject area (such as math) or that you have tough time relating to parents. The key to answering the question is to either choose something



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Question 7

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irrelevant to success in the position or turn a negative into a positive.

I don't suggest using the traditional, "I'm a perfectionist," as it is often overused, and sounds phony. It is also important not to get defensive and try to justify why you are weak in a particular subject area, such as social studies. This will make a bad impression, because it may be relevant to the position that you are seeking. Whatever you decide to use, ensure it is not one of the key skills of the position you are seeking. In other words, don't pinpoint classroom discipline and/management or a subject area.

Think of this question as an opportunity to sell yourself. Here is an example: You wouldn't say, "I have a difficult time organizing my day." Instead, rephrase the answer by saying, "There are many creative activities I plan for my students and class time is limited, so it is difficult to finish all the activities that I would like my students to experience each day. Over time, I have learned to prioritize the lessons that are the most important to enhance student learning. I now realize that I can't do everything I would like to do in a day."

The above example shows you are excited about designing new and creative lessons for your students. In their mind, this is not a negative. It will position you closer to getting a job offer. Whatever you choose, make sure you let the panel know your plan to either rectify the weakness or that you have already done so.

Let's imagine an interview for a grade one teaching position wherein the interviewer asks: "Describe your classroom's physical appearance."

Having prepared ahead of time, you understand the interviewer[s] attempt to determine:

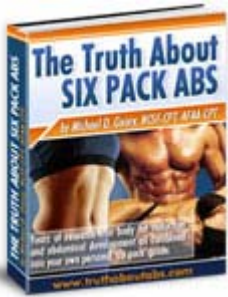
- Your teaching style,
- Your ability to manage the class effectively,
- The amount and quality of student interaction,
- Your teaching philosophy,

Within this context, you might respond:

"Upon entering my classroom, you will find a lively and colorful room wholly centered on children and active learning. Sight words, the alphabet, numbers, and inspirational quotes cover the walls, while large bulletin boards proudly display students' work. A large area is carpeted specifically for reading,



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storytelling, show-and-tell, weather discussions, calendar skills, and day-of-the-week conversations. My classroom includes an abundance of age appropriate reading materials and math manipulatives, as well as student mailboxes where children place personal journals, take-home reading books and workbooks, and homework, and collect newsletters or other parent communications to take home at the end of the day. The desks are arranged in groups of six. Learning centers line the walls, including a computer center, an art center, and reading and math centers. Our class rules, along with rewards and consequences are clearly posted."

NOTE:

Presenting floor plans successfully used in the past demonstrates strong organization and preparation skills. Indicate various potential seating plans used throughout the year and offer pictures of your old classrooms as a way to give the principal and interviewing board a first-hand view of your potential classroom. As the saying goes, "A picture is worth a thousand words."

Remember, each person's answer will vary depending upon teaching style and philosophy. The district will determine if your style is compatible with their needs; thus, thoroughly researching each specific district provides the key to successfully meeting those needs.

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Question 8



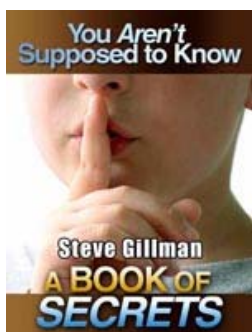
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Why do you want to work for our school district?

Preparation and research is imperative to successfully answer this question. Provide a few reasons why you're interested in the school or district, and explain what in particular sparked your interest. What is your personal experience with the school or district? What do you know about its student body, faculty members, industry reputation, community involvement, educational goals and objectives, upcoming initiatives, demographics, or extracurricular activities? This information will help you to accurately respond to the question. The word accurate is important -- don't answer the question using old information.

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Question 9



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The interviewer is looking for evidence that you really know why you want to work there or if you just sent out applications and hoped for the best. This research will also help immensely when answering other questions throughout the interview, so plan to dedicate some time and energy doing this homework. Effective research will help to tailor your answers, without being deceiving, to the question above. Preparation and honesty are the keys to a successful answer.

How do you handle classroom discipline?

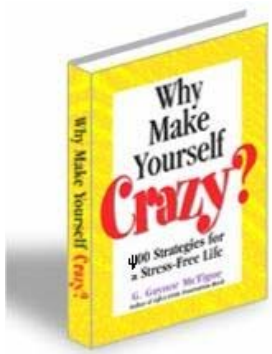
For obvious reasons everyone will have a different answer; it will depend on your teaching style, grade for which you are interviewing, and past experiences. The interviewer will be looking to see if you have a plan, you know how to implement it, and if you think that discipline is an important part of the position. What I have found from coaching clients is they fail to provide a clear action plan that can be backed up with examples. Also, it is important to find out what the discipline philosophy of the school or district is; this will give you some additional information. A few things to bring up when answering this question include the following:

It is important to develop ground rules the first week of class, this allows the students to understand what is and isn't acceptable behavior. Five or six basic rules are plenty. Make them broad, for example, "Treat others kindly by your words and behavior." That rule covers a lot of ground: no calling names, hitting, pushing, gossiping, teasing, etc.

The rules should be discussed and agreed upon with the students; this helps the students show accountability and act responsibly. In your discussion, you may want to touch on your philosophy of classroom discipline. This of course will depend on your style; you will have to be honest with yourself. You may believe that you can reduce negative behavior by offering the students an intellectually stimulating, organized, and respectful environment. While this is generally true, don't think that it will prevent discipline problems; it won't. You need rules, consequences, and rewards. And, you need consistency!

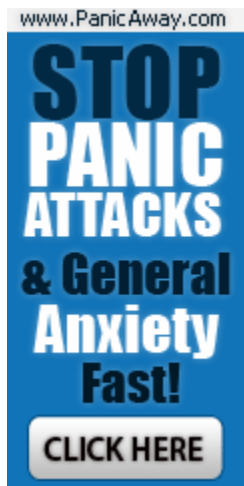
You will want to provide an example of your plan to interviewers; mention some real situations to show your expertise in this very important area. Whether you use a red light/green light, time-outs, or removing a student from the classroom, it is important that you state specifically how your plan works, why it is effective, and use examples. Don't forget to include rewards and use of praise in your plan, such as a few minutes of extra recess, extra game time, occasional video, small prizes, notes home to parents, etc.

It is also important to indicate that you know there are always



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Question 10



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two sides to every story, so if an action involves disciplining two students, you must make it clear that you will listen to both sides. Indicate that you will try to get the students to resolve their own disagreements, which may involve compromise. And always end the discussion by asking them, "How will you handle this situation next time?"

Be honest when answering this question or any other question during the interview, but by organizing your thoughts and stories ahead of time, you will make your response concise, truthful, and convince the interviewers that you are realistic and well-prepared to handle classroom discipline.

How would you describe a successful principal?

By asking this question, the hiring committee is attempting to assess the following:

- Do you understand what traits contribute to the success of a principal? As a teacher, what traits do you value most?
- Your response may indicate or suggest possible conflicts with the current principal.

Responses to this question may include:

It is important that a successful principal...

- has a vision and a plan to reach that vision, combined with the ability to bring faculty members together to form a cooperative team, get consensus, and motivate them to achieve district goals and objectives. This answer may not work if the school district prefers principals to govern, rather than lead.
- be visible... the principal's presence should be evident on a daily basis. He or she must be easily accessible to both students and teachers and visit classrooms and the playgrounds often.
- has a great sense of humor, and can relate well to a diverse group of individuals.
- genuinely cares about the students, teachers, parents, and the district.
- has unlimited amounts of patience.
- supports teachers in disciplining students and maintaining a well-controlled school.

Question 11



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Do you have any questions for us?

An interview isn't just about responding to the prospective school district's questions; it is an opportunity for you to impress the panel with examples of your foresight regarding the position they are offering. By asking questions, you can also determine if the fit is right, show interest in the position, and develop rapport. If you feel comfortable, and the interviewer seems amenable, you may ask questions at appropriate times throughout the interview. Once you have been in the interview for a few minutes, you will start to get a feel for your comfort level. If you don't ask questions during the interview, you will most likely be given the chance to do so at the end of the meeting ... be sure to take advantage of this great opportunity!

So what questions should you ask? First, only ask questions you cannot get answers to through your research, for example, by investigating, you may easily determine how many students attend the school -- so, think of a different question to ask. Be sure you think carefully about what questions you would like answered ... make them genuine ... and recognize that it is always advantageous to ask questions. Remember, don't try to dominate the interview with your questions; keep in mind you are the interviewee. A good idea is to practice asking the questions you create in front of a mirror the day before the interview. Write your questions down on a professional pad of paper or an index card and bring them to the interview.

Some suggestions of appropriate questions are provided here ... ask them only if they are not addressed in the interview and if you don't have access to the answers. If the questions are structured correctly, you will provide yourself with a further opportunity to sell yourself, for example; "I am very interested in team sports, what extracurricular activities are available for teacher participation?" What does this show the interviewer? You are a team player and are willing to participate in extracurricular activities.

Other potential questions to ask the interview panel are:

- I have always been successful with getting parents involved in the classroom, how active are parents at this school?
- I am well-versed at integrating computer technology into the classroom, what kind of resources does the school have available?
- Do teachers work in teams? If so, how is this organized?
- I consider myself a life-long learner, what professional

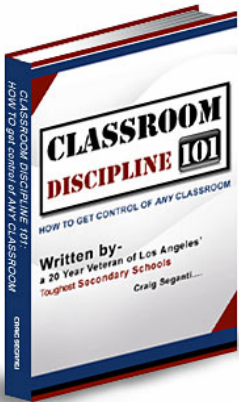


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Question 12



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development opportunities will be available?

- What is the student/teacher ratio?
- I have been instrumental in developing new programs in previous positions I have held. Will the school be implementing any new programs this year, or require input to develop programs?
- Will the school be addressing any major issues this year?
- If you are new to the industry you may ask, "Is there a mentor teacher program available?"
- When do you hope to reach a decision as to who the successful candidate will be?

This is just a sample of the many types of questions that you may ask in an interview. Be sure you don't overwhelm the interviewer with questions ... three or four questions is usually sufficient.

As always, it is important to be honest when answering questions during the interview, and organizing your thoughts and questions in advance will help illustrate your skills and compatibility with the district.

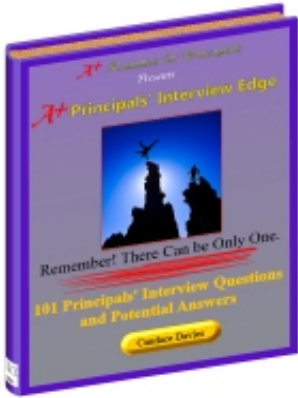
Are you a flexible teacher? If so, explain how.

Yes I am a flexible teacher. I can deal very effectively with people and students from all backgrounds and socio-economic groups. In teaching, I am completely aware that students have different learning rates and styles. Some are fast learners and some are slow learners, some learn best in auditory manner, others through actions or visual media. Still others have specific learning disabilities. I am flexible in the sense that I address these differences and make it a point to respond to their different needs. In my teaching, I make use of different learning strategies so that my instruction will be interesting and motivating to students. I use lecture, discussion, hands-on activities, cooperative learning, projects, manipulatives, role playing, debates, reports, technology, and others. (Choose the ones appropriate to the subject and/or grade for which you are applying.)

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Question 13



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Question 14



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Question 15

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What did you find to be the most difficult aspect of student (intern) teaching?

For me, the most difficult part of student teaching is the limited contact hours with students within one class period (or day). When I teach, I have so much information that I would like to impart to my students that time flies by too fast. I always go to my classes full of energy and armed with lessons which I believe will stimulate curiosity and spark understanding and new insights in my students. There is so much information that I need to present for them to have a comprehensive understanding of a concept. My challenge is to make sure that I structure my lessons so effectively that learning takes place in one class period (or day). So I plan ahead to maximize every minute of my class period (or day).

What ways do you assess and evaluate students?

In assessing students, I make use of different methods. I use formal and informal assessment procedures to promote social, academic, and physical development. The usual assessment that I use is written quizzes (case studies, discussions) and examinations. Throughout the semester, I also grade and assess students on their class participation such as recitations, reports, group activities, and seat work. I also assess and grade students based on their completion of assignments and timeliness in submission. I also use authentic/alternative assessments, in which the student shows they can perform a task, such as making a speech or writing a story. I like to use written, oral, and day-to-day assessments.

What will you do to modify your teaching to meet the needs of a gifted student?

A gifted student in the midst of the regular students can be a challenge in terms of addressing his or her particular needs and capabilities. What I will do is to modify his work assignments in expectation or length to fit his abilities. His tasks will require a higher level of understanding compared to the regular students. During class discussions, I can direct questions to him or her that require higher-level thinking skills. I also would encourage the gifted student to take a leadership role in group work so that his classmates can emulate and be inspired by him.



I Hope you found this information useful. If you have feedback, either positive or areas for improvement please contact Candace at candoco@telus.net

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