

Teaching Students How To Interview Someone



Teaching students how to interview someone is a valuable skill that can have lifelong benefits. Interviews are not just a tool for job hunting; they are essential in various fields such as journalism, research, and even casual conversations. Educators play a crucial role in equipping students with the necessary skills to conduct effective interviews. This article will provide a comprehensive guide on how to teach students the art of interviewing, covering preparation, execution, and follow-up.

Understanding the Importance of Interviews

Before diving into the mechanics of interviewing, it is important to convey to students why interviews matter. Understanding the significance can motivate them and make the learning process more meaningful.

Real-World Applications

Interviews are used in a variety of contexts:

1. Job Interviews: Students will eventually face interviews in their job search, making this skill essential for their future careers.
2. Research: In academic settings, interviews can be a primary source of information for research projects or qualitative studies.
3. Media: Journalists rely on interviews to gather facts and perspectives, a critical element in reporting.
4. Networking: Interviews can help students build connections within their desired fields.

Building Communication Skills

Conducting interviews enhances several soft skills:

- Active Listening: Students learn to focus on what the other person is saying, which is crucial for effective communication.
- Critical Thinking: Students must think on their feet, adapting questions based on responses.
- Empathy and Understanding: Interviews often require students to connect with others on an emotional level.

Preparing for an Interview

Preparation is key to any successful interview. Teaching students how to prepare can set them up for success.

Research the Subject

Before the interview, students should gather information about the person they are interviewing. This can include:

- Background Information: Understand the interviewee's professional history and interests.
- Recent Work: Familiarize themselves with any recent projects or achievements relevant to the interview.
- Common Interests: Finding shared connections can help establish rapport.

Crafting Questions

Questions guide the interview and should be thoughtfully constructed. Teach students the difference between open-ended and closed questions:

- Open-ended Questions: Encourage detailed responses (e.g., "Can you describe your journey to becoming a teacher?").
- Closed Questions: Often yield short, factual answers (e.g., "Do you have a degree in education?").

Encourage students to create a list of potential questions that cover:

1. Background: Personal history and experiences.
2. Expertise: Insights related to their field.
3. Challenges: Difficulties faced and how they were overcome.
4. Future Aspirations: Goals and visions for the future.

Practicing Interview Techniques

Set aside time for students to practice their interviewing skills. Role-playing can be an effective method for this:

- Pair students up and have them practice interviewing each other.
- Provide feedback on their body language, tone, and question delivery.
- Encourage them to switch roles, allowing both parties to experience the perspective of the interviewer and interviewee.

Conducting the Interview

Once students are prepared, it's time to conduct the actual interview. Here are some essential tips for helping them navigate this stage effectively.

Creating a Comfortable Atmosphere

The environment can significantly impact the quality of an interview. Teach students to:

- Choose a Suitable Location: A quiet, comfortable space free from distractions is ideal.
- Be Friendly and Approachable: A warm greeting can help ease nerves for both the interviewer and the interviewee.
- Establish Rapport: Starting with a light conversation can set a positive tone.

Active Listening and Engagement

Remind students that active listening is crucial during the interview:

- Maintain Eye Contact: It shows that they are engaged and interested.

- Nod and Use Verbal Affirmations: Simple gestures indicate that they are following along.
- Avoid Interrupting: Let the interviewee finish their thoughts before responding.

Being Adaptable

Teach students the importance of flexibility during the interview:

- **Follow Up on Interesting Points:** If the interviewee mentions something intriguing, students should feel free to explore that topic further.
- **Change the Course if Necessary:** If the conversation flows in an unexpected direction, students should be prepared to adapt their questions.

Post-Interview Activities

Once the interview is completed, there are several important steps students should take.

Thanking the Interviewee

It's essential for students to express gratitude towards their interviewee. This can be done through:

- **A Verbal Thank You:** Acknowledge their time and insights immediately after the interview.
- **Follow-Up Email:** A brief note thanking them again can reinforce the relationship and leave a positive impression.

Reflecting on the Experience

Encourage students to reflect on their interview experience:

- **What Went Well:** Identify strengths in their interviewing technique.
- **Areas for Improvement:** Discuss what could be improved for future interviews.
- **Lessons Learned:** Highlight any new insights gained from the

experience or the interviewee's responses.

Documenting the Interview

After the interview, students should document their findings:

- **Transcribe Key Points:** Write down significant quotes or insights.
- **Summarize the Experience:** Create a brief write-up detailing the interview and its outcomes.

Encouraging Continuous Improvement

Interviewing is a skill that benefits from practice and reflection.

Encourage students to seek opportunities to refine this skill.

Practice Regularly

- **Conduct More Interviews:** Encourage students to interview different people to gain diverse perspectives.
- **Join Clubs or Activities:** Participation in journalism, debate, or public speaking clubs can provide additional practice.

Seek Feedback

- **Peer Reviews:** Students can share their experiences with their peers and receive constructive criticism.
- **Mentorship:** Connecting with professionals in their field can provide valuable insights and guidance.

Conclusion

Teaching students how to interview someone equips them with a vital skill set that extends beyond the classroom. By understanding the significance of interviews, preparing effectively, conducting them with confidence, and reflecting on their experiences, students can become

adept interviewers. This ability to communicate, connect, and gather information will serve them well in their academic pursuits and future careers. As educators, fostering these skills can empower students to engage meaningfully with the world around them.

Frequently Asked Questions

What are the key skills students should develop when learning to interview someone?

Students should focus on active listening, effective questioning techniques, body language awareness, and the ability to build rapport with the interviewee.

How can students prepare for an interview to ensure they feel confident?

Students can prepare by researching the interviewee, practicing their questions, and conducting mock interviews to familiarize themselves with the process.

What types of questions should students ask during an interview?

Students should use a mix of open-ended questions to encourage

detailed responses, as well as follow-up questions to explore topics in more depth.

How can students create a comfortable environment for the interviewee?

Students can create a comfortable environment by choosing a quiet location, starting with casual conversation, and ensuring the interviewee feels valued and respected.

What are some common mistakes students make during interviews?

Common mistakes include not listening actively, interrupting the interviewee, asking leading questions, and failing to follow up on interesting points raised during the conversation.

How can feedback improve students' interviewing skills?

Feedback allows students to identify areas for improvement, understand the impact of their style, and learn effective strategies from experienced interviewers to enhance their skills.

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